



The Departed



Gliding Trip



felix

The student newspaper of Imperial College

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Referendum to decide on joining NUS

Andy Sykes
Editor-in-chief

The referendum to decide whether Imperial College Union will affiliate to the NUS has been decided upon at Exec and Council, with the Yes and No campaign leaders being appointed and budgets assigned to each campaign.

The referendum was triggered by a petition handed to the Union President, John Collins, with 704 signatories. After checking the CIDs and names of those who signed, only

617 of the 704 were deemed to be valid, just 3 more than the 614 required by the Union Constitution (5% of the Union's total membership of 12,267). The Exec paper recommended that the question on the ballot be: "Should Imperial College Union affiliate to the National Union of Students (NUS)?"

Mr Collins' paper to Council reveals that almost all the Executive Committee declared an interest in the NUS, and therefore could not form the Referendum Committee. The only members without an interest were James Millen (SCC Chair), James Yearsley (Media Group Chair), Shama Rahman (Deputy President, Graduate Students) and Jon Matthews (Deputy President, Finance & Services). Mr Matthews has been approved by Monday's Council meeting to act as Returning Officer for the referendum, as John Collins (Union President) declared an interest and stood down.

Some hacks are unhappy with the sabbs being so vocal with their opinions on the NUS, and arguing that ICU is already being influenced by the ideas of the NUS. Felix approached each of the sabbs to ask what their interest in the NUS was. Ben Harris (Deputy President, Education & Welfare), said: "Everybody knows I'm pro-NUS," adding that he felt it was okay for him to campaign on behalf on the pro-NUS cause: "If I believe something is right for students, then I'll campaign for it." There are also unconfirmed rumours that Mr Harris was spotted 'lewd dancing' with the NUS President, Gemma Tumelty, after the Presidents' Dinner during

the handover period, though thankfully no photos survive of this event. Mr Collins (Union President) has gone on record numerous times as being pro-NUS, and commented to this reporter on his reasons for declaring an interest: "I want to be part of the debate." It is not yet clear whether Mr Collins will campaign directly for the pro-NUS cause. Eric Lai (Deputy President, Clubs & Societies) is well known as a supporter of the anti-NUS campaign, and is likely to command the backing of the sports clubs, thanks to his role as ACC Chair last year.

The leader of the Yes campaign is Alex Guite, a friend of Mr Harris, and the leader of the No campaign is James Fok, the CGCU President, a position once held by Mr Collins. Each of the parties has been given £1000 to campaign with, and equal access to student media and other communication opportunities.

The student media are working together to ensure the facts are presented to students in an unbiased way. To this end, *Felix* is collaborating with the CGCU online newspaper, Live! (live.cgcu.net), to present arguments from the Yes and No campaigns. Live! will provide discussion forums based around opinion pieces they receive from each of the campaigns. The Union's TV station, stoic TV, will be running a documentary about the NUS, interviewing the sabbs and NUS officials.

Felix urges students to think carefully about the ramifications that affiliation may have upon the Union before voting, and that such a decision should not be made lightly.

Felix editor-in-chief graduates, somehow



Felix editor-in-chief, Andrew Neil Sykes, pictured practising his gurning skills for the upcoming Visage Contortion Festival 2007, stunned family and friends when he graduated on Wednesday. Passing with a 2:1 grade and being awarded the Evans' Medal for outstanding Chemistry skills, rumours that he slept his way to success are completely unfounded. Upon finishing his sabbatical position, a PhD and permanent life of periodic tables and PVC aprons await. Congratulations from the *Felix* team! Much love.

Referendum timeline

13 October
Referendum approved.

7 November
Hustings takes place at the Reynolds Bar, Charing Cross campus at 7pm.

8 November
Hustings in Da Vinci's at 7pm.

13 November
Electronic countdown in Da Vinci's opens.

14 November
Voting opens at 00:01.

16 November
Voting closes at 23:59.

17 November
Results announced at 7pm.

Spying on students?

A leaked government paper suggests universities monitor "suspicious students" over fears of extremism on UK campuses

Andy Sykes

A draft paper leaked from the Department of Education, obtained by the Guardian, has incited a new row about extremism on UK university campuses.

The paper urges university staff and lecturers to report any students that are involved in 'suspicious' activities to special branch, and acknowledges that this will result in "concerns about the police targeting certain sections of the student population (e.g. Muslims)". The draft paper, which was sent for consultation to official bodies is reported to focus on factors that radicalise students, with specific attention paid to the role played by Islamic societies on campus. It discusses the possibility of monitoring any Islamic society's leaflets and speakers, and warns of the dangers of terrorists "talent-spotting" on campus and "grooming students for terrorism".

The paper was leaked at a time when the Government is under strain with regards to its attitude towards British Muslims, after Jack Straw's request that a constituent remove her niqab (face-covering veil) when speaking to him resulted in outrage amongst many British Muslims.

The paper devotes a section to factors that can drive students to extremism, and lists a number of contributing reasons; these include a feeling of "segregation" from British society, extremism in their original hometowns, and the influence of radical speakers. On the subject of invited speakers, it advises keeping a close eye on invited speakers and committee members: "The control of university or college Islamic societies by certain extremist individuals can play a significant role in the extent of Islamist extremism on campus." It worries that the influence of these "charismatic, persuasive and eloquent" speakers can tap into feelings of alienation common



Ruth Kelly, communities secretary, has defended the plans

to students arriving at university.

It is true that extremists have been operating on campuses in the UK for the past few years. In the recent foiled terror plot to blow up airlines travelling from the UK to the US with explosives, one Islamic society president was arrested air side while allegedly trying to smuggle explosives on board an aircraft. In a far less clear-cut case in 2003, Babar Ahmed, an Information Technology Support worker at the College, was arrested on charges under the Terrorism Act, and police raided rooms in Mechanical Engineering to seize computers. He is currently awaiting extradition to the US. And at last year's Freshers' Fair, individuals acting under the name "Stop Islamophobia" were attempting to recruit students for Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamist party that was facing a ban under proposed anti-terror legislation.

The outcry over the leak has been widespread. Gemma Tumulty, the NUS President, compared it to McCarthyism, adding: "They are going to treat every Muslim with suspicion on the basis of their faith." Wakkas Khan, president of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, worried about the lack of moderation shown by the paper: "It sounds to

me to be potentially the widest infringement of the rights of Muslim students that there has ever been in this country. It sounds like you're guilty until you're proven innocent." In defence of the plans, Ruth Kelly, the communities secretary, reiterated that academic staff were not "spying" but rather "monitoring students". Paul Mackney, joint general secretary of the University and College Union, also drew comparisons with the McCarthy era, and said the paper had "major implications for academic freedom, civil liberties."

A paper put to Union Council on Monday night by Camilla Royle, a student closely involved with SWSS and Student Respect, which condemned Islamophobia and asked that the body get in touch with College authorities to ask whether students' details were being passed to Special Branch. It seems, however, that those fears are misplaced. This reporter contacted Rees Rawlings, Pro-Rector for Educational Quality, asking if there were any plans to monitor affiliations of students or to specifically monitor Muslim students and societies. Mr Rawlings replied succinctly: "Your questions are simple to answer. The answers are no, and no."

Halal food debate



Almost all the chicken served by the Union is now halal

The rising number of Muslims on British university campuses has caused a surge in the number of universities serving halal food, though some, including the Secular Society at Oxford University, have protested against the lack of options available.

Halal simply means "permissible" in Arabic; the act of halal slaughter is called dhabihah. This act involves first checking if the animal is healthy; if so, the animal is given water to drink and pointed towards Mecca. The slaughterer then says a brief prayer, and slices open the large arteries in the neck of the animal. This helps drain the corpse of blood, as the consumption of blood is forbidden in Islam.

At Leicester University, students managed to get pork banned from the union's food outlet, and all other dishes are now exclusively halal. At Sheffield, a branch of Hally Ally's, a fast food company that serves only halal food, has opened on campus. The Union serves halal food, which is clearly marked on the menus. According to Jon Matthews, Deputy President (Finance & Services), said that chicken served by the Union is "almost entirely halal". In College food outlets, the story is similar. In a statement made to Felix, a catering manager in College said: "The majority of chicken we serve is halal... beef and lamb are not currently halal. We identify on menus with an 'H' all dishes that are halal."

At Oxford University, recently the centre of a furious animal rights row, some chefs have refused to prepare halal meat because of con-

cerns over the way it is slaughtered. The University's Secular Society has also protested the introduction of entirely halal dishes, arguing that one group's religious requirements should not be forced on to another. Mr Matthews responded to this concern, saying: "We never have an entirely halal menu, so other options are available. Why would non-Muslim students care about halal?" The College caterer takes a similar line: "As the taste and quality is the same as non-halal meat, this does not affect the menu choices for our non-Muslim customers."

Research into the dhabihah method of slaughter is inclusive with regards to animal suffering. While some academics have stated it to be one of the fastest methods of killing an animal, and that the draining of blood results in a relatively painless death, animal rights groups contend that it causes unnecessary suffering compared to modern methods that stun the animal prior to slaughter. The Government-funded Farm Animals Welfare Council has recommended that the conventional form of dhabihah that takes places without any stunning should be abolished.

Some have raised questions over the accommodation of Islamic eating habits, arguing that Jewish students should be able to obtain kosher food on campus. However, as Mr Matthews says, this would likely require an entirely separate kitchen in order to ensure that milk and meat are never handled together or with the same utensils, whereas halal food requires far less work to accommodate.

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Game On Exhibition

"The games are the focus - an eclectic mix of the past and the present, offering a whistle-stop tour from decades of gaming." PAGE 5

Bangladesh Crisis

"In the small town of Mirpur homemade bombs killed over 20 people. Over 500 people have been injured in such riots in the last two months. The Bangaldeshi people are fighting for their right to a reliable source of energy." PAGE 6

Take That Razorlight

"I was given no time to adapt to the crowd as The Kooks ventured onto the stage. Before any instruments were picked up I was crushed by squealing girls." PAGE 13



Walking the Boards

"Hilarious, rude, loud, extravagant, and constantly pitting the cynical against the soppy; you come out with your cheeks aching from laughter and a sense of wonder at how realistic a puppet sex scene can be" PAGE 16

Designer Vs. High St

"Even if designer stores aren't as quick to move as the high street, are the clothes at least of a better quality? Or the designers any better? It's scandalous that Ralph Lauren charge £50 for a plain top" PAGE 11

IC Caving Club

"Abseiling down through a chimney between the rock, the walls suddenly disappear. Looking down far below, I can see pinpricks of light - the headlamps of the rest of the party waiting for me." PAGE 27

End of a Legend

"No other driver besides Schumacher can polarise this sport in such a fashion, or cement a team so cohesively together" PAGES 28 & 29



Chinese and Tibetan émigrés protest outside the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington High Street, where Chairman Jia Qinglin, responsible for Tibet policy, was meeting Tibetan spiritual leaders

HSBC pushes student over the edge

A student committed suicide after being 'hounded' by HSBC and having his overdraft facility removed

Dave Ellis
News Editor

A 20 year old Computer Studies student from South Wales committed suicide after his bank hounded him to pay off his £1,200 overdraft. Geraint Banks-Wilkinson, from Nant-y-moel, studied at Swansea Institute and was described as an "award-winning student".

Mr. Banks-Wilkinson supported his studies with a part-time job at McDonalds, an overdraft and a small student loan. In December 2005 HSBC began to phone Mr. Banks-Wilkinson almost every day pressurising him to pay off his overdraft. His parents later said: "He was not afraid of a bit of work and was doing his studies as well, but could not do everything. The way they treated him was appalling. They were hounding us when they could not get hold of him."

Whilst taking his GCSE exams Mr. Banks-Wilkinson had self-harmed and had a history of depression. He had also been prescribed anti-depression medication.

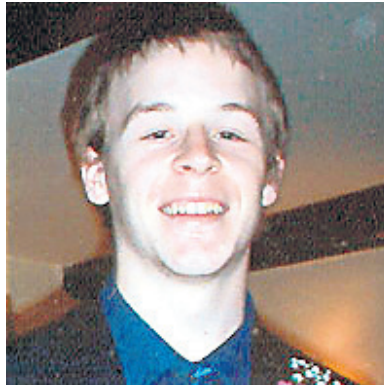
The pressure mounted and climaxed at Christmas when a £1000 student loan was paid into his account, paying off most of his £1,200

overdraft. HSBC then cancelled his overdraft facility leaving him with no student loan and no access to any money. Distraught, Mr. Banks-Wilkinson was driven to the Bridgend branch of HSBC on 11th January by his mother. He returned in a state of extreme distress. Mrs. Banks-Wilkinson recalled: "He said 'They can't help me'. When he came back, basically he sat in the car, put his head in his hands and sobbed."

Mrs. Banks-Wilkinson tried to pacify her son over a cup of tea, advised him to try other banks or to contact HSBC by another means. He was appeared to cheer up and returned to Swansea in order to return to work at McDonalds.

The next day he went to work as usual and socialised with work colleagues after the shift was over. However, Mr. Banks-Wilkinson was found hanging from the ceiling in his bathroom the following day.

A final, bitter irony came as HSBC tried to phone Mr. Banks-Wilkinson's father on the day his son died: "On the day he died, they even called and I told them exactly what had happened. I said: 'You have pestered him for months and now you have driven him to his death. I hold you responsible'."



Geraint Banks-Wilkinson

Philip Rogers, the coroner, recorded a verdict of suicide after a post-mortem exam showed the cause of death was by hanging.

HSBC offered the following statement concerning the tragedy: "HSBC again offers its sincere condolences to the family and friends of Geraint Banks-Wilkinson. HSBC has not as yet had an opportunity to review the coroner's findings and as such cannot comment on them specifically. Further, privacy legislation prohibits a bank from discussing the details of its customers' accounts, and we certainly would not

want to intrude upon the family's grief." A spokesman for the company also said: "At HSBC we make every possible effort to reach customers the moment we begin to see signs of financial difficulty, not to do so would be irresponsible."

Since the tragic suicide of Geraint Banks-Wilkinson, a number of HSBC customers who have had similar experiences have come forward. One student was reportedly left with £30 to last until the end of term because his overdraft was cancelled. Jamie Marshall, who studied at Reading University, said: "I went over my overdraft limit and cleared it by paying in all of my student loan and wages from my job. HSBC cancelled my overdraft, leaving me with £30 for the term. For a month, I ate one meal of beans on toast a day." Another student, Aaron Robinson claimed to have been targeted by HSBC after he graduated. He said: "Roughly every two hours a person would call demanding I pay off my £2000 overdraft in full or face serious repercussions. They then rang my parents from 6:30am to as late as 10:30pm."

An HSBC spokesman commented: "I don't see multiple calls as badgering people. It's trying to get

a message to someone in financial difficulty."

Whatever the reasons, whoever is to blame, one thing is clear: Despite high street banks bending over backwards to attract new student customers, the incentives do not mean the banks will offer any sort of support, or display any kind of understanding of a student's situation. Banking is a hard-nosed business and a successful bank will always defend its interests.

On the other hand, many students find it difficult to pay the large tuition fees and support themselves whilst studying, since they may not have much time to work. This conflict can have disastrous effects and is likely to get worse with the introduction of student top up fees, putting students under a debt larger obligation.

The likely effect is that the pressure created on students from less affluent backgrounds may grow to much for studying at university to be a viable career option. And since graduates earn much more than non-graduates, the rich-poor divide could widen. That point could not be more clear than to the friends and family of Geraint Banks-Wilkinson.

Boris to tackle Uni cheats

Boris Johnson, the shadow education minister has said that exams, instead of months of coursework, would help prevent students cheating.

Coventry University recently caught 237 students who had broken their rule concerning coursework. Seven have been expelled and another twelve cases are being looked at. Nottingham University have disciplined 53 students for the same reason, but only one has been expelled.

The main method of cheating is by 'cutting and pasting' coursework from the Internet. Some websites are selling essays for up to £1000.

Baroness Ruth Deech, the student complaints ombudsman, said: "Education is a quest, a voyage of discovery weighing up a range of views and encouragement of notions. The intellectual tradition of inquiry is getting lost. If lecturers can imbue students of the notion that they are searching rather than copying, we maybe can go some way to tackling plagiarism."

The Daily Mail claims that up to 20,000 university students were caught cheating last year. Boris Johnson also said that the alleged 10% of students who cheated were "a minority driven to extremes". He also described the website UKessays, which sells essays to students, as "queasy-making in its efficiency".

Meanwhile, Wes Streeting, the education vice-president for the NUS claimed the high level of students working part-time was putting them under pressure. He also attacked some universities for having "adopted a heavy hand and... throwing students off courses."

Another popular way for cheaters is to use technology. Typically a



Boris Johnson moments before tackling German No. 6 Maurizio Gaudino; if that's anything to go by then cheaters should watch out

student would photograph a question and MMS the picture to a colleague outside the exam hall, who then sends back the answer. The problem has got so bad that one Government expert is calling for exam rooms to be 'shielded' from mobile phone signals using a 'Far-

aday cage'. The device would act similarly to the way elevators act in blocking mobile phone signals.

Plagiarisers should be wary; Universities UK say that 80% of institutions are now using the electronic software 'Turnitin' to catch the cheats.

No C in the K&C!



The proposed new C zone that will come into effect in February

The Congestion Charge is to be rolled out over a large section of Kensington and Chelsea. The plans have been contested in the area, but the efforts of campaigners appears to have failed. The existing zone, which borders Park Lane, will be swept out to the Earl's Court Road one-way system.

The plans have come under intense criticism since the RAC revealed that the most congested roads lay to the north, south and east of the centre, rather than to the west. This has led many to question Ken Livingstone's motives. Some believe he is trying to raise income by effectively introducing a tax on the residents that live in West London.

Edmund King, executive director of the RAC Foundation, said: "There is no possible logic for singling out west London for this proposed extension. There are many other areas that are far more congested. Many key routes that cross the proposed new charging zone

have very little congestion at all. Of course King's Road gets busy but that is a sign of a vibrant shopping and entertainment culture. Experience tends to suggest this latest scheme is all about revenue raising, not combating congestion." Jo Valentine of London First said businesses were frustrated at the Mayor's "unwillingness to... address problems with congestion hotspots, none of which are in the proposed extension."

A document released by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea points out that not all the residents of the borough are affluent; some areas in the borough are the most deprived in England. The areas of St. Charles and Golbourne have about 23,000 residents, 60% of whom live in social housing. Under the proposed plans, these residents would not qualify for the reduced tariff, but would not be able to effectively use their car without paying in full.

How to turn science into hard cash

How Imperial physicist John Hassard turned his hard work into hard cash, founding three companies

Emma Turner

For all those bright sparks who rolled up to Imperial College thinking: "I'm in! My life is sorted! Roll out the champagne and silk shirts!", the harsh reality eventually dawns that having a brain full of science does not a fistful of money make. And as you soon work out research pay is pitiful and the city (if you can get through the minefield of inter-

views) may pay a decent wage but it will drain your soul.

So how do you turn science into hard cash? If you'd turned up to John Hassard's presentation at the Launch of IC's Entrepreneurship Societies event last Tuesday you might have a few ideas. Hassard is a man with his eye on the ball and a spring in his step. A man who realised that in order to rake in the dosh you need to take off your sci-

ence glasses and put on your business head. Which is exactly what the high energy physicist has done.

Hassard has been involved in the creation of three separate companies, all of which make this tricky transition. The first one is brushed under the carpet with a muttered 'dismal' but the second and the third are his babies. 'DeltaDOT' merges the physics of high resolution imaging with the biology of molecules

to enable us to 'See the Molecule not the Label' (the tag-line on the website www.deltadot.com.) The entrepreneurial bit of this invention is the absence of a pesky intrusion into the imaging process – the label – a fluorescent chemical applied to the molecule that enables you to 'see' it. Basically it gets in the way, Hassard's team have used their combined disciplines to remove it and sell the new technology.

The third and potentially most exciting company is HydroVenturi, a company that puts a spin on tidal power, the classic renewable energy source by adding some tweaks that make it just that bit better. Why? Because Hassard thinks big and energy is 'the biggest fish' of them all. Where there is a problem, actually a catastrophe looming on the horizon that is the whole world's interest to solve there is money to be made. Basically the bit that sticks out of the water is called the 'head' and HydroVenturi's genius is making the head as small as possible, but not too small – as the man eloquently puts it "Don't even bother getting out of bed for more than 10

metres of head". Sounds good to me. This is Hassard's advice to budding entrepreneurs – find a sizeable problem and use your sought after science knowledge to solve it, and to do this you're going to have cross over into business territory. It's a scary thought.

But on listening, frankly enthralled, to the man for the duration of his speech there is no disguising the fact that for all his Alan Sugar-like business sense Hassard is a physicist at heart. If for no other reason than he calls the symbols on the board his 'guys' (a classic physicist trait), but also because he has the stimulating energy of a man who has the recognisable passion for his useless subject. But in contrast to his crazy haired colleagues his application of the subject renders it not so useless.

Hassard believes that "physicists need to justify their existence", a sentiment certainly not shared by everyone. But with a passion and deep love of his work as well as more money than you could ever earn in the square mile just waiting to fall into his wallet, it's Hassard and the entrepreneurs who are going to have the last laugh.



John Hassard, reader in physics at Imperial, founded the tidal power company HydroVenturi Ltd and biotechnology company DeltaDot

NOMURA

Before you tell us about you, here's a little bit about us

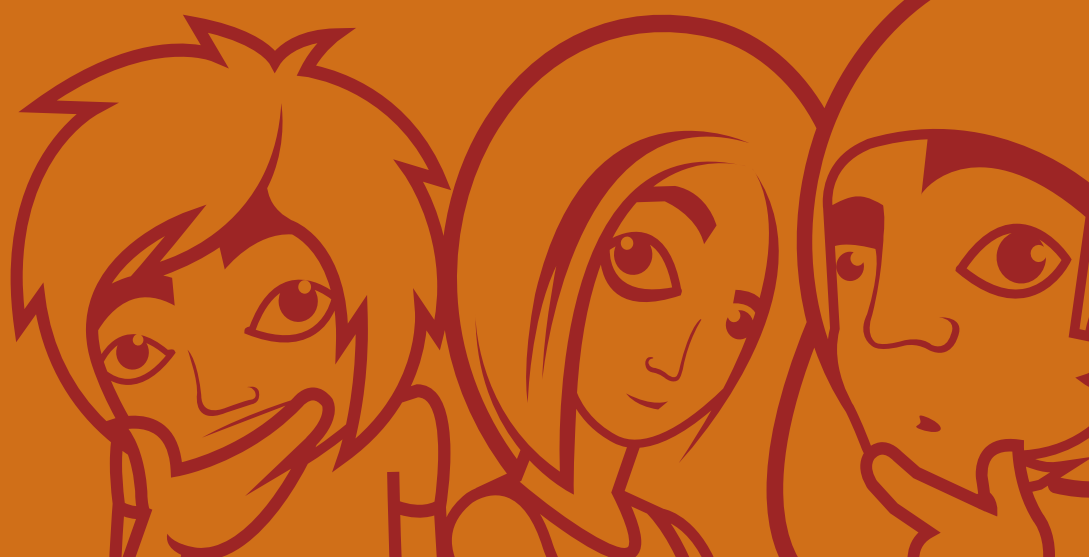
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Graduate deadline – 1 December 2006

Summer Internship deadline – 19 January 2007



And the winner is... Primo Levi

Edward Wawrzynczak

'The Best Science Books Ever', an event organised by the Royal Institution together with Imperial's Science Communication group, asked three experts on popular science writing to nominate their candidates for best book.

The Guardian's former science editor Tim Radford went for Primo Levi's *The Periodic Table*, a memoir with its metaphorical roots in chemistry. Armand Leroi, biologist and author, chose an inspirational book on animal behaviour, Konrad Lorenz's *King Solomon's Ring*. Lastly, Sara Abdulla, publisher and theatre buff, praised the skilful writing of Tom Stoppard's brilliant play *Arcadia*.

Lively debate among the panel and audience identified other authors and books with strong claims. Although there could be only one



winner on the night, the discussion brought out the characteristics defining the best books of the science writing genre – successfully covering a big idea, getting across what we know of the world, showing how science is done, and, not least, achieving high literary quality.

The Periodic Table ticked the boxes and won the popular vote. Primo Levi deserves a place on everybody's bookshelf. In the words of Saul Bellow: "This is a book that is necessary to read."

The Game On exhibition

An inspired recollection of gaming history or a chance for more Nintendo marketing?

Mike Cook

The facts don't entirely speak for themselves, but they allege that there are 26,500,000 gamers in the UK. This ranges from the hardcore denizens of Azeroth right through to the Brain Trainers and businessmen who play Sudoku on their phone. Whether or not all of these people are truly 'gamers' is a debate in itself, but the numbers do say this – gaming, in one form or another, is a part of the nation's psyche. And if it's technological history, then the Science Museum want to play host to it.

But if you're not convinced by the numbers, you might be wondering why the exhibition is gracing the museum at all. Gaming still has its neuroses and its stigmas attached, and even without them it can still seem all too Pop Culture. Has the Science Museum sold out?

"I think it's very important to actually look at Game On beyond just what's in [the exhibition], but also the whole museum." Explains David Yarnton, the General Manager of Nintendo UK, speaking at the exhibition's opening, "The important thing [Nintendo] see in games, and the reason why we want to be here, is because we think of games as something that gives young people the opportunity to get inspiration and have fun."

If nothing else, Mr. Yarnton knows the Science Museum's intentions pretty well. The exhibition itself is draped in cool blues and bright colours for the most part, with vibrant murals by Jon Burgerman – an artist who has worked for Sony in the past – and it's these that really underline the direction of Game On, highlighting the content of videogames, challenging the long-held stereotypes and clichés, and asking questions of the future.

But of course, it's the games that are the focus – Space Invaders is projected at an impressive scale onto the walls, lively platformers such as Jak And Daxter share floor space with old classics such as Elite. It's an eclectic mix of the past and the present, offering a whistle-



Rock on. Suits wah-wah their whammys on Guitar Hero for the PS2 at the Game On Exhibition

stop tour of most of the last decades of gaming.

In Mr. Yarnton's opening speech, he hinted at the relationship between the exhibition and the wider museum. He described gaming as something "where kids, by having fun, [gain] inspiration to further things in the future.", and made mention of the drop in interest in science across the board. "It's so important, I think, at the moment, and I read all the time in the papers about young people... but it's so important that we get them involved and participating towards innovation in the future."

Later, I find David Braben wander-

ing somewhat bemusedly through the exhibition. He talks to me about the exhibition, and about what gaming has been for him in the past two and a half decades. In front of us, the Elite console that he donated to Game On glows and sparkles. Is there still scope for technological innovation and development in the future? Is there still a future for science in gaming? "We don't even know where the 'scope' is," he says, "This exhibition is a milestone, it shows that we've reached a turning point. But it's no more than the end of the beginning."

It's worth noting that the exhibition is sponsored by Nintendo itself – this doesn't just mean that they get exclusive sketches of Donkey Kong and Mario. It also means that the exhibition is distinctly lacking in the areas that Nintendo don't cover. Metal Gear Solid, Half-Life, Quake, even Doom are all conspicuously absent, and the most recent Final Fantasy they could muster was a Playstation conversion of FFVI. The exhibition still does its job of highlighting some of the great moments in videogaming history – but it also has a few pages missing, particularly as you go on through time.

In the final chamber of the exhibition, a projector throws out Guitar Hero, two-player, onto a screen. Schoolkids and Suits strum away to Franz Ferdinand, both equally amazed and confused by the flurry of sound and colour. For all its poor lighting and lack of seating, Game On is still a charming exhibition of gaming, and offers a few very rare chances to glance upon some very special pieces of gaming history. From Grand Theft Auto III concept art through to Spacewar! and an original PDP-1, there are some real gems. But it's unlikely to come into

its own until the Wii and Playstation3 are released, as this will make their collection finally complete.

It comes at an interesting time, a time when gaming is partially embraced by consumers in general, but still at threat from legal and moral minefields both at home and further afield. Game On fails to challenge the image of gaming very well, and it's claim of "every game worth playing" similarly doesn't ring true. But it remains a beautiful and rare tour-de-force of some of the lesser-travelled paths in gaming history.

"It's exciting," Braben explains, with a smile that hasn't dulled over 24 years of working in the industry, "To write games, to play them. We're just beginning."

Game On, like the industry itself, still has a lot of work to do.

Exhibition Information

The Game On exhibition runs from 21 Oct 2006 until 25 Feb 2007 at the Science Museum.

Entry costs £8.50 for adults or £6.50 for children and concession entry. Family tickets are also available.

Opening times are from 10.00 until 18.00 with specific extended special events during November.

Booking can be made online at www.sciencemuseum.org.uk or by telephone on 0870 906 3890. Note that booking fees may apply.

For more information about the exhibition including which games are playable, visit www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Truth about prophetic Greek oracles

Nigel Praities

Deranged celebrity behaviour goes back further than we thought. Recent geological evidence confirms that for thousands of years, generations of women in ancient Greece were acting crazy and becoming famous for it.

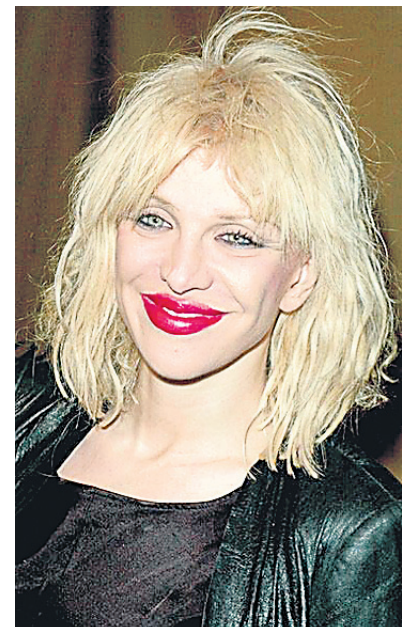
During the 8th century B.C. the Delphi temple in Greece became internationally famous for the prophetic powers of Pythia – the priestess who sat on a tripod, inhaled toxic vapours and babbled predictions of the future. Over hundreds of years, the various Pythias at Delphi were consulted for advice on many major decisions and were the most prestigious and authoritative oracles in the Greek world.

Pythia inhaled toxic vapours and predicted the future

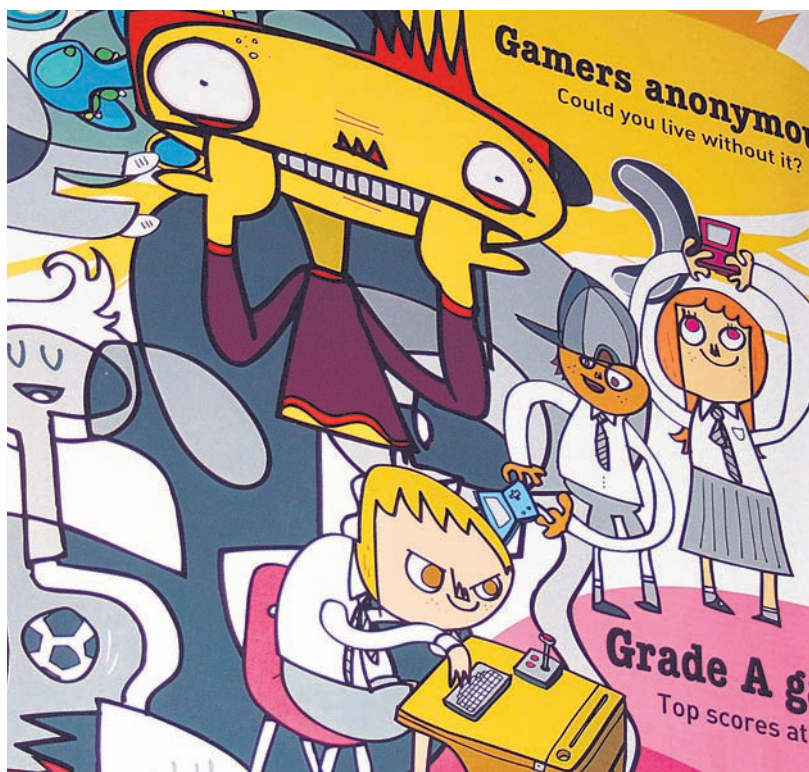
Recent geological investigations have provided some suggestions of the source of the Pythia's deranged behaviour. Two major fault lines have been discovered under the temple thought to be responsible for the release of hallucinogenic gases. These hydrocarbon gases, such as ethylene, would have brought about striking neurotoxic effects in the famous oracle.

However, new research has shown that it is more likely to be oxygen deprivation from carbon dioxide and methane release that induced trance and delirium in the oracle. In the enclosed temple chamber, these gases may have resulted in acute oxygen deprivation. The research, published in the current issue of *Geology*, also suggests that the 'sweet smells' described around the temple could have been from benzene fumes coming from local springs, although they did not detect the gas.

This research provides a rational explanation for the bizarre antics of the Pythia, though research is ongoing to uncover the reasons for the behaviour of Courtney Love.



Courtney Love: Another toxin abusing, bullshit spouter



One of many vivid gaming inspired banners adorning the exhibition

Bangladesh: the fight for energy

Jignesh Parekh
Engineers Without Borders

In the small town of Mirpur north of the capital Dhaka, famous for its mango trees, homemade bombs killed over 20 people. In Kansant, a small village, hundreds fought with police, and 7 were killed. In the suburb of Dhaka, thousands took to the streets in protest; a local MP was violently wounded. Over 500 people have been injured in such riots in the last two months. The Bangladeshi people are fighting for their right to a reliable source of energy.

Over 18 power plants are currently shut down for repair and maintenance and the countries generating capacity is barely reaching half of the current demand. The challenges of numerous blackouts, sometimes lasting several hours a day, have been particularly strenuous during the holy month of Ramadan which sees people fast in extreme heat. The lack of electricity for even cooling fans has pushed the masses to breaking point.

The energy crisis is not the only challenge that Bangladesh is facing; its water and transport infrastructure has been found lacking, 24 percent of the population are living under extreme income poverty and the country is in serious political turmoil. Over the last year we have witnessed an average of one mass strike per week. It is this web of intrinsically connected obstacles that has made solving the energy crisis an altogether monumental challenge, one that several energy ministers have tried to take on but have resigned promptly after appointment.

The electricity provision in Bang-

ladesh has been seen to suffer from variable voltages, poor operating efficiencies, significant load shedding and poor tariff and billing procedures. All review indicators have been towards a lack of investment in the country's power generation infrastructure. With expected demand to increase by 60% in the next 6 years it is expected that an investment of over 10 billion pounds is needed by 2011 to reach a target of reliable energy by 2020. It is a sum so large that the government has little choice but to look towards international donors and private in-

vestors to replenish the countries power infrastructure.

But Bangladesh isn't the easiest place to invest, with alleged issues of corruption, beauracracy and misinformation all plaguing the government. Whilst Chinese companies have been seen to finance and implement projects successfully, such as a recent 100 million dollar transmission refurbishment project, others have been withdrawing investments, including the Indian company Tata. However, investors don't seem to be coming out with flying colours either; they

have often accused of exploiting the nations resources. The American company Occidental had a major pipeline explosion in 1997 and the matter of compensation for environmental damage has still not been resolved, and a similar case exists for the Canadian company Niko Resources as well. Asia Energy PLC have looked to initiate an open pit coal project which displaces over 40,000 people over the next 10 years which has caused much anger from local village communities. There is an uncertain and potentially violent future for the Bangladeshi people;

and there seems to be a lack of solutions being delivered. The government has set in place several short term measures, including enforced black outs for 'unimportant' industries, which are seemingly frustrating the situation further. It is ironic that a country with rich natural gas is unable to meet its own power requirements due to ultimately a lack of good governance and professional technical and management human resources who are able to deliver solutions in these difficult social conditions.

The world should perhaps take a serious note of violent repercussions of energy shortages that we are witnessing in Bangladesh, for a similar situation may not be too far for others, the UK included.

Note to Reader:

I am not an informed expert in the area of Bangladesh's energy situation and would like to apologise for any misrepresentation given to the reader. I would also invite anyone who has an alternate view to write in to share their thoughts at: jap103@imperial.ac.uk.

To find out more:

Engineers Without Borders is a national student-led international development charity which aims to train and develop students who are able to tackle such global challenges. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact: thalia.konaris@imperial.ac.uk

Also, to attend an informal session on the role of microfinance and social mobilisation in development work today, Friday the 27th, contact Nara at ns704@imperial.ac.uk for more details about time and place.



The Bangladesh energy crisis has left 27 people dead and over 500 injured in the last 2 months

This month

Pugwash

Wednesday 1 November
Launch Event 2006/2007
Location TBC

Informal introduction to Pugwash as an organisation with a professional historian who works for international Pugwash.

To find out more visit www.union.ic.ac.uk/scc/pugwash
Or you can email: pugwash@imperial.ac.uk

Engineers Without Borders

Friday 27 October
6pm Union Meeting Room 2

Informal session on the role of microfinance and social mobilisation in development work

To find out more visit www.ewb-uk.org/imperial
Or you can email: thalia.konaris@imperial.ac.uk

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Embracing the environment

João Vitor Serra
Globally Speaking Editor

According to the College's Energy and Environmental Services website, energy management and environmental services on campus are key issues to Estates. Imperial College Estates promises to provide up-to-date information about its energy and environmental performance and its initiatives to reduce environmental impacts and reduce energy costs and consumption.

All of this sounds perfectly reasonable and for anyone who doesn't know better the College is probably keeping to its promises. However, if you take a moment to investigate the topic you will find that the College's 'up-to-date' information is insignificant at best.

According to the Energy Management Policy website, "Imperial College is a world-class teaching and research institution providing scientific and technical excellence, innovation and solutions for the global needs of the 21st century. Best practice in energy management will become increasingly important in support of this position."

However, this spirit is rather contradictory to the website information, which doesn't include the energy policy itself. Worse still, some of the web links, for example the College's Carbon Management Programme, have expired.

Furthermore, for a College which embraces the idea of environmental protection, the College is not doing so well by not funding the Union's sustainable redevelopment initiative.

The only section of the website which is relatively up-to-date is that on recycling – which provides information on the College's five phase programme on implementing and managing recycling on the



Have you seen the College's new recycling bins on campus?

campus. Interestingly, this section of the website was updated earlier this year – around March – which coincided with the first annual Imperial College Green Week (6th – 10th March).

"Estates have developed this scheme to comply with the College's environmental policy and to meet the demands of the college staff and students," confirming

the power which students and staff have in influencing the College's actions. The second annual Green Week – which is expected to take place at the end of February 2007 – will focus on reviewing the College's energy use and demand that it take action towards cutting its carbon emissions.

For a "world-class teaching and research institute" the College lets itself down by not making use of its own technology. With the majority of our energy currently being bought from the expensive electrical grid it would seem not only economic and environmentally friendly, but also extremely advantageous from a PR perspective that we implement the technology developed by our researchers on our own campus.

Further to this, Estates should not only provide up-to-date information on its developments, which it doesn't appear to be doing very well, but it should actively disseminate such information. As a result, Green Week will aim at further increasing the communication between Estates and the people whom it serves, the College's students and staff.

For more information visit:
<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/facilitiesmanagement/energy>.
If you would like to help organise Green Week, contact João at jvs03@imperial.ac.uk.

Household heat loss



■ The average household spends approximately £400 on energy bills during the winter (October - March). This is about a third more than an energy efficient home. (Source: ETSU)

■ By turning down your thermostat by 1C, or using one hour less heating a day, you could cut your fuel bills by 10%. (Source: BRECSU)

■ If everyone boiled only the water needed to make a cup of tea rather than filling the kettle, we could save enough electricity to run practically all the street lighting in the country. (Source: DETR)

Europe's impending pension crisis

By 2050, the rising proportion of elderly people means that there will be only two adults per pensioner

Paul Estruch
Business Correspondent

Old people are getting older, with the average person living to be 76, five years longer than was in the 1960s. The reasons: people have better lifestyles, better healthcare and new medicines. Worryingly, whilst the old are multiplying, the young are not. This is amplified by the baby boomers, born after the Second World War, who are now reaching retirement age. Exacerbated by the low birth-rate of 1.47 children per woman, European populations are getting smaller. All this combined is changing the population distribution from a pyramid to a more top-heavy shape. By the year 2050, the year I am due to start receiving my state pension, there will only be 2 adults per person over the age of 65.

The retirement age in the UK is currently 65 for men, and 60 for women. However this is going to start to rise with the retirement age for women reaching 65 by the year 2020. In most EU countries, people depend on state pensions when they retire. With the state pension in the UK being under £100 a week, it makes for quite a meagre living. The government is encouraging people to put money in to their own pension schemes.

It is not just state pensions which are in trouble. Last month, David Norgrove, from the Pensions Regulator, expressed his concerns about companies underestimat-



The current retirement ages of 60 and 65, for men and women respectively, are set to rise dramatically

ing the length of time people will be withdrawing from their pension schemes. With each year life expectancy increases, there is an increase of 4% to pension scheme liabilities. This is becoming a very real and very expensive problem for companies and could spell disaster to any who underestimate it. As it is linked to the stock market, if the economy was to slow down companies may not be able to provide the pensions they said they would. Their mistakes could end up costing us in higher rates or lower pay out rates once we have retired.

The elderly want to help combat the pension crisis. Some have been

forced to retire, whilst others would enjoy a part time job for a little extra money and to keep them mentally sharp.

Some employers frown upon hiring these very experienced workers. They can be seen as having a very short shelf life and some bosses do not like the idea of having someone more experienced and possibly more qualified working below them. Many of the older generations are returning to work, though. There has been a big increase in part time work for the elderly in places such as supermarkets who utilise the older generations experience and excellent people skills.

The government has recognised this want of pensioners and as of the 1st of October, new age discrimination laws have come in to affect. It is now illegal to discriminate against someone because of their age if they are under 65 and people over 65 need to be given 6 months notice when an employer wants them to retire. This, in theory, should help to get the elderly out of retirement, not only meaning they do not need the support of the government and living a better life, but paying taxes to help support others.

The government recognises what a big problem the pension crisis could become and has set out a list

of proposals in a white paper earlier this year, based on the recommendations of Lord Turner. It has been set out that the retirement age is going to be raised gradually from the year 2024, so that by 2048 the minimum age for withdrawing a state pension is 68. The government also wants to introduce a National Pension Scheme in the year 2012. 4% of a person's salary will be paid in to the scheme, with the employer paying an additional 3% and the government 1% into it. The government is hoping that the National Pension Scheme will counteract any fall in state pensions caused by the growing size of the older generations.

There are some people out there that believe there is, and will be, no pension crisis. It is thought amongst some that the change in ratio of young to old will be offset by the increase of productivity. Further to this, immigration is increasing and will continue to increase, with the acceptance of Bulgaria and Romania in to the EU. These immigrants provide needed relief to the work force, helping to bolster the working force, supporting the elderly.

Undoubtedly we will have to continue working to an older age than our parents. If we want a reasonable standard of living, so we can enjoy our twilight years, we have to expect to either pay higher taxes or make contributions into a pension scheme almost as soon as we graduate from our courses, and make it a priority.

This week's business news

Craig Lukins
Emily Tam
Business Correspondents

■ Shares in the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China will begin trading this Friday in what is likely to be the world's largest ever IPO. The flotation of ICBC, China's biggest lender, generated huge interest last week, with orders for the 5% portion of the shares allocated to retail investors 49 times over subscribed in Shanghai. Such interest is likely to see the shares priced at the top of the proposed range of \$0.33-\$0.39.

With the IPO split between the Hong Kong and Shanghai markets, ICBC stands to raise up to \$16bn in Hong Kong and \$5.8bn on the mainland, trumping the \$18.4bn float of NTT DoCoMo in 1998. These figures assume greenshoes (the ability to issue more shares than initially planned in case of heavy demand) will be exercised. The success of the offering was due in part to investors' desire to access the booming Chinese economy, with risk reduced due to the Chinese government's backing of ICBC. The company has also done much recently to reduce a soaring non-performing loan ratio with a restructuring that has made the bank competitive.

■ Markets have remained buoyant despite mounting evidence that the US economy is heading for a "hard landing". It is increasingly likely that the Federal Reserve will keep rates at 5.25%, rather than making the economy-boosting cut that had been hoped for. Despite this, falling oil prices have seen the FTSE 100 retain ground and the Dow Jones Industrial Average break 12,000 for the first time.

■ Corus, the Anglo-Dutch steel-maker, confirmed it accepted a £5.1bn takeover bid from India's Tata Steel, in a deal that would create the world's sixth-largest steel producer. Corus and Tata Steel have agreed a cash offer, valuing Corus at 455p per share, which will be put to shareholders over the coming months. The Tata-Corus deal would be India's largest foreign takeover, reinstating Asia's current strength in the steel industry.

The deal, which includes an equity value of £4.1bn and around £1bn in debt, was not received well by Standard Life, one of Corus' largest shareholders. The investment company, who own a 7.9 per cent stake, says the deal undervalues Corus, and has not yet commented on whether or not they will accept Tata's offer. The deal maintains the trend of rapid consolidation within the steel sector, the most recently publicised being the £18.1bn takeo-

ver of Arcelor by Mittal Steel (another Indian steel maker) in June this year.

■ Toshiba, the Japanese industrial giant, is to sue Sony for damages to its brand image after the recall of about 830,000 of its laptops that contain Sony's allegedly dangerous lithium-ion batteries.

The batteries, which have reportedly overheated and burst into flame, have been installed in laptops of several different manufacturers, leading to a global recall of about 8 million Sony batteries, with US market leaders Dell and Apple recalling 6 million batteries between them. Sony last week announced a huge revision to its operating profits forecast for the full year.

The battery recall is expected to cost Sony up to £180 million, based only on the cost of replacing the faulty batteries, and not including the potentially huge compensation costs if legal action is carried out against them. Sony reported that operating profits would be 62 per cent below its previous forecast, at Y50bn rather than Y130bn, despite an unchanged revenue forecast of Y8,230bn. The situation has been exacerbated by recent problems in its games division. Sony's huge investment in its much hyped PlayStation 3 has yet to be realised as a result of launch delays and a reduction in price and initial shipments.



The Commercial Bank of China is set to be the world's largest IPO

■ David Cameron and Gordon Brown have sought to win the support of the City in their pledges for the premiership. In a meeting with leading City figures Mr Brown proposed a significant review of the tax system aimed at reducing regulation by "at least 25 per cent". Mr Cameron's Conservative Party published a review that also recognised the need for simplification of taxes and further recommended a cut in corporation tax, from 30 to 25 per

cent, and the abolition of stamp duty on share transactions. Currently at a rate of 0.5 per cent, there have been increasing calls from the financial sector to scrap this tax, an issue that Mr Brown has as yet failed to address. These proposed measures aim to keep the City an attractive place to do business. By changing the tax regime, London will hope to remain competitive with global financial centres.

Comment & Opinion

Who will influence whom?

Is it in the interests of Imperial students to pay tens of thousands of pounds to the NUS when our interests often conflict with some of those of the current members?



Oliver Pell



Ashley Brown

As postgraduates, we've been around Imperial for quite a while – 5 or 6 years in fact. We remember the last NUS debate, which was full-bodied and lively, with a sabbatical leading the Yes campaign and an ex-sabb leading the No campaign. The result was an overwhelming 72% in favour of remaining outside the NUS.

This time around things have changed. The key argument is that once we pull out of the University of London we'll no longer have a union bigger than us – University of London Union in this case – to fight our corner at a higher level. Many poor misguided souls feel we will have no voice without joining the NUS, as evidenced by the publicity stunt during freshers week (see the photo on the article). They need to take a serious look at what's going on around them.

The key question to ask, is "would we influence the NUS, or be influenced by them?" The answer is plain to see, if you look at the attitude of certain sabbaticals. The ICU website contains an announcement by Deputy President (Education & Welfare) Ben Harris of the NUS anti-fees march on Sunday.

Whilst the march is a worthwhile venture, ICU appears to be losing an independent voice already. Imperial's delegation will join the NUS London region, rather than working with non-NUS affiliated institutions such as Southampton.

The NUS introduces the campaign on its website as follows:

"Top-up fees of up to £3,000 are here. Student debt is at its highest and applications to university decreased by nearly 4% this year. This

situation is only set to get worse."

Ben Harris provides the following take on the campaign on the union website, "Top-up fees of £3000 have arrived on campus. Student debt stands at record levels and looks set to reach up to £44,000. And it's about to get worse." Much of the text appears to come directly from the NUS, with a small degree of paraphrasing. The impression is of a union whose fees policy is being driven by the NUS campaign, rather than an independent, freely discussed ICU policy.

If our policies are already influenced by the NUS, what would happen when we finally joined? ICU should be defending its own students, not students all across the country. Our lab-based courses require an increase in funding from somewhere, presumably from cheaper non-lab courses. A central national body (the NUS) will be obliged to defend funding for all courses, even though it would not be best for our current and future students.

Another question to ask is what degree of representation would we get from a group so fundamentally different from us in their views? While the NUS national conference discusses issues such as foreign affairs, Imperial tries to keep those out of union committees, preferring to focus on student issues instead. We would be one voice among thousands, no more powerful than unions such as Manchester – a union which has not spoken to its Vice Chancellor for several years, because of his stance on fees.

If we join, our own voice will get drowned out in an organisation full of career politicians and those stu-

dent activists more concerned with foreign policy than student issues. We have no voice that can be heard. What's worse, we might even end up with policies at odds with our needs, due to policies drifting downwards from the NUS. Former NUS presidents – Charles Clarke for example – actively pushed for top-up fees despite the NUS opposition.

If we do not join, we have only our own voice. We will need to shout loudly to be heard, but we cannot be suppressed by the views of other unions who's needs our different from ours. We are the 3rd-best university in the country and 9th-best in the world. We have the 4th-best medical school in the world, after Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard. We have a loud voice if we want one – look at the fuss over the dress code. That debacle resulted in the Guardian linking to our news server, along with coverage on London Tonight, BBC News Online, India Times, The Daily Mail and even The Register. Finally, there was the top-up fees debate from 2002 in which the silent protest was covered by the press.

Let's not forget that the NUS lost the last top-up fee campaign and has had very few successes in England while the Labour government has been in power. A lot of NUS officers want to become Labour MPs (and often succeed), which may have something to do with it. Our fluffy pro-NUS sabbs – ICU President John Collins and DPEW Ben Harris – are also both supporters of the Labour party, along with the leader of the 'Yes' campaign, Alex Guite. When voting, think very carefully about whose welfare these people are looking out for.

Letter from an ex-editor

Dear Andy,

Firstly, congratulations on hitting the ground running as the new 'Editor-in-Chief' of *Felix*. However, I couldn't help but feel a little upset with some of your coverage these first few weeks.

I'm not entirely sure why you feel you have had to belittle my editorship of *Felix* on so many occasions – in your (otherwise excellent) handbook, in your first editorial of the year and in last week's edition.

You may not agree with some of the things we did last year, but winning four Guardian Student Media Nominations is quite a success story. "In what may surprise some of those he antagonized in the Union and College, the previous editor, Rupert Neate, has been nominated twice", is sniping and counterproductive. To write such a disparaging news story and rather pettily choosing a weird picture of me (face painted as a Tiger) seems a little... bitter?

Telling the readers of your first editorial you had "inherited a *Felix* thoroughly disliked by both staff and students" is just untrue (sorry if it's not a direct quote, but you haven't updated the website at all despite promising to do so in your election campaign).

At the end of the day, you're not just insulting me by belittling *Felix*'s success, but all those who worked so hard to make the paper what it was last year – many of whom still work on your staff.

It's a shame you can't feel proud of the fact that *Felix* has been nominated four times. Perhaps you should stop attacking my editorship and concentrate on what really matters to readers – doing a good job with yours.

Yours,
Rupert Neate
Felix Editor 2005-2006

Dear Rupert,

Firstly, thanks for your compliments on my handbook.

I feel the opinions expressed in my editorial adequately backed up the feelings of the general population of the College. As for the editorial team, well, they seem happy with my leadership; the free pizza for those working with me late at night might have helped. That tiger photo is apparently one of your favourites; you used it for your columns in the past. Perhaps you've forgotten?

If you take a look at the website now, you'll see a placeholder. The new site will launch next term.

Good luck with your journalism course; I'm sure you'll fit right in.

Yours,
Andy Sykes

"If we join, our voice will get drowned out in an organisation full of career politicians and those student activists more concerned with foreign policy than student issues"

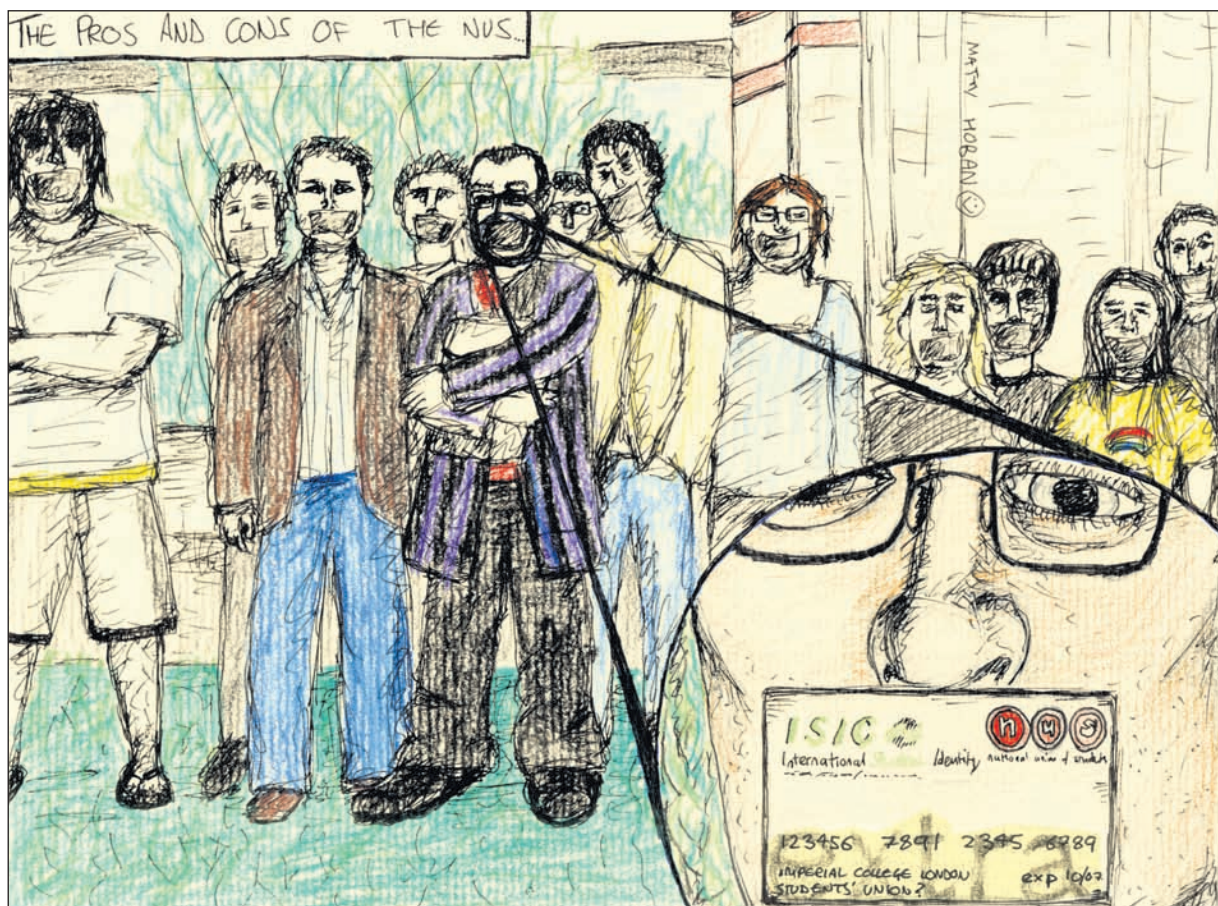


ILLUSTRATION: MATTY HOBAN

Journos of the world unite



Stephen Brown
Comment Editor

If you have been reading our esteemed publication over the past few weeks you will be aware that student journalists are being persecuted by high-minded, arrogant sabbatical officers across the country. We had the dubious pleasure of entertaining some of them last week when the Union Presidents of The Aldwych Group came all the way to South Ken to have a chat and a fairly uninspiring picnic. Our editor Andy attempted to discuss issues surrounding freedom of the press in their constituencies. Unsurprisingly the few that he approached did not seem too enthusiastic to discuss these matters with ULU President Vicki Slater becoming particularly defensive when asked about the future of London Student.

Who on earth these people think they are and why they should be protected from lowly newspaper columnists is beyond me. What is important though is that the student press remains united in the face of such brazen hostility from bruised political egos. Imperial College has a long and proud history of a free press. In addition to Felix we have our own television channel, radio station and a thriving news server, Live (live.cgu.net), run by City & Guilds College Union. As you have probably noticed the upcoming referendum on NUS affiliation has sparked a fierce debate which continue to be fought through these pages and Live contains several well-informed articles on this subject, amongst others. This is why I am very pleased that Live and Felix are now working more closely than ever before, with Felix now "syndicating" contributions to their website which will now also link to articles that have appeared on these hallowed pages. Live are in the process of setting up a webpage that will give both sides of the debate with contributions from both the "No" campaign team and the Imperial College Union Labour Supporters Network, or the "Yes" campaign, as they prefer to be known. If you are interested in the debate on the NUS and how much it will cost our clubs and societies I would recommend that you have a look.

Along similar lines, I find the following information rather curious. Both a senior Union source and a prominent member of the Yes campaign have stated that NUS activists who are invited to campaign in favour of joining will be "screened". This is because they are aware that the typical NUS activist (a highly political, loony left Polyversity arts student) will not go down too well with your average Imperial student (apathetic, studies a "proper" degree, will be able to obtain gainful employment). If we are talking about joining an organisation then surely we should have the honour of seeing a wide cross section of its activists and not just the ones least likely to piss us off? What is even more startling is that those in favour of joining are so aware the negative aspects of the NUS that they have to plan their campaign to minimise their impact. Sounds a bit shifty to me.

felix

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In reply, about the veil

Samuel Lynas responds to Omar Hashmi's comments about Jack Straw

Reading and re-reading Omar Hashmi's opinion piece of last week on the current debate stirred up by Jack Straw's comments on the wearing of the Muslim veil ("Weighing in on the veil issue", *Felix* 1360), I felt an unexpected surge of empathy in response to his question: "To what end does it serve [sic] making some look different, isolated, weak and suspicious?" Let us leave to one side the obvious objection that it is not Jack Straw's comments but the veil itself, which makes people look different, and, dare I say it, suspicious. What Mr Hashmi is in essence asking is: "What can Jack Straw hope to achieve by putting these women under the spotlight?" This is indeed a legitimate question, and one I feel I can answer.

Jack Straw has fired a salvo at what would, in military parlance, be referred to as a target of opportunity, that is to say, a target made attractive not by its intrinsic value but by its vulnerability. As unassimilated – and arguably unassimilable – Muslim populations represent an ever-greater threat to the security of many Western European states, even those as marinated in the miasma of multiculturalism as our current government have finally realised that the ramifications of leaving this problem unchecked could be horrendous.

But how best to confront it? Should we, perhaps, make a bold stand against

those who insist we consign traditional ideas of freedom of speech to the trashcan, as demanded by irate Muslim communities throughout Europe (and the world) during the Salman Rushdie and Mohammed cartoon crises? Should we introduce new legislation to explicitly ban the criminal practice of forced marriages, rather than relying on a potpourri of existing legislation relating to kidnap and the like?

Of course not. For this might bring us into contact with the bad-tempered men with the placards, their faces contorted with rage at the discovery that there exist people on this planet who have the temerity to question their beliefs and values. This clearly being an unacceptable option, Jack Straw has wisely (albeit cravenly) decided to hack off that part of the problem that looks likely to yield the greatest benefit for the least cost. Hence his comments about the veil, an ultimately harmless item of only secondary interest at best. Such are the times we live in.

I will not expect Mr Hashmi to share my opinions of the problems that Islam poses for Britain and other European countries; indeed, he has made it clear that he does not. However, in the spirit of the communication he hopes to engender, I will express my alarm that he seems puzzled by the idea that people with different 'core values' or who favour different 'systems of governing life' could be a danger to society. What, one

wonders, could conceivably constitute an internal threat to a society, any society, if not those very things? What does he believe underlies the turmoil that leaps out at us from the pages of virtually any history book? Leprechauns?

Mr Hashmi goes on to inform us that as long as conversation between seemingly opposed groups is "conservative, suitable and necessary", it should be "fine". But this slightly sinister and vaguely authoritarian wording is a manifestation of the problem, not a route to its solution. Many Muslims, it seems, cannot help but insist that interaction take place on their terms. No Mohammed jokes, no bombs in turbans, no Sataanic Verses, no unsolicited comments about the veil, no exceptions. Where do we think we are? Britain? These days, one rather wonders.

As for the tired old claim that it is always the actions of others that account for the violence of Muslims, perhaps Mr Hashmi could explain why Sunni and Shi'a Muslims are so intent on slaughtering each other in Iraq and other Muslim countries over a succession dispute that took place over 1300 years ago in the sands of Arabia. If some Muslims are prepared to kill each other for such farcical reasons, is it unreasonable to suggest that still others might be prepared to kill non-Muslims on the basis of even less legitimate grievances? Mr Hashmi might do well to consider the possibility. As might the rest of us.

NHS ambulance nightmare



Valerio Chang

Recently, a friend of mine in halls came down with a headache that his doctor diagnosed as an eye infection, saying he shouldn't worry about it. Three days later the pain increased, and the hospital told him that it was probably sinusitis. Then, on Saturday, I found him moaning in pain and incapable of doing anything due to the throbbing pain in his head. As a result, he had not eaten or slept for more than three days. The situation continued into the evening, when a friend and I decided to take him to the hospital.

I stood on Exhibition Road for more than ten minutes trying to hail a cab with no success, so, reminded how horribly torturing my friend's pain was, I decided to call an ambulance.

I've never called an ambulance before, knowing that it is a valuable resource not to be taken lightly. However, being first year students in a foreign country in excruciating pain and having no other means of traveling seemed to justify the use. I dialed; the lady on the other end asked me some standard questions

and notified me that an ambulance was on its way. I was really appreciative of the kind and supportive service, but my perspective on the NHS changed when the ambulance arrived and the whole evening just went downhill.

The two drivers walked out of the ambulance. I greeted the drivers, whose expressions immediately changed when they saw us. They started to demand who called the ambulance, and I, upon confirming, received a bashing about how the situation was inappropriate: my friend wasn't bleeding, was conscious, and was able to walk (albeit barely) – basically the situation wasn't lethal enough.

They shouted at the patients for being cheap students who took advantage of the system, instead of taking a cab. We apparently wanted to save money by calling an ambulance. My friend recalled being told on the way to the hospital that the drivers scolded him for depriving people who are having heart attacks and bleeding to death of the service and that he could be legally sued for this abuse.

I was shocked at this unexpected attack; didn't the university say that we should not be afraid to ask for help on the first day? And the medical centre who said no emergency was too small? I explained unavailability of taxis to the drivers, who disregarded it as a lie, and pushed the patient into the ambulance in the manner that police treat criminals. When my friend and I followed, the drivers pushed us away, telling us to take a taxi to the hospital to give us a lesson that ambulances are not free.

I asked which hospital, and they replied St Mary's. I was abhorred at this treatment and too shocked to demand the response that we deserved. As my friends and I climbed into a taxi ten

minutes after the ambulance left, I realised that I shouldn't have taken that and let my friend go to the hospital alone.

It turned out that my friend hadn't been taken to St Mary's. The error caused us distress and confusion for a good half an hour, as we ran around the city, trying to locate our friend. After about two hours, the nurses dispatched us, telling my friend to rest and that nothing major was wrong.

The pain continued till Monday, when my friend returned to his home country in Europe. From what his father told us that evening, my friend was diagnosed with a frontal spontaneous epidural haematoma for the medics, and for the rest of us 'a leaking vein', and clotting blood was trapped under the skull suppressing the nerves around his brain. He was in the operating theatre within three hours of his plane landing in his home city. A surgery to his skull was performed, without which he would have been dead within a week, according to his doctor. By the time he was back in university again, all was well as before, except for a scar.

The reason I am publicising the incident is that I want everybody to know about how you could be treated when you call the ambulance, and be prepared if this happens. I also want to tell the ambulance service of the unimaginable attitude of their staff. I don't think that we should have been treated the way we were, given the circumstances. Health is a priority as a student. Perhaps this article will prompt improvements in the future, make wardens in the halls be aware that this happened or alternatively I'm just making a fool of myself by calling the ambulance when I shouldn't. Whichever one it is, I will be glad if either one of us learns something.

NUS – Good, Bad, or just plain Ugly? Only you can decide...

On Friday the 13th November, a petition containing signatures of over 5% of the Full Members of this Union was submitted calling for a referendum on whether or not Imperial should affiliate to the National Union of Students. What does this mean? Well, in short, a hell of a lot of people have said that after five years, it's time you had your say. How many people is this really? Think about every undergrad in Aero, then double them, or the whole of EEE if double Aero is a bit too scary for you, then add a few and you'll be just about there.

So what? Well, I'm not going to go into any of the arguments, that's not my job, but this is a big deal. You have the biggest, 'bestest' and probably only chance (unless you end up hanging around here as long as I have) to change the way the Union is represented and seen on the national stage, or not. That's the scale of what we are talking about.

So what about the good, the bad and the ugly? Well, the Pro-camp will be more than happy to tell you about the good, the Anti-camp about the bad, and I'm here in case it all gets ugly.

It's your say that counts, you have a voice and we are listening. The biggest decision this Union can ever take is going to be made over five days in November. Teams of people are going to be trying to influence you and persuade you one way or another, they will both have good arguments, they will both be sure that they are right. Which of them are? That's your decision.

For the next three weeks, you are not going to be able to hide from the debate, those three little letters are going to become the biggest thing to hit campus since Facebook.

Live!, Felix and stoic tv will be featuring debates and discussions, the walkway will become a gauntlet of flierers to put Oxford Street's chuggers to shame, there will be public debates between the two camps.

Is this a good thing? Should you be allowed to just carry on with your lunch or your mad dash to that lecture that started five minutes ago? Why should you vote? I'm not going to answer those questions, but I will answer a different one: Who doesn't need to vote? If your life is an Utopia to make Sir Thomas Moore green with envy; if every evening you stroll back from your lectures along a coral beach into a sunset under which everyone dances together holding hands; if you truly, genuinely live an untroubled existence of perfection in which nothing can change, then you don't need to vote. Everyone

else, this vote will affect you. Like the NUS or not, want to be a part of it or would rather sever vital parts of your anatomy with a blunt piece of cutlery, this vote will affect you. Things are going to change for us all next year, you get to influence how. The good old IC apathy is well known by the older hands amongst us, we've seen it all before, some of us have even had this debate before. So what has changed? We're in a whole new ball-game now, we're leaving ULU, Imperial is becoming a University in its own right, tuition fees are changing. The old debate is no longer valid, most of us here for the last one have left. We need to see that the situation has changed and a new debate is needed on both sides. Those of you who have joined Imperial since the last referendum deserve your own say. There are people whom have joined Imperial since the last referendum yet graduated two days ago. A whole series of members have passed through, we have moved on and so must the debate.

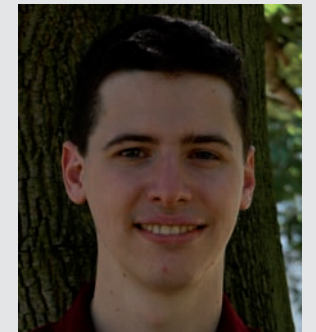
So, how can you get involved? You can contact the leaders of either camp if you want more information or have already made your mind up and want to help with the campaign. You can turn up to the public debates but most of all, you can vote.

Listen, think, vote. Please. Remember, our future is in your hands, that may sound melodramatic, but it really is...

Jon Matthews
Deputy President (Finance and Services)
Returning Officer, NUS referendum.



Jon Matthews
Deputy President
(Finance & Services)
dpfs@imperial.ac.uk



John Collins
President
president@imperial.ac.uk

Update from the President

The Imperial College and ICU Centenary

Imperial College Union was founded in 1907, the same time as Imperial College was formed by the City and Guilds College, the Royal College of Science and the Royal School of Mines coming together to form this great institution. Next year will be the College's and the Union's 100th anniversary and this is clearly a superb occasion to celebrate and publicise.

The centenary is not only a brilliant opportunity to raise the profile of both the Union and the College with our alumni; it is also a chance to raise money for student projects such as the hardship fund, the Beit Building project, and any initiatives that our clubs, societies or faculty unions may wish to publicise. ICU is working closely with the College to ensure that we make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and create a legacy that we can all be proud of.

Traditional College-wide Union events such as the Summer Ball, East Meets West and Artsfest will adopt a centenary theme this year and whilst large events will form an important part of our events programme, it is equally essential that our faculty unions and as many clubs and societies as possible organise their own centenary activities throughout the year. It is also vital that we coordinate this plethora of celebratory activities in a sensible fashion and in order to achieve this we will be distributing centenary advice packs to all of our clubs, societies and faculty union committees detailing how to run centenary branded events in the very near future.

Preparations for the Summer Ball, which is being branded as the "Centenary Ball" this year, are now underway and Jon Matthews (Deputy President for Finance & Services) is presently recruiting students who may be interested in joining our working group. If you or any of your friends may be interested in helping us with this event then please contact Jon (dpfs@imperial.ac.uk). If you are interested in any other aspect of the centenary project then please feel free to email me (president@imperial.ac.uk) or the centenary project manager and Medic President, sometimes affectionately referred to as DPMC (Deputy President for Medics & Centenary), Shiv Chopra (shiv.chopra@imperial.ac.uk).

Remember; centenaries only happen once every 100 years! This is your one and only chance to get yourself or your club or society involved in this great occasion. So, if you are even remotely interested in organising a centenary activity this year then please get in touch with us as soon as possible.

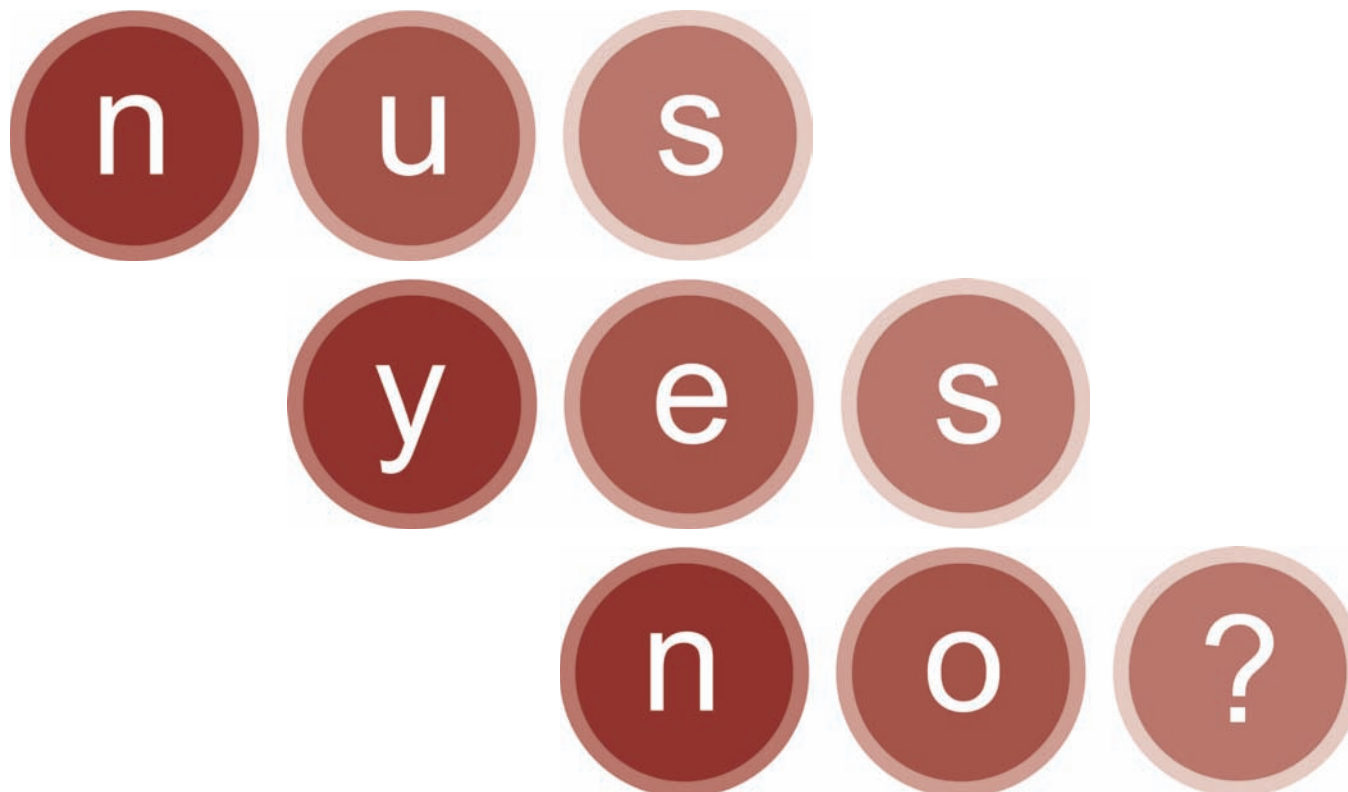
And finally - PLEASE VOTE!

Please do not forget to vote! The polls have just opened and can be accessed by logging on to our website: www.imperialcollegeunion.org/vote. Voting closes at 23:59 on Tuesday 31st and the results will be announced in Da Vinci's at 12:30 on Thursday 2nd November.

To contact the pro-campaign
email nus.yes@imperial.ac.uk

To contact the anti-campaign
email nus.not@imperial.ac.uk

To contact the Returning Officer
email elections@imperial.ac.uk



Centenary Ball 2007

Get involved with the biggest party in the College, EVER!

We need volunteers to help in our Centenary Ball team. If you think you can help then get in contact with Jon Matthews, Deputy President (Finance & Services), dpfs@imperial.ac.uk.

VOTE

Council Elections 2006

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

Vote online at imperialcollegeunion.org/vote

**Voting opens online at 00:01 Fri 27th October
and closes 23:59 Tue 31st November**

imperialcollegeunion.org/vote





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[24th November 2006]

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MUSIC

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

This week's diet of guitars

The Kooks impress live despite critical backlash and golden oldies underachieve

live review



The Kooks
Shepherds Bush Empire

It seemed almost ironic that during the closing moments of their pivotal and evidently most popular track, *Naïve*, the words 'Just don't let me down' rang out as everyone in the ecstatic crowd outstretched their hands to the ceiling. Not one person showed the slightest sign of disappointment throughout the gig.

I was given no time to adapt to the level of uncontrollable hysteria the crowd suddenly achieved as The Kooks ventured out onto the stage. Before any instruments were picked up I was already suitably crushed by squealing girls and blaring men, with beer already dripping slowly down my neck. *Seaside* was the perfect opener, it built up the indie-flavoured atmosphere with a fantastic acoustic soundscape, bringing a smile to even the most sardined person.

Eddie's Gun burst into life and the thunderous cheering by the crowd,

random projectiles and unintended violence dealt out by the various, numerous inebriated fans present would have looked like a full-scale riot from afar. This is something you would not normally associate with The Kooks, undeniably, it was all the better for it.

After only five songs I smelt strongly of beer and, interestingly, cannabis smoke – no wonder the people behind me announced that they could actually see the music.

You could certainly feel the emotion of the band, though; the music flowed down into the crowd as they towered over us all on the stage, whilst everyone present was marvellously illuminated by some spectacular lighting effects.

She Moves In Her Own Way made its appearance about halfway through, and those in the standing area were doing anything but. Their hands were swinging erratically, beer was sprayed liberally all over the place, and several people disappeared into the pulsating crowd.

The encore began after the crowd decided to impersonate a stampeding herd of wild rhinoceroses, and amazingly people quietened down to listen to some new solo work by Luke. He wowed even the most excitable, drunken fan by once again demonstrating his skills on an acoustic.

The closer, *Pull Me In*, proved to be the highlight, with both the band and the crowd's infectious enthusiasm soaring, which climaxed with Luke crowd-surfing. He was lucky not to have been sucked down into the pit of screeching girls already gripping his trousers legs.

A special mention must go to their as yet unreleased songs – scattered liberally throughout their playlist – all of which proved as popular with the crowd as their debut album material.

After the gig, as I was plodding

through the sea of plastic cups and various liquids on my way out, I couldn't help thinking about what the frontman of Razorlight, Johnny Borrell, once said about The Kooks, branding their music 'shit' and the lead singer 'boring'. The Kooks soon retorted, dedicating the single *Naïve* to Borrell.

After experiencing such a memorable performance, I can wholeheartedly say that anyone who claims they produce sub-standard music is truly *Naïve*.

Robin Andrews



The Kooks in a scene of cabbage-leaf green



Matty Hoban
Music Editor

Is anyone else extremely bored with the amount of coverage given to any old politician giving their two cents on the 'veil debate'? I have ceased to have an opinion either way and have been reduced to an apolitical mess. A worm of opinion if you will. I am going to take you on a tenuous journey related to this, so hold on.

Something I feared as a result of all this talk is giving London band The Veils publicity. I am somewhat surprised that the lead singer of this band has chirped in with what he thinks we should do with people's religious freedom. If you looking for an answer to extremism and integration – not that kind, maths fans – then don't look for it in between the mundane lyrics of said band. Quite frankly, The Veils are boring and typical of 3 million guitar bands around at the minute.

Which leads me onto the point of this rant. Guitar music has seen a bit of a renaissance lately, what with My Chemical Romance becoming chart toppers. Now, don't get me wrong, guitar music was my first love but I can't help sighing with disillusionment at every new band that gets labelled with the 'up and coming' tag. None of these attempt to be challenging or innovative.

Yes, I am a music purist. But it isn't just me who is bored by the current crop of 'indie' bands, I'm certain of it. I remember when bands used to say things with their music but now bands come along with watered down messages of watching girls dance and dancing with girls. You should give bands who aren't immediately accessible but are innovative a chance. Don't submit to the catchy riff or dumb, obvious hook. That's what the big record labels – who want nothing but your money – want you to do.

To round off my socialist diatribe, here are three guitar band reviews. Two that have been around a while and were once exciting, now are struggling to achieve. The other review is of The Kooks, a young band who make music for consumption, not appreciation. This is all my opinion by the way, please feel free to challenge it. It would make a better debate than all this nonsense about veils.

Oldies fail to nourish ears these days

single reviews

Radio 4

Packing Things Up On The Scene (EMI)

★★☆☆☆

I'm always a bit dubious when bands put the word 'scene' in their song or album titles, it usually means that they're desperately scenester whilst desperately trying to deny it (hello The Cribs). Also, everyone knows that Radio 4 are a poor man's LCD Soundsystem. Luckily for Radio 4 something about that fat white

man yelping along to his admittedly pretty funky songs makes my fists itch, so I'll humour them.

Dance-like drum rhythm. Check. Squelchy bassline. Check. Slightly yelpy nonsensical lyrics. Check. Goes on for about 8 minutes. Check. It has got nice touches, like a piano intro, some good use of guitar (a lot of this kind of music has awful guitar), and a bit of nifty chanting towards the end. You know, it probably took them a day in the studio, but they put in some sort of effort. Except with the b-sides, I hate it when the b-sides are just two remixes and a radio edit, and every

single I possess by the band follows that formula.

To be honest if you're really lazy, Radio 4 aren't the worst place to look for that indie-rock-dance crossover, but there are a hundred similar, better bands out there and they don't have a cowbell. Listen to The Rapture instead, they're better.

James Millen

Hundred Reasons

The Chance (V2)

★★☆☆☆

Hundred Reasons are pretty emo. Disagree? Well *shuddupayaface* because I once talked to them and they freely admitted to having kick-started the British strain of emo (Brit-emo? Limyemo? Fish 'n' Ch-emo?). They suggested that perhaps they were, and I misquote, 'The Grandfathers of British emo'.

Nothin' to be proud of boys, and also, up until latest offering *The Chance* also factually incorrect. The 'Reasons debut *Ideas Above our Station* was imaginative and novel for this country, a prime example of what, for want of a better name, I'd call Brit Rock. Other such advocates of this were Kinesis (the political band of the scene),

Hell is For Heroes (the pop band of the scene), Aereogramme (the heavy band on the scene), Reuben (the teenagers of the scene) and Biffy Clyro (the most imaginative of the scene). Unfortunately for the 'Reasons even though they predate these bands, and I think I'm correct in saying that all of them have supported HR at some point, they've never really had the success and/or critical acclaim that has been enjoyed by the others.

The band is technically excellent live, and many of their songs are complex, but to be honest they're boring. Now new single *The Chance* is about the dullest thing that's ever been played on my shiny new MP3 player. The band sound bored; it's quiet, it's repetitive, no real structure, simplistic drumming, and an emo-er than thou "Will you remember me now" outro.

In contrast the b-side, the yawn-somely titled *Live Fast, Die Ugly* is over-the-top rock. It's not a patch on their previous work; it's achingly obvious Hundred Reasons by numbers. Oh well guys, you had a good run, and you can probably continue half selling-out the Astoria for three years if you have good enough touring partners. Proof that fancy websites and nifty graphical design cannot save your career.

James Millen



The Hundred Reasons could do with a riff-sandwich to pick them up

Scream! *The Grudge* returns again

Alex Casey ventures to the cinema in search of a decent sequel and albino spirits but finds familiar territory

Referencing *Scream* seems clichéd nowadays when discussing horror films, but there is a sequel rule that secretly worries everyone no matter how much they enjoyed the original ie: they are generally crap.

Ten years on and Hollywood still cashes in with remakes, a low artistic merit, high profit margin culture. So can a film that ticks both boxes ever make an entertaining hit? *The Ring 2*, possibly the closest relative to *The Grudge 2*, left audiences divided. Unfortunately, *The Grudge 2* will struggle to do that.

It suffers primarily from leaving behind the claustrophobic nature of being stuck in a foreign country in a haunted house and trying (as did *The Ring* sequel) to make a more omnipresent fear. It also relies heavily on coincidence: in Tokyo there will always be a helpful English speaking stranger (even the mother of murderous ghosts from an isolated village...) so you never believe the characters are as bewildered as those of the first film.

The opening is reminiscent of the prequel so depending on your view of this, you may already be making your way back past the ticket counter, but if that's the case, why did you buy the ticket? The ghosts/demons/bluey-pale corpses with the creaky throats are back and the rest of the original permeates the sequel through flashbacks, strange time-blurring frame splicing and the necessary Sarah Michelle Gellar segment to aid continuity.

The story picks up shortly after the first one left off, although the heavy exposition throughout means you can get the gist of its predecessor without sitting through it (though I recommend that you should).

Here the story has three separate strands where we meet fairly two-dimensional characters that fail to develop throughout. One involving a schoolgirl daring to enter the original haunted house, one centred on the sister of Gellar's character finding out the truth about her sister's ordeal, and one concerning a family in Chicago (Why? Who knows...) and their encounter with the Japanese curse. The lack of plot conclusion and warped chronology leave a sour taste.

Not caring for the main character or anyone else, means Jennifer Beals still has *Flashdance* on top of her resumé and Gellar will omit it altogether, whilst Amber Tamblyn (yes, of *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*) still hasn't got a big break. But, the actors do alright with the little they have to work with. While Oscar won't be calling any time soon, they're watchable despite moments of mandatory melodrama.

But the main question: Is it scary? Well, no. Shocks are in short supply, the croaky voice grew old in the first one and the death scenes generally flatline. The horror genre is again in need of resuscitation as, at this rate, Kayako is killing more than just hapless American immigrants.



Hell hath no fury like a ghost that can hold a grudge. Takashi Shimizu returns for a fourth outing with *The Grudge 2*. No, really, a fourth time

The Departed blasts into box offices



Leonardo DiCaprio stars alongside Jack Nicholson and Matt Damon in Martin Scorsese's *Infernal Affairs* remake, *The Departed*

Hugh A D

A well-written script can transform its setting from a mere location into a fully-fledged character in its own right, doubly so in the hands of a gifted director. Few would argue that Vienna is any less important to *The Third Man* than Harry Lime.

Martin Scorsese, however, transcends mere geographical niceties; in his works, time becomes a character itself. Whilst there has been a lot made of his decision to repeatedly collaborate with Leonardo DiCaprio, his commitment to using time in each and every one of

his films suggests an inseparable bond.

Although time plays a slightly smaller role in *The Departed* than it did in Scorsese's previous feat of endurance, *The Aviator*, it is perhaps a more important one. Whilst in the earlier work it displayed the deterioration of the mind with age, the latter is more bleak - time represents death.

Though the juxtaposition is never made explicit, *The Departed* is unarguably about death - for all its themes of loyalty and deception, at the end of the day. And also, it contains the passage of a great deal

of time both on- and off-screen. Two decades pass in the first ten minutes, though Scorsese sensibly refrains from allowing the rest of the film to continue at this pace, or its narrative would end in the late twenty-third century. However, most striking is the time experienced by the audience; there can be few to leave the cinema without realising that they are considerably closer to their own death than they were on entering.

That it does so without leading to intense boredom cannot fail to be noted as a remarkable achievement.

The dreadful backache from sitting in a cinema seat for three hours only makes itself felt as the credits roll, as does the need to nip to the gents during a pivotal scene, and naturally every scene is pivotal.

Barely a second of the screen time is wasted: hammering home quite how inappropriate it was for the cinema to stick an extra-long half hour of adverts and trailers at the beginning, knowing full well what proportion of daylight hours would be taken up by it already.

In short, where Scorsese is concerned, *The Departed* really is very good.

Win *The Omen*!



Just in time for Halloween, *Felix* has three copies of *The Omen* to be given away.

The Omen (2006) is available to buy and rent on DVD on 23rd October 2006. *The Omen* 30th Anniversary Edition, digitally remastered versions of *The Omen* sequels and *The Omen Pentology* containing all 5 films are released to buy on DVD on the same date. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment.

In order to win tell me, how many versions of *The Omen* have been made in film history? And also, who was the director of *The Omen* (1976).

Email the answer to film.felix@imperial.ac.uk now!

50th London Film Festival

Felix provides the low down on everything cinematic that the BFI has on offer for you

Andrew Somerville

As the fourth week of term grinds to an end, many will be getting bored. The freshers' events are mostly over and the dull, aching rhythm of our respective courses has probably just begun to noticeably eat away at the abstract noun that we Imperial students no longer refer to as a "life". Never fear: there's something far more interesting to do.

For two weeks, London is the centre of the Cinema world. The Times BFI 50th London Film Festival will, by the time you read this, have swallowed Leicester Square, and a cavalcade of actors, directors, and beautiful people will be waltzing up and down its long, red tongues.

What's this I hear you cry? "World-renowned film festivals are for places like Venice and Cannes, not the likes of us!"

How very wrong you are. Even though most of you have never heard of it, the London Film Festival is a prestigious event on the international film calendar, and this is the 50th anniversary of its inaugural opening with Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*. Thus, with its line up of screening events and world premiers, it is guaranteed to be brain-smashingly good.

If you are still unconvinced, the festival sweetens the deal with its array of amazing guests and speakers, including Dustin Hoffman, Tim Burton, Bob Hoskins, Jude Law, Will Ferrell, Martin Sheen, Gillian

Anderson, Richard Linklater, Ben Affleck and Yo La Tengo.

In fact, the main problem with the festival is deciding what to see. Unfortunately, as with all things in this great city, it isn't cheap (from £7 to £11 for most of the screenings); so whittling down the number of films to an affordable number (from the 180+ available) is painful. If you aren't an all-knowing film buff with a couple already picked out, the best way to do this is to stick to the Galas, special screenings and screen talks.

At £15 they are more expensive than the normal screenings, but they are truly red-carpet events; attended by members of the cast and crew who give talks and Q&A sessions once the film has finished. It is a rare experience to see people standing in front of you who were on the screen mere moments ago; and to ask them, and the other creative forces, the questions that inevitably pop into your head during a film. Among most promising of these will be *Babel*, an epic drama starring Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett and Gael Garcia Bernal, created by the writer and director team responsible for *Amores Perros* and *21 Grams*; and *Stranger Than Fiction*, an intelligent comedy starring Will Ferrell, Dustin Hoffman and Maggie Gyllenhaal.

With the festival on our doorstep such gems cannot be ignored, no matter how little time you claim to actually have.



Will Ferrell in *Stranger Than Fiction* at the London Film Festival

FilmSoc's revolutionary take on the LFF



Images from *The Signs* (left four) and *Petites Révelations* (right two) at the London Film Festival

Victoria Sanderson FilmSoc President

On Monday 23rd October, a jovial group of seventeen members from FilmSoc marched our way to the annual BFI London Film Festival for our first trip of the year.

The festival is now in its 50th year and has many different strands, including World Cinema, New British Cinema, Experimenta and Treasures from the Archives, as well as

the obligatory special guests, red carpet events and discussions from directors, actors and other members of the film crews.

However, we were there to see *The Signs* and *Petites Révelations*, which were showing at the Cine Lumière as part of the French Revolutions strand of the festival. As well as the two films, there was also a Q&A session with both directors.

The Signs is directed by Eugène Green, who has been described as

"one of the best-kept secrets of current French cinema". This short film came about when he was asked to make a film inspired by a piece of contemporary art. He chose a triptych of photographs by the Basque artist Maitetxu Etchevarria, and used them as inspiration for this story about a family's vigil for the father who has been missing for 10 years, presumed lost at sea. As Eugene discussed afterwards though, the main focus of the film is really

to communicate some of his ideas about the universe, and how he believes that the universe has meaning, which we can discover if we are wise enough to recognise the signs presented to us.

Petites Révelations, directed by Marie Vermillard, consists of a series of moments in the lives of various unconnected people, some very emotionally charged, others less so. Marie explained that she had been writing down these moments in her notebook for many years, and she made this unconventional film without a narrative to allow us to focus on the moods created by these various moments. *Petites Révelations* was generally agreed to be the favourite, the concept is one of those things which can only really be communicated effectively through the medium of film, it's pretty much impossible to explain in writing!

Anyway, if this article has managed to whet your movie appetite or tickle your cinematic tastebuds, the festival is ongoing until the 2nd November. I urge you to get along and see one of the films showing.

Become a member of FilmSoc to get discounted cinema tickets on future trips as well as entrance to all our weekly screenings in college. For more information or to join FilmSoc email victoria.sanderson@imperial.ac.uk, or visit www.imperialcollegeunion.org/clubs-and-societies/a-to-z/f/filmsoc/

vue

cinemas

www.myvue.com/students

Film times for Fulham
Broadway from Friday,
October 27 to Thursday,
November 2, 2006

Paid Previews

Borat (15) (RT 1h45)
Thurs only: 11.00 13.00
15.00 17.00 19.00 21.30

Subtitled Shows

Barnyard (PG) (RT 1h50)
Sun @ 12.55
The History Boys (15) (RT 2h10) Tuesday@ 17.40

Audio Description

The History Boys (15) (RT 2h10) Daily: 15.10 17.40 20.10

New releases

Saw 3 (18) (RT 2h10)
Daily: (10.50 Fri-Sun only)
13.30 16.00 18.35 21.15
Fri/Sat Late: 23.45

A Good Year (12A) (RT 2h20)
Daily: 12.40 15.20 18.10
20.50

Step Up (PG) (RT 2h5)
Daily: 12.15 14.40 17.25 19.50
Fri/Sat Late: 22.30

General showings

Barnyard (PG) (RT 1h50)
Daily: (10.45 Fri-Sun only)
12:55

The Guardian (12A) (RT 2h40)
Daily: (17.00 Not Thur) (20.00
Not Fri/Sat/Thur) Fri/Sat Late:
23.00

Marie Antoinette (12A) (RT2h25) Daily: (12.05 Not
Sun&Thur) (14.50 Not Thur)
17.35 (20.20 Not Sun)

The Grudge 2 (15) (2h05)
Fri/Sat Late 23.15

The Last Kiss(15) (RT2h05)
Daily: 13.20 15.50 18.15 20.40
Fri/Sat Late 23.05

**Texas Chainsaw Massacre:
The Beginning (18) (RT 1h55)**
Fri/Sat Late: 23.35

The History Boys (15) (RT 2h10) Daily: 15.10 17.40
20.10

Open Season (PG) (RT 1h50)
Daily: (10.40 Fri-Sun) 12.45
14.55

The Devil Wears Prada (PG) (RT2h10)
Daily: 12.50 15.30 18.00
20.30 Fri/Sat Late: 23.25

When the puppet show grew up

Singalong: 'Everyone's a little bit racist at times (but it doesn't mean we go around committing hate crimes)'

Avenue Q

Noel Coward Theatre,
St Martin's Lane
From £10

Have you ever sat down and thought how perfectly adorable the bastard child of the Muppets and South Park would look? If you have, you're dreams have come true.

The Broadway triumph 'Avenue Q', created by Jeff Marx and Robert Lopez, is a musical for a generation that grew up with Sesame Street and don't think musicals are very cool, really.

Hilarious, rude, loud, extravagant, and constantly pitting the cynical against the sappy (read on to find out who wins); you come out with your cheeks aching from laughter and a sense of wonder at how realistic a puppet sex scene can be when they only exist from the waist upwards.

The story is set around the wide-eyed Princeton ("What Do You Do With A BA In English Literature?"), an optimistic college graduate who moves to a scruffy New York street, and the colourful friends he makes there.

These include love interest Kate Monster, a fuzzy kindergarten assistant who likes romance with eve-

rything; Rod the "not a homo-what-ever!" investment banker; and Lucy the Slut (who makes Miss Piggy look like the Virgin Mary); as well as the riotous Trekkie Monster.

There are human characters present too, who come across like amiably twisted versions of children's television presenters with their bright clothes and fixed grins, and serve to remind us how strange a format a stage peopled by a cast of grey-clothed puppeteers who sing, dance, and race around with the furry creatures of the musical on their arms really is. This presentation does take a little getting used to, but eventually proves to add a remarkably energetic and entertaining extra dimension to the performance.

The band is fairly traditional, but the songs certainly aren't, and these are the star appeal of the show. This author's personal favourites include the ironic lyrics of "For Now" ('Everyone feels a little bit empty inside,' they're puppets, geddit?), and the genius of "The Internet Is For Porn".

Avenue Q is a wicked and comical representation of the struggle of youth in the modern world, with all its temptations and vices which appear in the form of the two

cute "Bad Idea Bears" that dance around Princeton, encouraging him to spend his last pennies on beer in true student fashion.

The show deals impudently with

"Right now you are down and out, and feelin' really crappy. And when I see how sad you are, It sorta makes me happy."

—Schadenfreude

themes of morality, ambition, and the individual's search for purpose and sex; ultimately concluding in good old-fashioned sentimentality, charmingly shirking away from the tragic realities of life that it daringly grazes. Well, they're only puppets after all. What do you expect? Bloody Ibsen?



K.L. Julie Atherton as Kate Monster

Sherfield Building gets glamorous

The Imperial Collection

Great Hall, Sherfield Building
Friday November 3rd
Tickets from £17.50

Accused of perpetuating teenage anorexia with size-zero models, and with the ugly link between last spring's Boho fade and child labour in India exposed by *The Sunday Times*, it seems there are lots of devils somewhere in fashion (possibly wearing Prada) but it seems that Miranda Priestley's evilness has passed us by.

We at The Imperial Collection have decided to put on a charity fashion show of up and coming African designers with the mission of show casing African creativity and helping trade and not just aid to the impoverished continent.

If you haven't already heard there's a fashion fusion happening at The Great Hall in the Sherfield Building on the night of Friday 3rd November, 2006.

The Imperial Collection, a composite fashion show of eight designers, was a phrase used by none other than British Vogue Editor Dolly Jones in an article she wrote about a previous Imperial College Charity Fashion Show. Work on the mammoth project began over a year ago when Angelika Huwiler, President of Wye Fashion, booked the Great Hall and decided to throw a huge event in the name of ethical African fashion.

With frantic emailing and telephoning throughout the summer and a constant barrage of hurdles to make everything flawless, Angelika

says, "When brilliant minds come together for one common goal, the result is perfection"; and fresh from South Africa Fashion Week, as well as a spell at the Storm modelling agency, Angelika certainly knows her stuff.

African styling is making big strides in fashion. Most recently, elements of African and oriental styles were spotted in Donna Karan's Spring 2007 offering. The Imperial Collection will display a wide variety of lines, including amongst others Jewels by Lisa, Arrogant Cat, Ajayi by Lanre Da Silva, and Virtuoso by Yemisi Olagbaiye.

All the profits made from the event are going to World Vision, the international relief and development agency, specifically in aid of a project in Uganda. The charity was chosen for its outstanding reputation in helping over 100 million people in their struggle against poverty, hunger, and injustice.

With rehearsals in full swing, I'm still on a high from having the contact details of the most beautiful guys and girls at Imperial, and I'm telling you they are utterly gorgeous! With expert styling from The Ray Cochrane Beauty School, they can only get better. I feel very powerful!

Invitations are being sent to all the top fashionistas including Vogue, Marie Claire, and the BBC, and together with an after party at the über-happening Roof Garden Club we're hoping for the glitziest night on the Imperial calendar. See you there!

James Burnett

Trickery, guilt, absolution, and bad accents

Bones

Bush Theatre
Until November 4th

Kay Adshead's take on black people's willingness to reinvent their society after apartheid is the major theme of her play *Bones*, currently premiering at The Bush Theatre, Shepherd's Bush.

Written and directed by Adshead, women-led theatre company Mama Quillo helped in its production, offering a uniquely female perspective. Indeed, the only two characters in the play are female: a white South African woman (played by Pauline Moran) and her black maidservant (Sarah Niles). The play follows the guilt of the white woman, Jennifer, as she inwardly shoulders the blame of the atrocities carried out by her dying husband while Beauty, her maid, takes advantage of this to make a fast buck out of her employer using her alleged healing powers.

A sparsely decorated stage floor greeted members of the audi-

ence, with live drumming from Joe Legwabe, which set the African theme perfectly. The play begins with a spotlight on a young black boy (played by Sarah Niles) being interrogated. The scene changes in the beginning of the play are abrupt and at first the lack of direction left me a little hesitant as to my enjoyment of the remainder of it.

Illustrating the need for white people to be absolved of their apartheid crimes

However, Niles picked up the pace with her witty and often impertinent retorts to her employer, Jennifer, carried out with great conviction.

Jennifer, racked with guilt at what she had witnessed her husband do to the black boy of the first scene,

years before, is hoodwinked into paying Beauty a hefty sum to cast a spell to save her husband's soul - Adshead wanting to illustrate the need for the white people to be absolved of their crimes committed throughout apartheid.

Moran does well in acting the tortured soul, fraught with tension after 42 years in an unhappy marriage, yet her erratic South African accent let her down. Her neurosis as Jennifer is entertaining in the way it contrasts with Beauty's comical interludes. Though one did get a sense that there was something lacking, passion perhaps, in Moran's overall performance.

As Adshead intended, it is Jennifer who is left cheated when realising Beauty has no healing power but is merely trying to make a living in the troubles times in which she lives. Despite thoroughly enjoying the development of the plot and theatrical techniques used to evoke such tension (Legwabe's haunting singing and drum beats), by the end I felt the play had been a bit too heavy going for a Wednesday evening after a day of using one's brain. But before I could go back to my initial impression, once again the play redeemed itself by ending on an uplifting note.

Beauty experiences a rare moment of genuine healing power and is possessed by the boy Jennifer saw her husband torture, and he in turn forgives both Jennifer and her husband. The play ends with the two talking of the flowers they would replant in the garden. Although at times a little heavy, Adshead's "Bones" is not one to be missed, if only to see the utterly stunning and convincing performance by Sarah Niles, who no doubt will go far.

Caz Knight

BRINKHOFF/MÖGENBURG



Sarah Niles and Pauline Moran in *Bones*. Gordon Rainsford

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Beauty and tragedy, drama and serenity: London's most exciting photography exhibition returns for 2006



Reading some of the captions in this year's Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition in the Natural History Museum, you'd be forgiven for wondering why anyone wants to take photos of wildlife at all. Living in the constant buzz that is London, it is hard to imagine what motivates someone to sit in a hide for days on end, waiting for that perfect picture. Yet each year photographers thank-

fully do just that, and the fruits of their labour are now on show at the Natural History Museum. Make no mistake, this is the best photography exhibition in London, so if you go to one gallery this year, make it this one. (Besides, it's just down the road, so you can easily fit it in a spare hour.)

Varying from humorous to moving, clichéd to completely innova-

tive, the pictures will astonish and amaze you, and sometimes you'll wonder how on Earth they could be real.

Walking around the (deceptively time-consuming) room, you'll move across continents and through seasons and be absorbed in the extremes of landscapes, yet you'll also be touched by the subtleties of nature.

I would list my favourites, but there would be far too many; besides, you should decide for yourself.

One pleasing touch to the exhibition is a slide show of the best photographs from competitions past, the inclusion of which challenges this year's contributors to be ever more inventive.

One of the categories of the competition, called "The World in Our Hands", asks for photographs which "convey our relationship with the environment".

When looking at these photos I couldn't help but feel the hypocrisy



of the competition being sponsored by Shell, a leader in an industry that clearly has a much greater effect on the environment than can be expressed by a few photos.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition takes place at the Natural History Museum in South Kensington. Tickets cost £6 or £3.50 for students.

Clockwise from top left:

Swimming for Life
(by Willem Kolvoort)

The dilemma
(by Rick Stanley)

Terrapin hot-spot
(by Manoj Sindagi)

Rival Kings (by Andy Rouse)





Alex Baldwin
Nightlife Editor

Hello my sweet and juicy children of the night. Just a short one this week, but it's filled to the brim with tales of exploits you were too lazy to be a part of. Why would you go out though, when a quick jaunt through the internet can land you with everything you need to turn your own living room into a ravers' paradise? In minutes you could have strobe lights, smoke machines and boxes upon boxes of glow-sticks winging their way to your very own door. Now all that's left is to borrow some friendly local audiophile's soundsystem and wait for the cloak of darkness to envelope you.

Or you could just do what I do and save a week's worth of *Deal Or No Deal* for a marathon back-to-back session on a Saturday night. Or pray that the BBC take note of my requests for a late night *Neighbours* omnibus.

No frills, some spills

Papadiso and Jaded try to convince us that Summer's not over yet

Papadiso & Jaded
Egg Club
★★★★☆

Summer is not yet over at Papadiso, a monthly event showcasing a variety of styles of house music hosted in Egg Club. From 10pm to 5am the energy level was sky high in all three rooms with the crowd raving to the beats from funky-house to filthy-electro.

Unlike a typical London club, Egg is unpretentious in every single way. Situated in a medium-sized industrial-looking building near Kings Cross, the rooms have all the basic necessities essential to a good clubbing experience. There is a spacious dancefloor, quick service at the bar (the average price for a spirit with mixer is £4), comfortable sofas to chill in, energetic clubbers and most importantly, floor-thumping tunes blasted through some sick-ass speakers. The security was also very tight complete with metal detectors mainly due to a shooting at the club in August which left a person dead.

Resident DJ, Shane Watcha and his filthy crew, Clint Lee and Gepy, held things down in the basement with their filthy house sessions, while Happy Mondays DJs took control of the terrace. They were

taking the decks back to back with pure acid house to the delight of their raving fans. After the Happy Mondays' set I did not think anyone could have superseded it, but Kiss FM's Steve Smart and Frisky DJs kept the clubbers on the dancefloor ever so frisky.

If you think you are going deaf from the beats or going crazy with hallucinations, take a break outside in the garden where tents were set up with lounge sofas underneath and for £2, you can have a 15-second giggling fit from the laughing gas.

I plead guilty to missing Chocolate Groove going head-to-head with Sub-Mission in the Loft, as I came in just in time to witness them wrapping their set up. The lounge seats along the walls in the loft not only looked appealing to us very tired souls, it also proves a great place to meet people if the dancefloor is too packed for comfort or heavy house music is not your thing.

The crowd is a mixed bunch of people, mostly in their mid-twenties with the same love for music. Everyone here is friendly from the stiletto-wearing Posh Spice wannabe to cowboy-hat clad, glow-stick waving hardcore raver. Most people I talked to were Papadiso regulars and were keen to discuss all the good times they have had there. Also, judging from the amount of times I got asked if I wanted some



party-food, they like to make sure you are having the time of your life too!

All good things do *not* have to end, as we discovered when the Jaded after-party kicked off at 6am. witnessing Sunday morning hardcore clubbers thumping the dancefloor with ferocious energy is unusual in those ungodly hours. We left the place around 10am, smiling into the glaring morning sun, knowing it was a night (or day!) well spent.

Papadiso in Egg Club is *the* place to be if you are up for getting down. This are no frills, no pretenses, no holds barred, pure hardcore clubbing. Not for the faint hearted.

Syaza Md Taib

Tamil Society Hit Ruby Blue

Sinthiya Punnialingam

In classic Imperial style, freshers' week for some students involved a few tests, cheap snake-bite and 3am conversations. This all changed (well for the Asians maybe) when Imperial College International Tamil Society produced the bi-annual charity clubbing event Twist: Rewind.

Having Ruby Blue, a funky West End venue as a backdrop, excellent build-ups and drops from the DJs including our resident DJ Harribo. It is no surprise that the ravers steamed up a little. The combination of freshers testing their alcohol limits and students from various universities coming together brought the club into a dancing frenzy.

Sometimes R'n'B nights can get very commercial, but with the infusion of hip hop, soul, bhangra and gaana (which only Tamils seem to 'dance' to), the event certainly was a proud success as a lot of money was raised on the night.

So, I just want to say a big thank you to the committee members of International Tamil Society 06/07 especially to Ramyah who made journeys to various universities to promote the event and Sarah who made the night possible.

Finally, Make sure you keep an eye out for our biggest variety show, Mega Maalai that will be coming your way!

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LEARNING TO LEAD



Designer or high street?

Are people shunning heavily advertised "high-fashion" labels, asks Sarah Skeete

The first designer label, Worth, originated in Paris at the end of the 19th century. Charles Fedrick Worth was the first dressmaker who, instead of copying the popular designs of the day from illustrated journals, would impose his own taste on women. He was also the first designer to throw a fashion show, using attractive young women as "sosies", effectively inventing the model. He would dress woman popular in high society to create a buzz about his designs, much in the same way designers today give the latest it-bag to the latest it-celebrity.

But are high fashion labels like Dolce & Gabbana, Yves Saint Laurent and so relevant any more? Trends move so fast these days that high street stores have the upper hand in staying ahead of the trends. People don't want clothes that last a lifetime; they buy clothes that are fashionable for the season.

Are people even being inspired by designer catwalks? Especially in this media-saturated age, people can get their inspiration everywhere. The internet means that we don't need designers to travel across the world to find the latest look. People don't need catwalks to dictate their look. Unless, of course, you're Victoria Beckham, who copies entire outfits from the catwalk: what a style icon. The latest trends, leggings for example, have come from "the street".

Even if designer stores aren't as quick to move as the high street, are the clothes at least of a better quality? Or the designers any better? It's scandalous that Ralph Lauren can charge £50 for a plain white vest top while an identical high street version is a fraction of the price. A lot of the time high street and high fashion labels even share the same factory. It's sewing on the designer label that costs the extra £40.

It's doubtful that designer labels represent the cream of the world's creativity. If you really want a great design, high fashion labels are the last place to go. For something of higher quality than the usual high-street fare, it would be smarter to head to a boutique that stocks a range of lesser known labels. You get a sense of exclusivity from the fact that the brands are small, as opposed to the sense of exclusivity from buying something that the majority of the world can't afford. It's pretty superficial to want something that's merely priced to



Tongue-in-cheek Diesel advert, aping past advert styles; something of a West Side Story feel to it

be exclusive. That's how you end up with the nouveau rich from Russia dressed head to toe in designer gear, yet only managing to look like upper-class chavs. Money does not buy style. Witness the decline of Burberry once the distinctively-patterned baseball caps were colonised by chavs. Nobody wanted to touch Burberry because the sense of exclusivity had gone. This type of branding, where the label is worth more than the design, leads to counterfeits flooding the market. People seem to be moving further away from the ostentatiousness of heavily-branded goods, towards clothing that subtly hints at better taste.

Designer labels just don't have the same cache that they did in the past. They brand you as a fashion victim. Granted, their advertisements are more seductive than ever, but aren't consumers smart enough to separate the ads from the brand? Those Calvin Klein jeans look hot on a half-naked model, but so would a pair from Oxfam. People understand that adverts aren't representative of the brand. Even if the advertisements are quite crea-

tive, what does that say about the brand? They're created by an outside agency. Diesel's adverts have always been quite interesting. Their first adverts, featuring the slogan, "Diesel: For Successful Living," were intended to make fun of all the improbable advertising promises of the past. I think it's an interesting sell, but that doesn't mean I have any of their clothes hanging in my closet. In fact in the past few years

the most successful jeans have been boutique brands from New York & California who haven't spent a dime on advertising; brands like Paper Denim & Cloth, Seven and Rock & Republic.

We're lucky that here in Britain we have a lot of choice between high street and designer labels. It really depends on what designer labels represent to you. Luxury or lack of style?



Buy Calvin Klein jeans and people will half-nakedly grind on you



Burberry - these days it reminds us of chavs in baseball caps

COOL



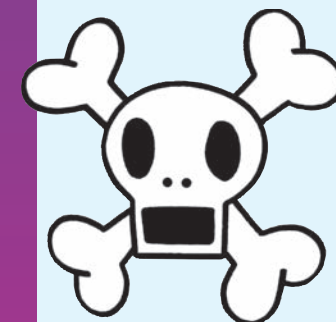
Redesigned Chanel 2.55 Bag

The beautiful revised edition on the classic 1955 quilted bag. If you don't happen to have £450 or so to spend on a bag (you filthy peasants) then buy a vintage rip-off. You can find bags inspired by the Chanel bag on Ebay, or from Absolute Vintage (15 Hanbury St., E1 6QR).



Vans

Guys look hot in Vans, but try to avoid the cliché checker pattern. Girls look great in Vans, unless you have big feet. Vans on big feet look like flippers. Effectively, you'd look like a manatee.



Skulls

Um yeah, Urban Outfitter and Topshop, tween goth is not a good look. If you go for the goth look do it in a sort of brooding romantic way. That look does not feature cartoon skulls.

Volume

You can use this as a test to see if a person is just following fashion slavishly or if they actually have some sense of style. No one looks good in this shit. Not even models. Not even naturally slender models with anorexia and exercise bulimia. Although most things don't look good on a skeleton.



Kate Moss

Not herself so much, more the continuing slavish devotion to her despite her decline in style.

LAME

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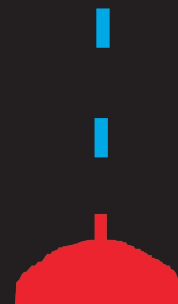
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▶ **Friday 3rd**

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ZOMBIE FOAM PARTY

FIREWORKS NIGHT PARTY

Toffee apples and bonfire in the Quad

▶ **Also on this fortnight**

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
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| Tue 31st | Da Vinci's - Quiz Night |
| Wed 1st | Sports Night - Team Karaoke |
| Thu 2nd | Roots and Shoots |
| Fri 3rd | Fireworks Night Party |
| Tue 7th | Da Vinci's - Quiz Night |
| Wed 8th | Sports Night - Bar Games & Beer |

▶ **Coming Up Next Week**

Arabian Nights

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Clubs & Societies

Up, up and away with IC Gliding Club

An unusual choice of holiday destination perhaps, but Slovakia managed to provide soaring skies for everyone involved

Andrew Cockerell

This year's Gliding Club tour happened to start on the longest day of the year. Lasham, our home airfield, had decided to try and get as many flights into the day as possible, which was handy; not only did the early morning start seem more bearable but some of us even managed to go flying before leaving! A largely uneventful journey across Belgium, Germany and Austria found the group in Nitra, Slovakia.

Nitra is about 60km west of the capital Bratislava and 8km away from the Tribec Mountains. The airfield has hosted numerous World and European gliding championships, so has very good facilities including a swimming pool and a tennis court (very useful when you weren't flying). We stayed on the airfield in chalets, which were only 20m from where the glider trailers were parked, so we could easily fall out of bed each morning and assemble our single seater Discus (no assembly required for our twin seater, 496, which was either in the hanger or trestled overnight). The airfield doesn't have any catering facilities (only a bar), but we were able to get food at Nitra's two Tesco's, one of which was actually on three separate floors! We went out most evenings and attempted to sample some of the more local cuisine, including an Italian, a Mexican and an Irish restaurant (the origins of the Irish one were questionable), two homemade barbeques, and a very good local restaurant where, if you ordered 2 days in advance, you could get a whole suckling pig. One fact that seemed to pass most of the restaurants was that when Sage said he was vegetarian, this means he eats no meat (Slovakian dishes 'without meat' may just contain less meat). We also made evening trips to Bratislava and Banska Bystrica; the latter is a historic town in the middle of the Tribec Mountains. Some of us later returned to Bratislava on a poor weather day whilst the others climbed the local ridge.

The first day was spent flying with instructors in the twin seater, to make sure everyone was safe to fly on their own. Launching was by winch, where the glider is hooked onto a mile long cable which is reeled in at 60mph to catapult you into the air. The Nitra winch was not the smooth, powerful launch we're used to at home (the average launch was to a pathetic height of 700 feet), and was initiated by swinging a very heavy metallic bat

around your head. The problem was the winch driver could barely see this bat from the other end of the airfield, so some people found themselves standing there waving for more than 5 minutes! Once under way the sticky clutch caused some jerky launches, and having broken every weak link (a replaceable part on the cable designed to break before the glider does) on the airfield we decided not to use the winch again. The rest of the launches were by aerotow, a more sedate way of getting airborne where a powered aircraft tows your glider up to altitude.

Generally the weather was superb by British standards, with fantastic soaring conditions allowing us to stay in the air for more than 5 hours at a time by riding on columns of rising hot air. This allowed those who were pre-solo to do a lot of soaring practice and upper air work with instructors, and those who could fly the single seater were able to practice their soaring and go for badge claims. There were a daring few (mainly flying with Bob) that went out to the local ridge. I say daring because, as we saw when we climbed it, if the ridge lift wasn't strong enough to keep the plane up it would be a long way to glide back to the airfield with very little height to spare!

The locals were all very friendly and helpful, and the youth contingent even allowed us to join in their drinking games; their shot glasses were the size of tumblers and the homebrew was lethal (the normal 8 hour minimum before flying was nowhere near a long enough recovery time!)

Overall, everyone there got something out of it. Pre-solo students were able to learn in a familiar glider in superb conditions and those who flew the Discus were able to hone their thermalling skills. Thank you to Bob and Sage for their hard work instructing and mentoring during the first two weeks; Sage even managed a bit of flying of his own in the last week when he had no one to instruct!

Imperial College Gliding Club meets every Friday lunchtime at 12.30-13.30 in Aeronautical Engineering room 254, and we fly on both days of every weekend as well as Wednesday afternoons. For more information about getting involved see www.union.ic.ac.uk/gliding or email our captain at shaun.murdoch@imperial.ac.uk



Imperial College Guiding Club: They're a surprisingly photogenic bunch of aviators aren't they?

Exploring the deep caves of Slovenia

Jarvist Frost

I awake at 1500m, in a hut on the slope of mountain Migovec in Slovenia, to the sight of a cup of coffee being waved in my general direction. The caving club has been exploring the deep caves of this mountain in conjunction with the local club for over a decade. The main cave system is over eleven kilometres long, and nearly a thousand metres deep. Our hope for today was to enter a more recently discovered cave – ‘Primadona’, and explore in the direction of this main system – barely a hundred metres away. Combined, these caves would be the longest cave in Slovenia that can be explored without diving equipment.

Setting off for the peak high above we are accompanied along the steep path by the roar of a river in the deep valley to our side, the stark peaks of the next mountain range jutting purposefully from the white cloud that rolled below our feet. At the cave entrance we check and stow all our gear carefully – one forgotten item would spell a premature and disappointing end to the trip.

The slope is permanent snow, a fast toboggan ride in a plastic oversuit!

The entrance is an enormous slope of permanent snow, a fast toboggan ride in a plastic oversuit! A quick crawl and a wander along a passageway, to reach the first rope. Down we shoot, zipping through the inky blackness. Kept company by the click of the karabiners onto rope, and the clunk of the boulders beneath the feet, forever chasing the headlight in front, the calls of ‘Rope Free!’ and ‘OK!’ merging into soporific mumbles over the echo. Today I am in luck – the Slovenian at the front of our advance party sings bass in a choir. Soon the chambers are resounding to his sonorous renditions – Slovenian folk songs interspersed with Leonard Cohen.

Abseiling down through a chimney between the rock, the walls suddenly disappear. Looking down far below, I can see pinpricks of light – the headlamps of the rest of the party waiting for me. I reach a reattachment point in the rope, where I need to take my abseil device off one section of rope and reattach it beyond the rock anchor. Before I joined the caving club, the very idea of doing such a manoeuvre would have filled me with dread. The drop is not just enough to guarantee a certain death, but would allow plenty of time for contemplation before hitting the rock. However, I now know that I am safe in my harness and am perfectly at ease, my actions totally automatic as I attach multiple safety cords, transfer my weight over and tested my descending device before taking out the last safety.

Free once more, with absolutely no effort I gently drift down. Ab-

seiling down into this bell-jar I am left dangling in free space; the thin white line of the rope disappearing beyond my light’s illumination above. The knit of the rope sheath started me gently spinning – I don’t even have to turn my head to watch the chamber go by, to see the waterfall across the way develop from a drippy purr into an almighty roar.

An energetic scramble up a slope of boulders got me to my companions, sitting on insulating coils of rope in a side chamber away from the damp and the draft of the falling water. Cravings for chocolate and nicotine were indulged by the various cavers, ice-cold drinking water collected from a nearby rock pool. How deep were we now? Still very shallow – not much more than two hundred metres. So – only deeper than Canary Wharf is high!

We then undulate along, scrambling over enormous house-sized chunks of limestone, ducking through rock archways and stomping along tube-tunnel-sized passageways. At the limit of exploration, we unpack and prepare to climb. Hours of work are spent gaining a precious ten metres of height through the roof of the corridor. Finally up, we had entered the unknown.

A little chamber with a clamber up into a crawlspace. No one has ever seen this passage, and we have no idea where it goes. This bit of cave was very old indeed, having formed when this part of the mountain was below the water table, before the kilometre-deep valleys formed on either side. As the last of the water drained out, it left behind amazing formations in the rock and the mud, some of which inevitably were illuminated, admired and then crushed underfoot.

Some rather acrobatic manoeuvres later, and the passage starts getting much bigger. Drawn on by the sound of a waterfall, we clamber down increasingly large climbs onto an enormous rock shelf. The main drop was too far for the short rope that we have, though looking carefully over the edge, one can see a little underground river running past far below. Placing rock-anchors on the very end of the ledge and bouncing sideways as we abseil down, one could reach a false floor just within the length of our rope.

Safely down, we walk around the corner to be confronted with a clear sign that someone had been here before – a neat cairn of rocks placed on a boulder in the middle of the passageway, marking the location of a survey station. But in which cave are we now? We had certainly travelled a sufficient distance to reach the main system, but the path had so many twists that we have no way of telling our overall direction. Exciting stuff indeed!

We split up and scramble around, looking for another station – hopefully one with a little note on waterproof paper stating which part of the survey it was, and therefore which cave. This part of the cave was an absolute rabbit warren, with extinct waterfalls and passageways criss-crossing and spiralling around each other. Like some Escher drawing, you can step across a chasm and look down to see an-

other team member crawling along sideways below you, while another caver traversed along high above.

Time was passing, and it was many hours of effort to reach the surface. Half the team started surveying the way back, slowly taking point-to-point compass, clinometer and distance measurements for feeding into a computer once back in the nearby town. The rest of us continue to explore. Climbing down with the other English ICCC caver, we found a route which doubles back under the way that we have come, shuffling along an increasingly wide gorge. Looking down is terrifying indeed – the roaring river being very far below, but the climbing was easy, along wide mantel-pieces of limestone. Back in a corridor-like passage we explore with dawning realisation – to be suddenly confronted with the sight of our original rope disappearing into the ceiling! This bit of cave simply reconnects to itself in a loop.

So we had failed to make the big breakthrough, on that trip at least. But no one has ever been down to that underground river – all it requires is more rope and more time. We finish the survey, tidy up the ropes and start back towards the surface, saying goodbye to the dangling bats as we go. Climbing vertically into the heavens, I am having the workout of my life – and in the most awesome surroundings rather than a stuffy London gym. Finally at the entrance, we scramble up the snow slope towards the stars beyond – eleven hours underground.

Back at the hut, a flood of warmth and pine smoke flows from the door into the icy night. You can always squeeze another caver around a table; bowls of hot soup and hunks of bread magically appear, followed by cake and a wee dram here and there. Sitting around me are the faces that go along with the notes

No one has ever seen this passage. We have no idea where it goes

of light in the dark, people who I had barely met when going underground now seem like old friends, united by the joy of cooperative exploration and the shared experience underground.

The chatter runs late into the night – where next to explore? And what was the cave going to do next? Where did that underground river run to? And where from? The winter snows will soon set in, it will be during the ICCC expedition next summer that we will be back at the pushing front. Simply join the club, let us teach you the necessary skills by practicing in caves across the most picturesque regions of the country and you can walk alongside us into the unknown.

For more information about ICCC visit www.union.ic.ac.uk/rcc/caving or email ic.caving@gmail.com



Imperial College Caving Club braving massive holes in Slovenia

Sport

Schumacher: is this the end of a racing legend?

A victory lap to look back on the Formula 1 world champion driver Michael Schumacher's 15 year long run of domination as he heads into retirement



Michael Schumacher in Red, post-Benetton. This jolly grin masks the fact that you will never be able to drive as fast or as well as him. But since he is retiring now, maybe you've got a chance and should give it a go if you can manage to pick up a few sponsors. Otherwise, put this picture on your wall and tell yourself there will never be anyone as good as Schumacher ever again, and try not to get misty-eyed

Formula 1 has always been a fast moving sport; drivers and champions come and go. Races are won and in terms of track records, whoever is vigilante enough to be standing on a podium is anyone's guess. That is of course with one exception that has dominated for the past 15 years. In 1991 a young German called Michael Schumacher came into the sport. His infamous desire to win at all costs and genius in driving a Formula 1 car would make him a legend even before he'd finished his career; a career which started when a poor worker knocked together a small go kart for his 3 year old son in a remote part of West Germany.

During the 1991 season, Eddie Jordan's young outfit was running a French driver called Bertrand Gachot, who was jailed for spraying CS gas at a London taxi driver. Jordan were in trouble, they needed a driver to replace Gachot at the hallowed Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium, a track, alongside the Nurburgring-Nordeschleife, considered as one of the most fearful places on earth to race a car. Backed by his success from the junior racing series leading up to F1 and bankrolled by Mercedes-Benz, Schumacher managed to convince Jordan that he had raced the track many times, in fact he'd only ever been around the circuit once, on a bicycle. It didn't matter. In the qualifying for his first race he mastered the much feared Eau Rouge

corner, and parked the Jordan 7th on the starting grid, outperforming his much more experienced team mate and shaking up the F1 establishment. In the subsequent race he failed to finish after the clutch blew itself to pieces on the run up to the first corner, in the meantime Formula 1 had already sat up and taken notice. By the Italian GP two weeks later, he'd been snapped up by Benetton, thus began the epic rise of Michael Schumacher.

Within a year he'd wrapped up his first win, at the very circuit he'd begun his career, and went on to win three more in 1993 in an inferior car to the likes of Ayrton Senna, Alain Prost and Nigel Mansell. His early career had already marked him out as the obvious successor to the great Ayrton Senna, and Formula 1 was set for a thrilling battle between two of the most gifted drivers in its history. Then came the San Marino GP at Imola, in 1994, a weekend which many in the sport call the darkest weekend in the history of Formula 1. In qualifying for the race, Roland Ratzenberger's car hit the wall, instantly killing him. In the race, Schumacher the young pretender was chasing the leading Ayrton Senna. Into the fast sweeping Tamburello corner, Senna's car bottomed out, hit the wall and he was killed when a suspension wishbone hit him on the head. Schumacher went on to win the championship that year, after a clash with Damon Hill at the last race of the season. His performance at the Spanish GP went down as one of his best: coming home second despite being limited to 5th gear for the majority of the race.

Benetton's momentum grew and Schumacher's ability to rally the team behind him saw the teams acquisition of the 1995 championship double. As all of this was happening, a middle of the grid ran team called Ferrari was watching on. Ferrari, although a legendary name in motor racing, had been struggling on track for almost 20 years. After the death of old man Commendatore Enzo Ferrari in 1989, the team and company as a whole went into a freefall dive. Rumour has it that Ferrari approached Schumacher's manager, Willi Weber, to sign him for them. He laughed, and jokingly said "give us a blank cheque and he will sign for you". Ferrari was not bluffing and did just that. In 1996, Schumacher came onto the track in red overalls. His transfer would help revive the most historic team in motor racing to be-

Schumacher records

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- Most Drivers' World Championships:** 7
- Most Race Wins:** 91
- Most Podiums:** 154
- Most Pole Positions:** 68
- Most Fastest Laps:** 76
- Most Championships Won Consecutively:** 5
- Most Career Championship Points:** 1396
- Most Races Won in a Season:** 13
- Most Championship Doubles (drivers and constructors):** 7
- Most races won at 1 track:** 8 (Magny-Cours, France)
- Most Laps completed in Lead:** 4741



Top, Schumacher gleeful over a glorious win that probably earned him a few quid. Center, Formula 1 stockcar with really expensive tires and choice endorsements. Bottom, "Cheerio and toodle pips!?"

come world champions once again. Schumacher quickly got to work by putting together a team of highly skilled and motivated engineers and mechanics.

Despite driving a vastly inferior, dog of a car, Schumacher took Ferrari to 3 wins that season. Most notable was his first emotional victory for Ferrari at the Spanish GP in Barcelona. There he obliterated the field on a wet track to win by an astounding 45 seconds, despite having dropped to 6th place at the start of the race. Forty-five seconds in a sport where timed measurements are calculated to infinitely small denominations of a thousandth of a second is practically a lifetime in a F1 race.

The next year, in 1997, Schumacher had a season to forget. After being found guilty of attempting to drive Jacques Villeneuve off the track in a bid to win the world championship, he was stripped of all his championship points for that season. This is considered by many as a turning point in the sport's perception of Schumacher. He still had his defenders, but now he had garnered a whole new set of critics prepped with stoked branders.

McLaren-Mercedes rose to dominance in the late 1990s and took both the double in 1998 and the driver's championship in 1999, with Mika Hakkinen at the wheel. Despite breaking his legs at Silverstone and missing 7 races in all, Schumacher finished the year 3rd in the championship.

The new millennium brought with it a new era of complete and utter dominance by Michael Schumacher and Ferrari. Together, they snapped up both the drivers and constructors championships for 5 years on the trot – the most dominant era by any single driver and any single team ever seen in the history of the sport. Prior record holder Juan Manuel Fangio had won 5 career world championships in the duration of his career, whereas Schumacher not only blasted through that 50 year standing record in 2002, but set a new one by winning just as many championship consecutively in only one team. That same year, he faced controversy for the most public display of team orders ever seen in F1. At the Austrian GP his teammate Rubens Barrichello was in the lead and about to win the race when he was radioed to slow down in the last corner and let Schumacher take the win. The outcry in the sport was massive, however Ferrari got away with a \$1m fine. His dominance was so oppressive that in 2002 and 2004 the sport was labelled boring and news companies stopped sending journalists to the races to cover events where in all probability Schumacher would win.

He relinquished his crown to young pretender Fernando Alonso in 2005 and despite a hard fought 2006 championship campaign, was unable to regain his title. A blown engine at the penultimate race effectively sealed the championship for Alonso and Renault.

Schumacher is labelled by many as a "cheat", but I like to believe he is a genius, albeit inherently flawed. Critics emphasize how he tried to drive his competitors off the track. With this dire hunger he even rammed his brother, Ralf, into the wall at 190mph. But these critics take too much ease in overlooking the unsporting actions of other greats such as Ayrton Senna who drove Alain Prost off the track in 1990 to win the world championship. Others fault him for being handed

number one status in Ferrari, and that all his teammates were bound by contracts to do one thing: Help Schumacher win. The fact of the matter is Ferrari is Schumacher's team. Had it not been for him, they would probably have continued their performance spiral to the back of the grid, and perhaps completely out of the sport all together. As a rule of thumb, the best driver gets the number one treatment in a team, all down the pitlane. The same can be said of pilots. Same difference.

Looking back at Formula One history, it is easy to see examples of people who have pushed the limits of the rules to the maximum to win, Schumacher is no different. His finely tuned dogmatic drive to do only one thing has labeled him as aggressive. His only objective is to race a car to victory and he will do anything it takes, even if he oversteps the limits of sportsmanship.

As Formula One moves into a new era without Michael Schumacher, many have asked the question, "who will replace Michael Schumacher?" Although the sport is seeing a huge wave of talent filtering through as in Fernando Alonso, Kimi Raikkonen and Felipe Massa, the answer to that question can only be "there will never be a replacement for Michael Schumacher". There is little doubt that any one of these drivers can break one or two of Schumacher's records, however, it is currently inconceivable that any of them will go on to beat a man who has rewritten the record books. No other driver besides Schumacher can polarise this sport in such a fashion, or cement a team so cohesively together beneath them, or drive the boots off their car so well even when the odds are heavily stacked against them. In the end, Senna was the fastest ever race driver, over a lap his ability was simply mind bending, but as the complete package, there is no parallel to Schumacher. He has raised the benchmark in Formula 1, and has shown that it is no longer enough to be just the fastest race driver, one must have the complete package; speed, teamwork, resilience, technical aptitude and courage. Despite his cold calculating "winning machine" image in the sport, he is known for being a charitable person, giving \$10m to the Asian Tsunami Fund, the largest single contribution made. He works as an ambassador for many charities and promotes the road safety message of the FIA.

There are many that say his last ever Grand Prix and indeed his last ever championship didn't amount to much. Regardless, he left the sport in the most fitting way that only Michael Schumacher could. With a championship deficit of 25 points in Canada, many had ruled him out, yet at Monza where he announced his retirement, he was back level on points with Fernando Alonso. In the season closing race, having had his left rear tyre punctured, an unscheduled pit stop sent him to 20th position. He cut a 70 second time deficit to under 30 seconds and carved up the field to 4th place. Chasing Jenson Button for a podium place into the final lap of his career at Sao Paulo, he was over 5 seconds behind, yet he simply refused to lift his right foot off the throttle pedal, setting the fastest lap of the race. For 15 years, there hasn't been a single race where a Michael Schumacher win has been discounted, he has been an omnipresent force. In the end, he went out as a true champion and, more importantly, as a true racer.



The RSM Hockey mixed team, and their alcoholic beverage of choice, kangaroo urine.. I mean, Fosters. Still, they look happy enough

RSM Hockey: Pissed as ever

Mikey P

RSM's first game of the season began in the usual style, with most people struggling to see after Saturday night house parties across West London. With the sweet taste of Jack Daniel's and Fosters vomit still on my breath (sorry Holly; at least it all went down the toilet) the Mixed XI took to the pitch full of confidence for a victory over a bunch of IC players who looked as hanging as we felt.

I'd love to give you a full match report of our first half dominance and silky inter-linked plays, but to be honest I can't remember a fucking thing from the whole weekend. Tom scored an absolute beauty, taking the ball from the half-way line and threading through a bemused defence before hammering it past the flailing IC keeper. Ade's debut performance in goal kept us in the game in the first half, although a special (speshul) mention should go to Andreas (the IC striker) who managed to miss more easy opportunities than I've had Cornish pasties. Unfortunately, somewhere along the way IC scored a couple of goals, apparently, and we lost 2-1.

Post-match fineage/celebrations were postponed until after training on Monday. Alice claimed Man of the Match for her stunning natural talent (hockey talent) and was rewarded with Guinness, Bells, Baileys and tabasco. Charlotte got the prestigious Thanks for Coming award, for doing practically nothing all day, although in her defence she did buy us some booze for half-time drinks. To her sheer delight she was presented with Old Hooky, red wine, Bells, Blue Aftershook, and more Lea & Perrins Worcestershire sauce than I've ever seen go into one drink before.

Special thanks to Sarah and the IC team for the game; we should do that again some time. If anyone happened to walk past the Union on Tuesday morning, and was wondering what the 3-square-metre patch of unidentified purple substance was, I'm sure Charlotte would be happy to explain (ca305@imperial.ac.uk).

Hockey girls win, get drunk, get lost

ULU League
IC 6-3 RVC

Having finished 2nd in ULU & as cup semi-finalists last year, we woke up on Sunday morning with one thing in our mind: how the f*** did I get home last night?

With nearly all the tube lines closed to King's Cross and using Jools' sense of direction, it took us nearly three hours to get to Brookman's Park. Getting to RVC grounds meant taking a long journey through a deserted forest, walking past the remainders of cars and animals, climbing hills and falling into a couple of holes and nearly getting a pre-season injury. Being used to playing with the maximum of 7 players in most of the matches last year, having 3 subs meant Christmas, 2 months early.

The first few strikes by IC in the first half, led to an early goal by spaniard Dehydys-"DD"(our very own Joaquin). Getting too carried away resulted in a shot by RVC's number 12 (aka "the wall") which amazingly missed all the defenders. IC's second goal came from Harriet's corner, finding Lizzie G outside the box.

LG's amazing Totti-styled shot arched over and beautifully landed in RVC's goal, leaving everyone impressed, especially the ref, who couldn't get over it.

Soon afterwards, RVC was rewarded a free kick from an Oscar-winning dive (even better than IC men's 7s' Jack Yip's) which went past the all CivEnged defence and slipped in.

IC managed to take control of the game afterwards. Creating con-

stant attacks starting with Harriet & Yoke's awesome moves & ending in DD, LG, Pav & Poppy's shots. The third goal was a classic. Winning a corner in the last second of the first half was an excellent opportunity for all 22 players to take part in it. Harriet's corner landed somewhere in the crowded penalty spot.

With IC having more than 10 shots and each time, hitting RVC players instead of scoring, it was hard to understand what the actual aim was. DD (known as the girl with headband to the opponents' coach), finally managed to miss RVC players and the half time finished with IC leading 3-2.

Having both Lizzies (LG & LB) in the pitch in the second half, caused a disastrous confusion on instruction towards them as G and B were mixed up. Again we took control early in the half.

Kate & Emma's move & Pav's ball, which slipped though for Poppy, brought the 4th goal. Linesman's obsession with offside cost us lots of good chances. Harriet scored the 5th, in a rather un-balanced position, completing her awesome game that day.

When RVC scored their 3rd, Pav (the captain) started worrying. That was when Mona (MLisa) & Poppy, wisely, started bombarding IC players with cries of motivation in Spanish & Portuguese. The impact was instant on DD, as she went to score a fantastic goal, taking advantage of goalie's hasty clearance.

Winning a penalty was the highlight of the match. Although Pop's shot was denied by the goalkeeper, it brought the team closer together (thanks for the memories Popp).



Cheery hockey types, seen here consuming only water

The game finished with a horrible tackle on LG & her being carried to the changing rooms, where we could still hear the ref, saying, "Did you see that second goal?"

Being awarded the "double" dame of the match, DD & Harriet will be

enjoying downing pints on Wednesday night along with their fellow team mates, while trying to figure out the difference between Kate & Katie and Imperial & Imeprial (especially on flyers).

Mona Haghani

Have you
got sports
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Send them
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Student wins championship

Daniel Carrivick

The 2006 Quest adventure race series had been one of mixed emotions. The first race of the season took place in April in the New Forest where the fast flat tracks suited me. I was pleased to score more points than anyone else (820 points); however, this was overshadowed by the fact I had picked up a time penalty, which dropped me back to second place despite sharing an equal number of points with the eventual race winner. Unperturbed, I focussed on the next race, held at the end of May in the Brecon Beacons. I was confident I'd be able to make amends; however, I stupidly spent too much time and effort biking. This was a big mistake as the heavy rains meant it was quicker to run rather than bike along many of the tracks. Consequently, my score suffered, and I was only able to collect a disappointing 630 points. This was a real low point to my season. I had raced to the limit of my physical capacity, and yet I finished some way off the pace. In the future I vowed to take more time to think about decisions. With the bad result behind me, the pressure was off for the third race of the series staged on the Isle of Purbeck in July. I got off to a flying start and managed to clear the kayaking stage with less than a minute to spare. Next came the biking, where I visited all but one of the checkpoints which set me up nicely for the running. I was sure my final score of 805pts was good enough for top spot. However, as the results were read out I couldn't hide my disappointment at only getting third place. The chap who had piped me in the first race of the season had done it again. He came second with an equal number of points but he pushed me into third as he collected them in a faster time.

So with just one race left in the season, on September 16, I was still looking for my first elite race win. I was placed third in the series overall, but with only three out of the

four races counting towards the championship I still had an outside chance of stealing the top spot. To do this I'd have to perform better than I ever had before.

Race day began rather sleepily at 5am with a drive to the Wiltshire Downs. There I raced against 300 other competitors, running, biking and kayaking to collect as many points as possible in the six hour time limit. Almost immediately after setting off I'd made a couple of bad decisions but it wasn't until I fell off my bike into a patch of stinging nettles that it hit home. Undeterred, I battled on, having to miss out some checkpoints. I started the kayaking late so there was no way I would be able to visit all the controls, thus I took it easy, conserving energy for the run. By the time I clambered out of my canoe my legs had seized. They loosened up once I got moving but the first few minutes were hard work. I had to visit all the running checkpoints to have any chance of winning the series. It was a big gamble, but I paced myself and it paid off. Having cleared the run, I was back on my bike to pick up a few more points on the way to the finish. As I knew all too well, if points are shared, then positions were decided on time, so I kept pushing hard right to the line.

Later, the results were announced. I'd scored 810 points - enough to win the race and with it the series. It was close. After 24 hours of racing, just five points separated me from my nearest rival but it didn't matter. I was the 2006 Quest adventure race series champion!

Members of the Outdoor Club regularly attend adventure races and mountain marathons which are geared to suit all abilities, so whether you want to compete at the highest level or just have a bit of fun, make sure you get in touch.

www.union.ic.ac.uk/rcc/outdoor/
E-mail outdoor@imperial.ac.uk
For full scores and race reports see www.questars.co.uk



Daniel Carrivick, the 2006 Quest adventure race series champion

1st XV rugby vs Middlesex

Robert Phillipp

Middlesex found themselves in league 1A after BUSA's restructuring, and were prepared for the higher standard of rugby.

The match started with an enthusiastic Middlesex using their large forwards trying to break the IC defence, which was strong until midway through the first half when Middlesex tried a rare wide attack. Taken by surprise, IC backs were sucked into leaving a gap for their centre to sneak through and score.

Imperial were straight back at Middlesex with the forwards punching up the right touch line with some great off-loads. The ball was then spread left with quick hands from the IC backs where it found Flanagan, who crossed the try line... and then the dead ball line, after briefly losing his concentration thinking he saw a mirror nearby!

Imperial continued to dominate with new fresher fly-half, Joe Brown, sniping through a gap for a fresher's try. 5-7 down at half time, Imperial were unlucky to be losing.

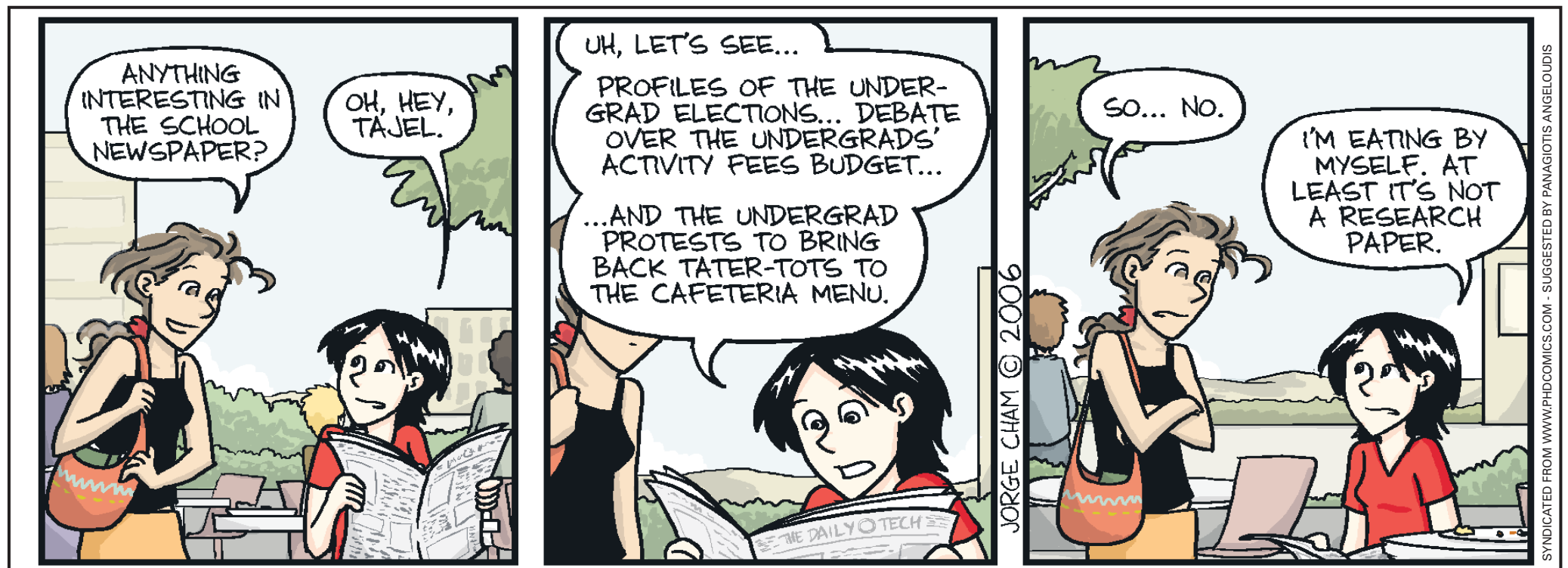
Imperial, determined not to lose their opening match, came out all guns blazing. Words and fists were exchanged, but thankfully Jov came out better looking than before.

Middlesex, not up to IC fitness, let their defence slip and fresher Alex Johnson scored in the corner at the end of a good series of off-loads. Imperial seemed in control with good ball retention, which was confirmed with an old IC rugby face, Alex O'Rourke, stormed over, dragging a number of Middlesex players with him.

Just to confirm the IC dominance, Joe Brown broke the Middlesex defence in the last move of the game.

Imperial, not at their best, but with a good win (final score: 26-7) and lots of potential from new arrivals to the 1st team, Ben, Mike, Joe, Alex and Dan, and strong performances from the old guard, Andy (man of the match), Hixxy, & Nath.

PhD Comics



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