



felix

The student newspaper
of Imperial College

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House fire injures ten IC students

Defective fire safety equipment puts students at risk

Andy Sykes
Editor-in-chief

A fire in student accommodation near South Kensington campus led to ten students being taken to hospital with smoke inhalation injuries and gutting part of the inside of the building.

The Fire Brigade were called to Chamberlain House, Cromwell Road on Monday afternoon after residents in the block discovered the fire. The residents, reportedly mostly students from the College, were led to safety by fire crews and ten were taken to hospital. One student had to be rescued from the third floor of the building by ladder after the smoke became too thick for them to exit via the ground floor.

The likely cause of the fire, according to the Fire Brigade, was a tumble dryer in the basement of the building. The smoke from the initial blaze filled the upper floors of the building, causing the inhalation injuries. The basement of the building has been severely damaged, and the thick smoke has damaged the rest of the block to varying degrees.

Fire crews investigating the scene discovered that the fire alert system had been tampered with, possibly maliciously, as all the break-glass from the alert boxes was missing. It is not clear who is responsible for this. The building had numerous other problems with

regards to fire safety, including fire doors being wedged open, defective emergency escape lighting, a lack of fire action notices, and defective fire-fighting equipment. The landings of the building were also blocked by stored furniture, making escape difficult. The block itself is classified as a "House in Multiple Occupation" (HIMO), making many of these provisions required by property law, including escape routes and fire-fighting equipment. Ben Harris, Deputy President (Education & Welfare), is understood to be in contact with the landlords of the property.

The property is not on College's list of private sector accommodation. However, the block is popular with IC students due to its proximity to the campus; the building

has 12 separate flats, with 5 or 6 students in each flat. The Fire Brigade has indicated that should the incident have occurred at night, the situation could have been much more serious.

Readers are reminded that checking the fire safety equipment in rented property is of vital importance - for example, check that extinguishers have regular maintenance markings, and that any smoke alarms are tested regularly. Any faults should be immediately reported to the landlord or letting agent. The College's Private Housing Office can provide advice to students who have concerns about the state of their property, and can be contacted at private.housing@imperial.ac.uk, or at www.imperial.ac.uk/residences/privatehousing.



Cromwell Road - a popular area for IC students

Miss Imperial at Queen of London Universities 2006



Students from across the London competed to become "Queen of London Universities 2006" at an awards ceremony held in the city last night, including Miss Imperial, pictured above.

ULU leagues secure

ICU teams keep the right to compete in ULU's sports leagues

Stephen Brown

At ULU Council on Monday night, John Collins, Union President, single-handedly spoke for a motion to allow Imperial's sports teams to continue competing in the University of London Cups despite fierce opposition from the Kings College and UCL delegations. ICU had a previous agreement with ULU to allow teams to continue competing in the league competitions, but this did not cover the knockout cups. The motion was passed by a wafer-thin majority of just one vote.

Kings argued that ULU leagues are open to non-affiliated institutions, such as the University of the Arts (UoA), whereas cups are not and that once Imperial left UL they would no longer be eligible to compete. In our favour, Mr Collins argued that ICU has been a member of ULU for over 40 years and it

was inappropriate to compare us to UoA; he added that it would set a bad precedent that could lead to the destruction of the competitions concerned if more colleges chose to leave UL. He also pointed out the financial benefits for ULU of allowing ICU sports teams to compete, as the Union will be paying an entry fee. Senior Union figures believe that it is worth paying for the privilege of allowing sports teams to continue to compete in leagues and cups as ULU. ULU leagues have proved extremely popular and have generally been well run by ULU management. ICU has no plans to continue to purchase any more of the services that ULU would offer.

The motion would have fallen if it wasn't for the late appearance of Deputy President (Education & Welfare) Ben "Fluffy" Harris, whose vote secured the majority. Mr Collins's motion was also staunchly sup-

ported by the large LSE delegation and without their support the motion would not have passed. Some ULU sabbaticals who were initially opposed to allowing us to continue entering the cups were eventually won round by Mr Collins' arguments and voted for the motion. No doubt they found the financial argument from ICU particularly appealing given the parlous state of ULU finances.

This motion should have been far less arduous if our whole delegation had turned up. The Union's ULU delegates, Lin Mei and Furquan Kidwai, have received a formal warning from the President for failing to give notice of their non-attendance, which almost resulted in Imperial teams being denied the opportunity to compete in cups. This would no doubt have been met with anger by sports clubs who enjoy competing in the knockout tournaments.



A cup, not of the ULU variety, but a cup nonetheless. Oh yes, it's definitely a cup of some kind. Hmm

Aston rejects NUS in new referendum



Aston University - now with an independent students' union

The NUS lost a member institution last night, as Aston University Students' Guild announced the results of its referendum on disaffiliation. 550 (53%) voted to disaffiliate, with a turnout of just over 1,032 (about 15%). Aston is consistently rated in the top 20 universities for teaching, but is outside the top research-focused institutions. It is a small university, with around 7,000 students.

The Executive Committee (EC) of Aston Guild believed that they were not getting value for money from the NUS and that their students' best interests would be served by choosing to disaffiliate. EC member Jarrad Glover told *Felix*: "We believed that the NUS just didn't represent value for money for Aston Guild. The NUS has achieved little of late, and we didn't think that what they were giving us was worth the tens of thousands of pounds we paid them annually."

In addition to the substantial affiliation fee, the overwhelming strength of feeling against the politics of the NUS was also a key factor for students who voted to leave. It was also evident that the introduction of the NUS Extra discount card at Aston stirred up a lot of antipathy towards the NUS as several students objected to paying £10 for a card that was previously free, on the grounds that it amounted to the marketisation of student discounts by one organisation.

The referendum at Aston did not pass without incident. A petition was submitted to Aston Guild before the results were announced

questioning whether the NUS tactic of sending dozens of their campaigners on campus each day made the referendum result invalid.

Union elections have rules regarding media access and spending to ensure that no candidate has an unfair advantage. Mr Glover commented: "There were only two Aston students who were prepared to commit time to campaign to stay in the NUS. We told the NUS to stay away as it should have been a matter for Aston students to decide, but they came anyway. It is undemocratic that they are allowed to overwhelm campuses during referenda in this way. The margin of our victory should have been greater."

NUS campaigners present included Wes Streeting, VP Education and leader of the Labour Students faction. It has been reported to *Felix* that he cancelled an entire day of meetings to assist campaigners at Aston. This news was met with incredulity by the leader of the No campaign at Imperial and City & Guilds College Union President, James Fok: "We respect that the students of Imperial voted narrowly to join the NUS but we are committed to ensure that the NUS delivers for us. ICU are paying them £52,000 a year and they shouldn't be using it to pay for the salaries of staff to stand and hand out leaflets. Mr Streeting will only benefit Imperial students if he is representing us at the highest level, like he promised us during our referendum, not wasting his time and our money at Aston."

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Spy games

"With a trail of radiation leading all the way to Moscow, was it Putin who ordered the unfortunate's death? But, as many commentators convincingly point out, is Putin foolish enough to have someone murdered so publicly? Or perhaps it was, as the official line goes, a small part in a larger picture trying to discredit Russia?"

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The time for giving

"Forget about bath oils, perfume, and clothes. I'd rather not battle with sales shoppers to exchange unwanted items. Whilst my sister settled with buying five identical black T-shirts for my dad last Christmas, I desperately scoured the shops for something that would trump her in the desirable stakes."

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Blood Red Shoes

"They also have an impressive work ethic; I saw them play three times in what must have been a month-and-a-half, and mostly unintentionally."

FEMM PAGE 6

Fashion police

"Wonderful dress on Lily Allen or anyone below about the age of 25. Seriously, how old is this woman? You'd have to carbon date her to find out! You can't tell from her botoxed face, which is probably 90% plastic and animal derivatives, 10% human. This fact is only highlighted by her lolita-style dress."

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The Sound Inside

"Anyway, the point of this article is to act as a guide to the festive season around this lovely town otherwise known as London. First of all, let's start with Christmas parties, since that comes first chronologically. Last years Trash mailing list party was great, which can only mean one thing: This year will be even better."

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Get it out and wave it all about. It's Wii day!

PAGES 28 & 29

Think you're hotter than this?
Prove it.

Pose for the *Felix* centrefold.

Email us at page3.felix@imperial.ac.uk.



Pears, herbs, and polonium 210

Li-Teck Lau

It is hard to commentate on the shady underworld of international espionage and secrets. An ex-Russian spy who co-authored the book *Blowing up Russia: Terror from Within* is murdered with a poison unfamiliar to the natural world. His drawn-out death implicated suspects among the country's diplomatic and secret services, whilst Vlad et al, wrapped in furs and twiddling their Faberge eggs surrounded by watchful Rokotov portraits in one of the many gilded rooms of the Kremlin, calling the incident 'unfortunate' along with a whole host of other inoffensive adjectives.

With a trail of radiation leading all the way to Moscow, was it Putin who ordered the unfortunate's death? But, as many commentators convincingly point out, is Putin foolish enough to have someone murdered so publicly? Or perhaps it was, as the official line goes, a small part in a larger picture trying to discredit Russia? Officials from the ex-communist state at one point indicted London resident Boris Berezovsky, an exiled billionaire and critic of Vladimir Putin. Traces of the now notorious substance were found at his offices in Mayfair last Monday. It could simply be a matter of personal revenge, though the culprit would have required access to materials found only in reactors.

There are so many questions that will almost certainly never be answered. Could Litvinenko have stumbled upon a secret organisation run by lizard people who control the minds of world leaders?

The big question on everybody's



Former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko died in the University College Hospital, London, last month

lips around the world must be "so what's Tony going to do about it all?". Months from retirement (hours if we are to believe everything written in the press these days), will the British Prime Minister stand up for a man who risked, and ultimately gave, his life for a cause he called 'noble'? Surely tensions and suspicions between the old cold war enemies must have worsened?

According to the larger picture, that course of action seems desperately unlikely, despite Mr Blair saying last Tuesday that "no diplomatic or political barrier" will hamper investigations. Blair has only spoken generously of his Russian counterpart, and publicly supports Russia's private war on terror in Chechnya. Even George Bush, he who oversees the occupation (or liberation

if you swing that way) of a country now subject to one hundred plus incidents per day of murder, rape and kidnap, described the conflict in the near east region as "chaotic". Perhaps Tony's stance has something to do with Britain's growing dependence on petroleum imports, or perhaps not. Maybe Tony is looking on pro-Putin Gerhard Schroeder's appointment to the board of directors of Gazprom on the day of his election defeat as a promising sign of things to come, or maybe not. However Mr Blair decides to navigate this political minefield though, what is clear is how cheated off the Kremlin is about the publicity an otherwise discreet matter has received; the embassy has allegedly vented their anger at the cabinet for not imposing an executive decision to contain Litvinenko's volatile

comments and ensure privacy.

Nine Scotland Yard detectives have flown to Moscow to continue their investigation, and last Friday, it was announced the Prime Minister from the early 90s Yegor Gaidar had fallen 'mysteriously' ill in Dublin.

It demonstrates clearly and publicly that, as long as the Russian Federation has the power to sell and buy nuclear warheads, and the one-time head of its secret service as president, it can do whatever the hell it wants. In Chechnya, in Britain, in Moscow, where the *Forbes Russia* editor was assassinated and more recently the fierce liberal journalist Politkovskaya on Putin's birthday, in the UN Security Council and in the White House where Vladimir suggested Bush's election was undemocratic.



Omar Hashmi
Politics Editor

It is funny how the last issue always aims to bring about hope. Not today, not my page! In a week that has from what can be superficially described as "quite normal," we have had a barrage of yet continuing news stories that show us in just the most beautiful of details, how every peice of the world is falling apart.

According to the BBC, there are over thirty Russian spies in the UK who all answer to the top two guys, who in turn report back to Moscow. How the BBC knows this, I have no idea, but it does show in a small way just how the cold war never really ended. Two responsible powers spying on each other? Why, whatever for? In the nasty world of international politics, everything is game. and why should any nation sacrifice its own power, influence and affluence for the sake of another's population or government?

Men are far from perfect, and hope in this frail being is subject to a siege of trials and hardship. When we allow men who have committed no provable crime to have their rights taken away by ministerial whim, do we not become those who take away honour and justice?

Sign Britain away

Adil Hussein

The UK's highest court ruled last week that two British men (one a former employee of Imperial College) may be extradited to the United States. The court did not immediately rule on whether the two men could appeal the decision to the House of Lords, Britain's highest tribunal.

If certification is not given by the High Court, then the appeal stage to the House of Lords will not go ahead. After that extradition is a real possibility within a short space of time, as previous cases have shown. On the other hand, if permitted, the legal team will have 14 days to argue over points of law surrounding the extradition decision, namely those concerning Military Detention and Rendition.

Failing that, the last appeal stage is to the European Court of Human Rights. In both cases, a lower court judge allowed extradition after receiving assurances from US authorities that they would not seek the death penalty, put the men before military tribunals or declare them "enemy combatants". This coming from the government that brought you the likes of the illegal war in Iraq, the extra-judicial procedure of Extraordinary Rendition, the pictures from Abu Ghraib prison and the injustices of the Guantanamo Bay concentration camp.

The lawyer for both men, Edward



The Palace of Westminster

Fitzgerald, argued that there was "a real risk of fundamental injustice"; that their basic human rights will be abused despite the assurances from US authorities.

Massoud Shadjareh of the Islamic Human Rights Commission said he found it puzzling why evidence against the men, if it does exist, has not been passed on to British authorities, to charge them in Britain.

"Since Britain has some of the most comprehensive terrorism laws in the world, if there is any evidence against these men, they should be charged and tried in a British court," he said. The British government has come under widespread pressure over the non-reciprocal nature of its controversial extradition treaty, which, after more than two years, has yet to be ratified by the US Congress. This treaty confirms Britain is losing her sovereignty to the US, and this verdict confirms we live not in a democracy but under US dictatorship!

Global news peanuts

Omar Hashmi
Politics Editor

Last week, the Iraqi parliament voted unanimously to extend the country's state of emergency, Not too surprising considering the state it's in! President George W. Bush, who declared himself a "realist," disavowed a leaked White House memo that suggested Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was either dumb, weak, or a liar. Maliki responded (with much diplomatic tenacity) by canceling a dinner date with the POTUS (President of the United States of America - what, do you think that I can be bothered to write that every time?!)

Marine Corps intelligence in the Sunni Triangle determined that US forces were "no longer capable of militarily defeating the insurgency," thus heralding the onset of civil war in Iraq. Just like in Team America, I.N.T.E.L.L.I.G.E.N.C.E is always the last to find out, poor guy.

The US Computer Emergency Readiness team issued a "situational awareness report" warning of an Al Qaeda "cyber threat," and Technical Mujahid (a magazine designed to "break the siege placed upon [Muslims] by the media of the Crusaders and their followers") released its first issue. This humble sub-editor has tried repeatedly to get a hold of this book for "Felix research purposes," only to be shouted down - "We already have



President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela in a re-election celebration

the NUS, WHAT DYA NEED THAT FOR?!

In Mexico, "donnybrooks and yelling matches" preceded the four-minute swearing-in ceremony of President Felipe Calderon, and the Mexican Committee for the Study of Kimilsungism hosted a seminar on the deceased North Korean dictator's seminal academic tome, "The Workers' Party of Korea Is the Party of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung." Indeed, South Korea's Agriculture Ministry announced plans to kill all the cats and dogs in Iksan, Korea. Minister Kim Chang-sup defended the action, undertaken in response to an outbreak of avian flu, by saying, "Other countries do it.

They just don't talk about it." Thank God it's not just me then.

A "bizarrely festive" atmosphere was noted on the streets of Beirut, where over one million Hezbollah supporters rallied for the ousting of Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora. Some see it as an irresponsible move to take power in a region that needs, above all else, a proactively peaceful governing body. However, votes and protestors do not lie.

And of course we do not need to read the leading article any more times to see that death and poisons were felling Russians around the globe... It's raining, it's pouring...

Helping people help themselves

Forget socks or toiletries this year. What your parents really want for Christmas is a goat for someone else

Hannah Theodorou
Environmental Society Chair

Parents are impossible to buy for. Well mine are anyway. Brothers and sisters are happy with any trinket that adds to the clutter building up in their bedrooms, while my gran's sorted with a *Queen at 80* DVD.

But parents are something else altogether. The only things that impress them are out of my overdraft limit. Getting them something they need is a gesture not completely lost on them, the £60 global knife rack I splashed out on a few years back has had pride of place in the kitchen until the wall it was carefully attached to was brutally ripped out by builders a few weeks ago.

Forget about bath oils (must be organic), perfume (not too overpowering), and clothes. I'd rather not battle with sales shoppers to exchange unwanted items. Whilst my sister settled with buying five identical black T-shirts for my dad last Christmas, I desperately scoured the shops for something that would trump her in the desirable stakes. Losing hope, I decided to settle on some CDs plus hand cream until I stumbled across an advert for World Vision's Alternative Gift Catalogue.

I was spoilt for choice immediately, with something for everyone in every price bracket. Whilst I was immediately drawn by an adorable goat, I eventually settled on a toilet for a school, a bargain at £30 for my dad. I thought back to my gap year, where going to the loo meant



Fishing nets – £10.00
Oxfam Unwrapped

This gift will help poor communities work together to fish their way out of poverty – providing nets, boats, equipment, and training.

Goat – £24.00

Oxfam Unwrapped

In Oxfam goat-loan schemes, the first female kid your goat produces is given to another family so the magic can begin again.



Deworming tablets – £7.00
Alternative Gift Catalogue

Cure parasitic infections in Angolan children so they can get all the nutritional value from their school dinners.



200 ft distribution pipe – £18.00
Alternative Gift Catalogue

Help provide safe water for families in the hills of Myanmar, where clean water sources are scarce. Literally a life saver.



Plant 50 trees – £16.00
Oxfam Unwrapped

Plant trees to help communities. Trees provide food and shelter, and slow soil erosion.

squatting over a hole and keeping balance whilst maggots wriggled onto your flip flops. Encountering a loo with a seat was cause for serious excitement.

My mum would flinch at anything involving bodily functions so she got blankets for an entire family because the accompanying picture was adorable. Each present comes with a gift card, and this year Oxfam Unwrapped are introducing fridge magnets so parents can proudly show the neighbours they've raised veritable philanthropists.

The number of catalogues has expanded this year, offering gifts ranging from oxen, AIDS education programmes, and mango plantations, although World Vision and Oxfam are two of the most established. Oxfam even offers gift tracking so you can follow exactly where your goat ends up. Inspired, my dad has since bought the boss-who-has-everything a yak for a family in Mongolia. Secret Santa for my formidable boss was sorted with a £5 mosquito net. Now I just have my Oxfam Unwrapped wedding list to look forward to. Let's just hope any future husband doesn't mind having to pay for our Dualit toaster. Happy giving!

For inspiring gift ideas check out: <http://nomoresocks.newscientist.com/Home/home.aspx>
www.oxfamunwrapped.com
www.greatgifts.org
www.giftinaction.org.uk

Development through slum networking

Slum networking: Helping some of the world's poorest people without direct government intervention

Amruta Kelkar
Engineers Without Borders

Engineers Without Borders (EWB-UK), which aims to facilitate human development through engineering, is one of the fastest growing student-run charities at Imperial. On Monday, 27th November it held yet another fascinating talk on the concept of "Slum Networking" under a global issue of "habitat".

The guest speaker, Priti Parikh, is a chartered civil engineer who is currently undertaking a Ph.D. in Sustainable Development at Cambridge University.

"Slum Networking" is a concept devised by Himanshu Parikh (Priti's father), which approaches the problem of slums by looking at them in the context of the city as opposed to an isolated unit.

Slums in India usually consist of a system of poorly built shelters, some made of brick, others out of corrugated steel and tarpaulin. Within these areas, sewage and water supply can often be found in the same location, exposing the slum communities to diseases.

Women and girls are required to spend a large proportion of their day disposing of household and sanitary waste and collecting clean water instead of preparing the children for school or attending lessons.

A possible solution to these issues



Hundreds of poorly built shelters in one of India's slums

was devised in the form of slum networking which looks to improve life in slums without direct intervention from NGOs, governments, and other organisations. To use a cliché, it is a method of helping slum dwellers help themselves.

The first method of implementing slum networking is by manoeuvring the natural drainage paths of the city to run alongside the slums. This

goes a long way towards improving the slum environment whilst dramatically reducing costs compared to conventional "slum solutions", such as public stand posts for fresh water distribution and community latrines.

To complement and increase the efficiency of the natural drainage system, topography management can also be applied to the city. This

involves the engineering of roads to slope continuously downwards so that they reach their natural water level with minimal intervention. These roads can also be contoured to act as channels for storm drainage. These slum networking techniques substantially reduce the costs of alternative drainage methods and also lower maintenance costs.

One of the many positive impacts of slum networking is that where slum dwellers have the means, there have been huge spurts of investment to improve their slum housing. Research has shown that the three main stimuli for investment, in descending order, are physical services, social status, and tenure security.

Employing this psychology, governments can tap into the latent potential of the slum-dwellers to help them increase their own resources.

In addition to this, the standard of living has improved, a fact underlined by health-related statistics such as a decrease in the infant mortality rate, a reduced number of working days lost due to illness, and a large reduction in medical expenditure.

The next hurdle that development workers such as Priti and her father face is gaining the backing from governments to implement the methods of slum networking in poor, densely populated areas.

If you're interested in Slum Networking or would like to come along and be a part of this amazing student movement, visit the Engineers Without Borders website: www.ewb-uk.org or contact the Imperial Branch at imperial@ewb-uk.org

Comment & Opinion

Rationality vs overreaction

As *Felix* decides to draw a line under the ongoing debate, Basel Siddiqi provides his take on the contents of these pages over the past three weeks



Basel Siddiqi

“This is not befitting of a tolerant society and we must rise above the blame game and realise it is not the duty of just one community to be careful and teach respect”

The recent comments in this section have inspired much debate. One thing to learn is that judging a writer's true intention based on what he or she writes is always risky. Take Samuel Lynas' article for example. The more naïve readers among us may have been fooled into thinking it was motivated by a concern for morality and a desire to correct misinterpretations. Fortunately, Mr. Lynas settled the issue himself last week with his bigoted reply in the Letters section, declaring that his article was for the attention of non-Muslims waking up to the 'danger that Islam represents to this country.' There can be no doubts about his intention now.

Ironically, in the same issue, Pierluigi Frison wrote of the 'need to be peaceful and respect each other.' Perhaps he was unaware that his code of 'general morality' was being broken a few pages later by the very person he was expressing agreement with. Or worse still, perhaps morals do not apply when the most important religious figure of Islam is labelled 'mentally ill.'

Now let us consider the ISoc's decision to post the original article. What the Society overlooked was that history is always a sensitive issue and people take it personally. Against that background, it is divisive to portray a conquest in a positive light, given that factual evidence may be inconclusive. Furthermore, it is an unfortunate reality that religions themselves are judged upon the conduct of their followers. Every sincere Muslim and open-minded non-Muslim

knows Islam to be a peaceful religion. Yet the likes of Lynas will continue to misinform others and their ammunition will be the conduct and carelessness of Muslims. The ISoc must be credited, though, for the events they organise to educate students about Islam. Such events are conveniently ignored by those who are poisoning themselves with conspiracy theories that Muslims somehow want to force the West to 'adopt the dictates' of Islam.

The response to the article has proved equally distressing. Since Lynas has discredited himself by the admission of his motives, it is not worth discussing his opinion further. Then there is the issue of educated observers such as Pierluigi Frison reaching drastic conclusions as seen in his closing paragraph last week. If Saad Raja's defence of the ISoc article can be taken as a demonstration that 'aggressive Muslims are everywhere,' then Samuel Lynas' comments indicate that fear-mongering Islamophobes are also ubiquitous. In that case, one would be equally justified to say that it is Lynas' views, not those of Raja, that constitute a 'perfect microcosm of the frictions' between the Muslims and the West.

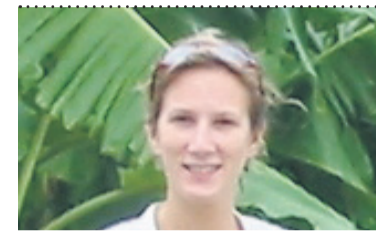
Saad Raja based his comment on studies of Ottoman history by historians whom he mentioned by name. Pierluigi Frison considers those sources biased and wades into the historical debate about what actually happened, obviously confident that the sources he himself relies upon are totally unbiased of course. He provides a whole list of lands conquered by the Ottomans and describes how parts of the population

were allegedly 'enslaved, raped and murdered.' That is, if we choose to believe the 'unbiased' sources Frison has managed to unearth, above those that Raja referred to. One can see the stalemate and never-ending argument developing here, which Frison exacerbates by comically resorting to the 'chicken or egg' game; stressing that Muslim armies conquered the Middle East from Christians before the crusaders attempted the opposite.

Frison would predictably argue that his aim was to criticise those who defend conquests of the past. But the simple claim that armies are often brutal to civilians post-conquest would have been enough to do this, since 'it should be clear to EVERYBODY' anyway. Instead he uses emotive language, as Lynas did, in what seems to be an attempt to gain the moral high ground. This attempt becomes obvious when he begins praising European countries and 'especially Britain' for condemning imperialism and the 'leeching' of raw materials and establishment of puppet regimes. Perhaps Frison has already forgotten about the illegal invasion of Iraq but I am sure the irony of his praise would not be lost on most readers.

Upon finding the ISoc article objectionable, the sensible approach would have been to ask rational questions about its validity. Instead, the response has been bigoted (Lynas) and exaggerated (Frison). This is not befitting of a tolerant society and we must rise above the blame game and realise it is not the duty of just one community to be 'careful and teach respect.' That responsibility lies with everyone.

Halls watch



Verity Leeson
Orient House

There's a saying in television that you shouldn't work with children and animals.

In my opinion an equally important adage is that, when in England, you should never plan any outdoor event more than 24 hours ahead of time. Doing so guarantees that you will end up sitting on the beach in a thunder storm or running a marathon in a heat wave. So, having arranged Orient House's Christmas trip to Rochester Dickensian Festival, I shouldn't have been surprised two days before we were due to go to hear the weather warning for gale force winds and forecast for heavy rain! The day dawned and the rain and winds were in evidence as we all boarded the bus. I hoped that this trip wouldn't be remembered as the one where several students developed hypothermia. By some miracle, however, by the end of the hour and a bit long coach journey, we arrived in a cold but gloriously sunny Rochester.

“The narrow high street was crammed full of people enjoying the chaos”

The city was complete with traditional fair, Christmas market, street theatre, a whole array of Dickens' characters wandering through the crowds and even a brass band playing Christmas songs whilst snow fell (thanks to the marvellous fake snow machine that was in situ). Rochester is where Charles Dickens spent a large number of his childhood years and many of his books are based in the area. Hence the city hosts this event every year to celebrate their claim and the narrow high street was crammed full of people enjoying the chaos.

Having enjoyed the fantastic performers, looked around the castle, museum and cathedral that Rochester boasts and spent our pennies displaying our throwing skills (or lack of them) on the coconut shy, we all got back on the bus, thawed out and headed to a local hotel for dinner. Three courses, crackers and a bit of shaking our funky stuff later, it was time to head back to London.

A response to Pierluigi Frison (1366)



Rayan Aldouri

At the risk of re-igniting the same debate until we are all blue in the face I initially hesitated to write this but the comments made by Pierluigi Frison cannot go unchallenged. Firstly, note to self, an article in the 'comments' section of a paper is for the expression of personal opinion, not an open forum for propaganda.

Mr Frison's piece and that of Mr Lynas were riddled with historical inaccuracies which would make any historian turn in their grave. Mr Frison however, does make a pertinent remark, he urges us "to get informed by reading any version of the facts that is neither bias [sic] from the point of view of the conqueror nor the conquered". I agree, but there is no such thing as unbiased historical fact. This does not mean however, that we should all give up, just that we should keep these limitations in mind. A fine example of where the old historical accounts are being completely overturned, is in the history of the Vikings. They have tra-

ditionally been taught as rampaging, bloodthirsty Nordic tribes, spreading nothing but carnage throughout Europe and dismantling the civilisation that the Romans built. New evidence based on recent archeological finds, and newly discovered manuscripts and diaries, are proving that the Vikings were in fact a constructive force, stimulating trade and cultural developments throughout Europe. Similar changes have been occurring in the history of the Ottomans (see revisionist historians Nelson, DUBY, Sawyer and Coupland).

So what did Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), really teach about war? Before every battle he used to instruct his commanding chiefs and remind them of the ethics of war. These included not killing wounded soldiers and prisoners of war. Residential areas were not to be pillaged, plundered or destroyed, nor should they touch the property of anyone except those who were fighting against them. In particular, religious and sacred buildings of all faiths, were to be protected. Mus-

lims were forbidden from taking anything from the general public of the conquered country without paying for it. They were even forbidden from uprooting trees and plants. Now let us compare this with the continuous killings of innocent civilians, and the destruction of entire cities, all justified by 'liberal' and 'progressive' western states as being unavoidable 'collateral damage'.

Frison's flamboyant remarks that Muslims at this fine institute of excellence do not believe in general morality or maybe even encourage terrorism is, well, an opinion. In this science and evidence based institute we leave no stone unturned, let this not be an exception. Let us not allow our emotions or preformed stereotypes cloud our intellect. Judge for yourself, do the research, visit the 'immoral' Islamic society events and if you're feeling exceptionally bold one day have a conversation with an 'immoral' Muslim, you could be pleasantly surprised.

As for Lynas' letter to the editor? No comment.

Wielding the mighty organ



Andy Sykes
Editor-in-chief

I am tired. Really, really tired. This first term has been an absolute nightmare in *Felix*, with computers breaking, steam pipes leaking into the office, printing mishaps, and one memorable occasion where we were nearly six hours over deadline, and I was on the tellingphone begging the printers for just ten more minutes (oy, vay).

Oh well. I won't whinge about it any more. I'm just glad that this is the last issue of term, and I can go back to, like, having a life, eating, and occasionally sleeping.

I'll take this opportunity to say: if you're not happy with *Felix*, then find me and tell me. You can email me at felix@imperial.ac.uk, or you can find me in the *Felix* office most hours of the day or night. I will try to reply to every email I receive personally. At the end of the day, I am only the caretaker of *Felix*; I make sure it gets put out, gets advertising, and looks acceptable. I can't write everything, so if you want something to appear in the paper, or you want to be part of it, then let me know and I'll do my best to try and sort it out. I have no way of judging how successful I'm being – if I don't get any overt complaints, I assume that you're happy.

I'll not comment on the Islam stuff on these pages – see the Letters page for my responses. Take them all with a pinch of salt. You should read Stephen's editorial to the right of my big dumb head for a measured plea for peace.

I like Christmas, even though I don't believe it's the birthday of some bearded guy who was nailed to a tree 2000 years ago for saying how nice it would be to be nice to one another for a change. It's all about wrapping up against the cold, shitty weather, and the fact that when the rain is coming down horizontally in London you feel like you're in a film. Oh, and drinking with your relatives. My Grandma, bless her heart, becomes completely bonkers after she's tipped a couple of glasses of wine down her neck at the Christmas dinner table. She'll always trot out some memorable phrase we'll all chuckle about for the next 12 months; for example, she once announced to the room: "Andrew, you used to be such an ugly looking boy, but you came out alright in the end." She'll also ask horribly personal questions about my love life, and now she's started doing it to my sister as well. There's nothing more embarrassing than being quizzed on your recent sexual conquests by a drunk 80-something year old lady you're related to. Ah, how I love her, and I mean that honestly.

This editorial was brought to you by a very nice bottle of vodka that myself and a good friend consumed. Thank you, sir, for you are a gentleman. I'll leave you with news that as I write, a tornado has touched down in London about five minutes walk from where I live, but I'm at work instead. I guess God missed. Hah!

felix

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Enough is enough now!

A plea from our exasperated Comment Editor about recent issues



Stephen Brown
Comment Editor

How time flies when you're having fun. This term has been and gone, and to be honest, the editorial team of *Felix* are in need of a holiday. This is the last issue of term and it is an appropriate opportunity for *Felix* to close all correspondence on the debate sparked by Samuel Lynas (issue 1364). It has now rumbled on for four weeks and the majority of people are thoroughly sick of it so we will be looking for entirely new topics for discussion in the new year.

I've learned a valuable lesson over the past month that will be useful for my next two terms in this position. I am not going to accept any more articles that attempt to make political points using historical arguments. In case you haven't noticed, two groups of students have been involved in tittle-tattle, but the main thrusts of their arguments have been incredibly flawed as they have both been cherry picking facts and statements to suit their views.

This sounds reasonable enough but it is a very dangerous way to present an argument. For example, lets go back to GCSE History for a minute, flick open our textbooks and notice that from the Great Depression up until the start of World War II the German economy went from being stagnant to one of the most productive in the world. This was no mean feat, given the levels of poverty

after the Wall Street Crash. On the next page of the textbook, we notice that a Mr. Adolf Hitler was leader of Germany for most of this period and we decide to infer on the basis of these economic figures that he did an absolutely splendid job running Germany. Never mind the fact we've ignored the establishment of a dictatorship, the persecution of the Jews and the warmongering leading to the invasion of weaker neighbours. We have now constructed a perfectly viable, factually correct argument that represents a massive distortion of what was actually happening in Germany at that time. Arguing using this method is just plain bonkers.

As for some of the intemperate, highly emotive, even bigoted language aimed at Muslims over the past few weeks I found it very offensive. We hummed and hawed before eventually deciding to print them on the grounds that whilst it was offensive, it was not threatening and that if a student was prepared to put their name alongside it then they were entitled to have their views aired. If people do harbour opinions that others find offensive then I believe its best that everything is out in the open so we all know what and whom we are dealing with. I am in no way suggesting that anything was deliberately written to cause offence just that if you are writing you should be fully aware that in some cases the semantics can make all the difference and how people interpret your article may be different from how you intend.

On the other hand I almost choked when I read the piece arguing that the arrival of a Muslim army in Constantinople was "merciful." A Muslim army invading a foreign country that was acknowledged to have fairly unpleasant rulers was "merciful?" Oh, the irony.

Conquest is never going to be a black and white issue whereby it will be either totally welcomed or totally opposed and it should not be presented as such.

I have zero knowledge of this period of history, but I do know that good historians not only point out bias in the work of others but make every attempt to acknowledge their own motivations when writing. None of the authors made any real attempt to do this.

All of this started as a result of one person's interpretation of an article that appeared on the Union website but soon escalated into a discussion about a conflict thousands of years ago a long way from South Kensington. The problem with highly emotive topics such as war and religion is that almost everyone has an opinion on them but few are qualified to make any real assertions. It is a criticism that applies to every student newspaper in the country that you open it up to be presented with the ridiculous spectacle of 20-year olds claiming that only if you listen to them then we'll have world peace, a better economy or an accurate interpretation of a medieval war. I am aware that it is not possible to totally divorce matters that directly affect us students from the wider world and it is admirable that there are so many people who take an interest. Youthful idealism is a fine thing but we should always think carefully before we open our mouths in a public forum. I feel very strongly on a variety of topics and if I really wanted to I could use my weekly editorial as a soapbox for my political views but I don't believe that *Felix* is an appropriate platform for my opinions on, for example, American Politics. The reason I don't is that I realise I will have nothing new to add to the debate. All my opinions are formed on the basis of what I have seen on TV or read in the national press. My regurgitation of these facts and what I infer from them is hardly going to make interesting reading.

Ok, rant over. See you all in 2007. If anyone feels bored over the holidays get writing, but leave ancient history to the historians.

Beards and the beard prejudice



Hugh Mansfield

I am a member of a minority viewed with suspicion by many and feared by some. Being Irish, it has been some years since I was last considered to be from a background conducive to terrorism, ever since the IRA were superceded by Al Qaeda as the main terrorist threat against Britain, but recently I have become one of the bearded of society. Pogonophobia - the fear of, dislike of or aversion to beards - is more prevalent in western society than ever before. After all, three of America's most hated people are bearded - Fidel Castro, Osama Bin Laden and, after his spell hiding out from US troops, Saddam Hussein are probably the most famous bearded men of recent times. As such, I find myself viewed with considerably more suspicion than I was as a clean-shaven gentleman - on boarding planes I am taken to one side to have my bag

searched, and I find myself stared at, often with open hostility, wherever I go.

There is a religious precedent for such prejudice, alas - Isaac's sons Esau and Jacob were known for being very distinct in this regard - Jacob noted that "my brother Esau is a hairy man, but I am a smooth man", characteristics upon which their tale hinges. As Isaac's sight fails him, Jacob tricks him into giving a blessing meant for Esau by covering the exposed parts of his hands and neck with goat skins in order to appear as hairy as his brother. And yet, it is the deceiver, the smooth criminal, who is viewed favourably by God, who states in Malachi 1: 2-3; "Yet I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness." It seems, then, to be a mistake to depict Him as a bearded old man, given his disdain for the bearded Esau, but it is heartening to observe that artists throughout the ages have not been quite so prejudiced against the hirsute.

More notably, in popular culture a character having a beard is often used as shorthand for 'this chap isn't to be trusted', and nefarious types are signposted in this manner all too often rather than giving them believable motivations or character flaws. For example, Fu Manchu is often portrayed as having a long, thin beard (though, I am pre-

pared to admit, mistakenly so, since the character as written has no such thing) and The Master, Doctor Who's arch-nemesis, invariably sports a goatee, no matter how many times he regenerates. And in both popular culture and real life, bearded women are almost invariably regarded as grotesques.

Perhaps the most compelling example of pogonophobia is that of Richard Nixon who, in the first televised debate in the leadup to the 1960 US presidential election, wore no makeup to hide his stubble and was consequently viewed as sinister and untrustworthy by the viewing public, despite those listening on the radio generally agreeing that his performance was the more compelling.

Though this prejudice, whilst deeply hurtful and upsetting in itself, simply isn't anywhere near as much of a cause for concern as predudice on the grounds of skin colour or the like since I, and any other bearded man, have the option to remove it at any time. And in the case of those for whom wearing a beard is a religious observance, those who would view with suspicion are more likely to do so out of religious intolerance than on merely cosmetic grounds, while some will look on their beards in a more favourable light than those like myself whose reasons for wearing a beard are considerably closer to vanity than to faith.

Letters to the Editor

The Islam debate goes on, and on

The letters continue to pile up in the *Felix* e-postbag, as you all weigh in on the recent scuffles in the paper

Responses to Samuel Lynas' response to a response - I think

Dear Sir,

I wish to express my objection to Samuel Lynas' offensive comments in last week's *Felix*, where the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, was described as being "mentally ill".

Even though I do not agree with Mr Lynas' views on Islam, I do not think it unreasonable to question and debate others' views; however, I do think it unreasonable and inconducive to fruitful discussion to say such remarks, especially about a man revered so highly by over 1 billion people around the world.

Regards,
Kamal Dingle

Dear Andy,

Please note the complaint from one of the Beit Residents about the recent letter in *Felix* which was clearly offensive to Muslims. While I recognise your wish to publish letters freely, I support this complaint - in my opinion publishing material which is designed to be religiously offensive and inflammatory is irresponsible and beneath your normally high editorial standards.

Regards,
Neil McIntyre
Warden of Beit Hall

The letter from the Beit resident:
In the recent *Felix* issue there are potentially offensive remarks about our prophet in letters to editor. I am very much disturbed by these and so will be the Muslim community as this word will spread.

Please take notice of the situation if you have the authority to do something about this.

Regards
Umar Bhatti

Andy Sykes replies,

I felt these two letters deserved a separate response to the many missives I received on this subject, because they deal with Mr Lynas' right to speak his mind.

While you may not agree with Mr Lynas' assertion that Muhammed was mentally ill, it is his opinion and he has a right to express it. Of course it's inflammatory and offensive to those that don't share his views, but that isn't the point. The point is that, in this country, everyone has a right to free speech unless they use their speech to incite violence or hatred of a particular

group or person. He didn't do this.

And to you, Mr Dingle, the number of people that revere a given person has absolutely no effect on what you should be able to say about that person.

If we were to censor people on the grounds that their views were offensive to others, we'd be heading down a dark path. To paraphrase an oft-used maxim: you may not agree with what Mr Lynas said, but you should accept his right to say it.

A response to last week's editorial

Dear Sir,

This is mind boggling. Every time I open *Felix*, or any other newspaper for that matter, there are numerous articles on Muslims that avoid the most important questions such as why Muslims are the most underprivileged and poverty-stricken segment of British society, or why Muslims are the least likely to be given the best opportunities. These are important questions that society needs to address to itself if it truly believes in equal opportunities and values tolerance.

Instead, the focus is incessantly on stale arguments about banning the veil; cartoons; or the Pope. Okay, fair enough, in these cases freedom speech or multiculturalism may be identified as the core issue, but when I look at the "argument about Islam that's been raging" within *Felix* (as referred to by Andy Sykes), I can actually see no argument on Islam! I only see arguments on history, or wide-sweeping statements on Islam with no basis.

Mr Frison for example makes competent discussion about interpreting history, but doesn't give any valid sources for his claims. Moreover, I fail to see how he jumps to the conclusion that Saad is "a warmonger, completely biased", "aggressive" and "immoral" Muslim just because he has presented his opinion using well-defined Western and European sources!

However, I don't understand Mr Lynas' response at all! While the two letters addressed to him had substance to them, and even though the editor breached the writers' trust by providing Mr Lynas the letters outside the paper more than a week before this response was produced, Mr Lynas has only managed to come back with what could be at best described as incoherent ramblings of a racist or at worst hysterical propaganda. Therefore, Mr Lynas, please go back to GCSE English and learn how to construct an argument before you masquerade yourself as a saviour of the ill-informed, when in fact you yourself are the most ill-informed, and are

not willing to learn anything about that which you wish to defame.

It most certainly doesn't help when *Felix*, which is meant to be a responsible newspaper, simultaneously reports an absurd 6 year old rumour from a non-Imperial source about an 'Imperial Islamic death squad' as fact - as if such a thing could actually exist. Or even when it reports an honest attempt at defending civil rights through the perfectly conventional Union Council route as being "under controversial circumstances and allegations of intimidation" without giving any evidence to support its claim. I am of course referring to the report in the last issue about the Union's decision to support the innocent Babar Ahmed's appeal to extradition to a brutal and inhumane US regime.

So, in summary, it is evident that you Mr. Sykes are proud to be 'wielding the mighty organ', but please do not get so carried away

with being fashionably politically incorrect that you are incorrect altogether. Hence, please appreciate your huge responsibility and please give us something meaningful and truthful to discuss.

Regards,
Ammar Waraich

Andy Sykes replies,

Politically incorrect? Hmm. I'll deal with that when I've discussed some of false assumptions you've made in your letter.

Firstly, there have been a lot of replies and counter-replies to Mr Lynas' first article, refuting or supporting his points. I'd call that an argument, and judging by the passions it has stirred up, I feel justified in referring to it as 'raging'.

Secondly, you make a woefully false assumption that I "breached the writers' trust". This is simply

not the case. I have an obligation to ensure that if I am to publish a letter attacking an individual, I allow that individual right of reply, as laid down in the Press Complaints Commission's Code of Practice as well as *Felix*'s constitution. I gave Mr Lynas right to reply, and showed him the content of the letters discussing him.

Thirdly, the "Imperial Islamic death squad" statement was so ridiculous I felt that any astute reader would also find it ridiculous. The comment was prompted not by, as you put it, a six year old source, but by Imam Musa Admani on Newnight a few weeks ago. He did not use the term "Islamic death squad"; what he did relate was a story whereby a student approached him, and said: "Imam, I came to inform you of something... a group from Imperial College are coming to kill you tomorrow."

Fourthly, while I absolutely support the attempt by Colin Smith

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and others to protect the civil rights of Babar Ahmed, the way in which this was done was in no doubt controversial. Mr Smith swore and became aggressive towards members of Council; these facts are on the record. He refused to leave, and security guards had to be called; this too is on the record. Some accused Mr Smith's supporters of intimidating Union officers outside the meeting, hence the use of the term "alleged".

I suggest you read up on what happened: <http://live.cgcu.net/opinion/randomrant/1009>.

While I appreciate the rather elegant turn of phrase you use in your last paragraph, I fail to see what point you're making. I'm not politically correct, and I'd be more offended if you called me that. Political correctness is complete bullshit, and you can quote me on that.

The Islam debate is a rather depressing affair

Dear Andy,

Reading the debate in the letters pages surrounding the recent articles on Islam has been, at best, a rather depressing affair. I am surprised that, presumably intelligent, students of Imperial, such as Samuel Lynas (Letters, 1st Dec), could harbour such simplistic, biased and generally distasteful views on race, religion and history.

I would hate to think how unwelcome and uncomfortable, say, for example, a visiting Muslim student, coming to Imperial for a short time, might be made to feel by reading some of Samuel Lynas's ill advised comments.

I am of the belief that students should feel welcome and wanted

as members of our academic body no matter their religious or cultural background. Accordingly, we should discourage attitudes and legislation which may perpetuate the marginalization of any ethnic or religious groups. When considering questions of extremism in universities, as it is popular to do these days, surely the most effective strategy is to create an inclusive environment, with in which, all students are able to feel at ease in their surroundings. To marginalize or isolate them, through bigoted commentary or poorly conceived policy, is surely to play into the hands of those who wish to instil extremist ideals. Despite being non-religious myself, I would hate to work in an environment which restricted the religious expression of others (so long as they do not infringe on the freedom of anyone else).

That is not to say I do not believe in free, open debate. However, it must proceed with judicious care and thought. In addition, an awareness of the social/political context with in which it is being made is crucial; to debate the Jewish faith is one thing, to do so in the throws of 1930's Nazi Germany is quite another; to give a rather extreme illustration of what I mean.

For instance, I would take issue with Lynas's rather throw away comment that "Perhaps next week Mr Raja could explain away the millennia of slaughter, enslavement, rape, pillage and genocide committed by Muslims...". Firstly, this seems to ignore the fact that as far as "slaughter, enslavement, rape, pillage and genocide" go, our very own western, predominantly Christian, nations have a pretty stunning track record, what with Slavery, the Inquisition, Vietnam, Iraq and the Holocaust to name but a few events peppering our past and present.

However, this is besides the point, the real issue is that it is unjustifiable to identify, in anyway, today's Muslim citizens, be they students at Imperial or not, to events which



A Wednesday evening in da Vinci's - price cuts are in the works, according to Jon Matthews' letter

may or may not have been a part of their cultural past. Should we prejudice German students in light of their Nazi past? No.

As for "some unexplained media bias" (Samuel Lynas, Letters, 1st Dec) against Muslims. Well there certainly is a bias, as a cursory glance through the daily's would testify, but unexplained? No, it is very well explained. During tense and trying points of history there is a precedent for the media, government and public to seek a scapegoat, both as an expression of frustration and as a justification of actions, particularly in the case of the government (see McCarthyism and Commies, for just one example). It has been, in the past, the Jews, the commies, the Irish, etc, etc, perhaps it is now the turn of Muslims, what with

the mounting tensions in the middle east, the occupied territories in Palestine, the war in Iraq and the on going conflict in Afghanistan creating massive tensions around the globe (all of which we the British have a hand in).

Learning from our past is essential for the positive progress of humanity, but, it is not good enough to say Hitler bad, Stalin bad, Saddam bad. We must understand the political, economic and social attitudes surrounding the murkier parts of our history and how they played a part in their development. This brings me to my final point, comments of the form "wake up to the danger that Islam represents to this country" (Samuel Lynas, Letters, 1st Dec) are a little too close to the likes of "the danger that Jews represent", so frequently used in Nazi Germany, for my tastes. Don't get me wrong I am not for a second suggesting that there is a direct comparison, or that Lynas has anything even close to Nazi tendencies, only that we must be vigilant to such trends in the media if we are to take our lessons from the past.

Regards,
Leron Borsten

Andy Sykes replies,

This is actually one of the most reasoned replies we've had on this topic (in my opinion).

The parallel drawn with McCarthyism and "reds under the bed" is an interesting one, and one that I think is fairly valid. It is true that the US government has, since the attacks on Washington DC and New York, used terrorists, and specifically Muslim extremist terrorists, as scapegoat figures. This climate of fear has clearly spread to a good proportion of the western world.

Things are beginning to come to a head - the US electorate has decided to reject Republican fear-mongering, and fill both houses with Democrats. We, on the other hand, has experienced Islamic extremism on our own soil, something that seemed impossible three years ago.

What Mr Borsten says rings true, and I hope I see more balanced letters like this in future.

Lower bar prices?

Sir,

I write in response to Christopher Thomas's opinion piece "Student Politicians: hang them all now!" (Felix 1365). Mr. Thomas calls for cheaper drinks in Union bars, something I strongly believe in myself. Mr. Thomas also challenges me on the fact that I made it a campaign point and manifesto pledge that I would "correct the unacceptable increase in bar and events prices" and then goes on to accuse me of a betrayal of trust because he had not seen any decrease in prices (the fact that we had not seen any increases in prices since the start of my tenure seems to have slipped Mr. Thomas's mind...). I hope Mr. Thomas now feels suitably happy with the changes to the offers on Wednesday and Friday which have cut prices (see the Union page for details), I did feel that there was some irony in the fact that I read this attack on the same day as I was in meetings working on these price cuts, meetings which have been going on for some time and are still ongoing. I don't expect that Mr. Thomas, or many others I must admit, will now perform a volte-face and trust us all implicitly, but I do hope that I can once again walk past the nearest lamp-post without worrying about the length of my neck.

We are working hard on the commercial services provided by the Union to its members and there will be further improvements in the near future, these things do take time. Yes, we could cut a whole load of prices tomorrow so why don't we? I, personally, would rather not cut prices one week only to have to put them up again one or two weeks after that. The question people must ask is do they want us to go for a head-line grabbing, gimmicky price-slash and then put prices up only a few weeks after that, or would they rather we made a business plan and cut prices and then kept them down. I know what I would like...

Regards,
Jon Matthews
Deputy President (Finance and Services)
Imperial College Union



Senator Joseph McCarthy, whose anti-Communist 'witchhunt' capitalised on the American public's fear of communism - are governments and the media now using Islam as their scapegoat?



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Update from the President

ULU Cups and Leagues

I am delighted to report that after months of behind-the-scenes lobbying and following a controversial meeting of the University of London Union (ULU) Council last Monday, ULU has formally agreed to allow ICU sports teams to compete in ULU leagues and cups after Imperial College leaves the University of London next year. This is great news for both ICU and ULU as I believe that not only do our sports teams get a lot out of participating in ULU league and cup competitions, they also contribute a great deal to them. I would like to thank our friends at ULU, particularly this year's ULU President Vicky Slater, for working with us to reach this agreement.

Union Court – any volunteers?

It may not be the sexiest committee in the Union but it will hold a lot of power. This month the Union will set up a new body called the "Union Court" that will perform judicial, scrutiny and quality assurance

roles in the governance of the Union as and when required. It will involve a range of experienced lay members as well as elected students and the people who sit on this committee will be tasked with making decisions on, amongst other things, student media complaints, elections disputes and constitutional amendments. This body will have the power to conduct detailed reviews and over-rule Sabbatical Officers and Union Committees if they act illegally.

Elections for three vacant positions on the new Court will take place at the next meeting of the Imperial College Union Council, which is being held at 6:30pm on Tuesday 12th December in Lecture Theatre G34 in the Sir Alexander Fleming Building. If you are interested in standing for the Court then please submit a short manifesto (100 words) to me (president@imperial.ac.uk) by the 11th of December.

Union Building Update

I am pleased to report that the Beit Building redevelopment project is just about on time and definitely on budget. New furniture for Da Vinci's will arrive next week and this will be complimented by even more new furniture just after Christmas. We are currently working on plans for phase II of the redevelopment programme that will, if funds permit, see the construction of a brand new Student Activities Centre and Gymnasium in the west wing of the building. I appreciate that there will continue to be some noise and access disruption well into the New Year, however I am confident that the whole of the phase I programme will be complete by March 2007. Below are some images of the work already completed on the central core.



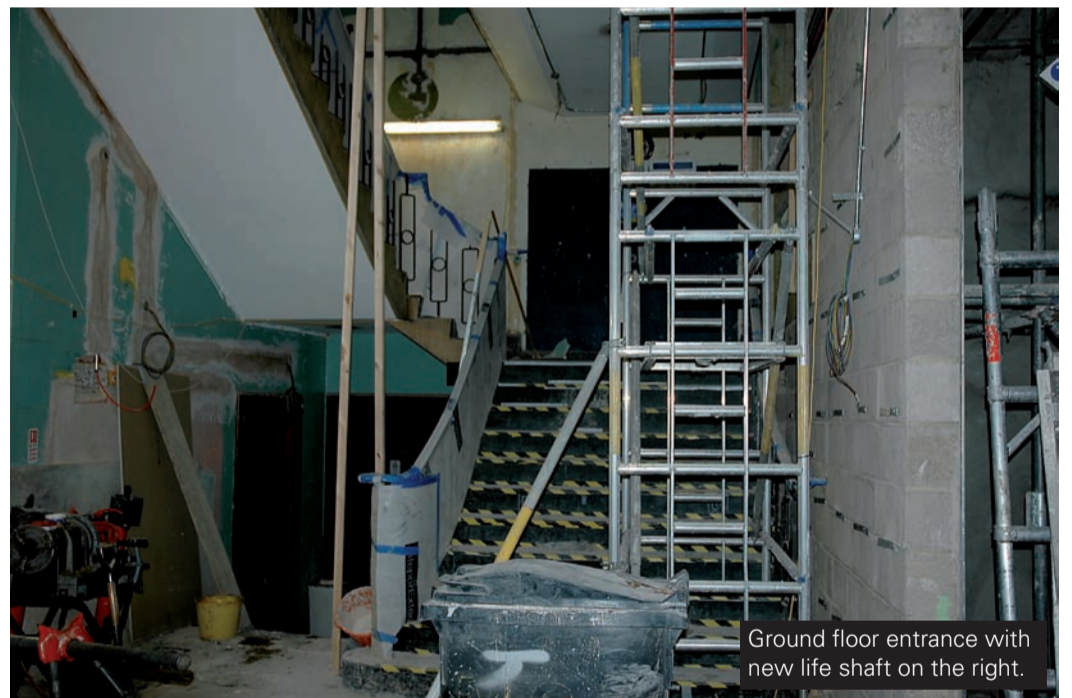
John Collins

President

president@imperial.ac.uk



The top of the lift shaft on the third floor.



Ground floor entrance with new life shaft on the right.

Beit Bars Update

Prices Down!

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the Beit bars, I have the pleasure to announce what we've all been waiting for: price cuts! From now on, in conjunction with the usual offer, **Reef will be only £1.75** a bottle every Wednesday night. Friday nights also see considerable improvement with the following spirits and mixer offer:

Smirnoff and draught mixer: £1.25

Gordons and draught mixer: £1.30

Bells and draught mixer: £1.35

Bacardi and draught mixer: £1.45

We are continuing to work on improvements to the bars with new furniture due into da Vinci's next week and I thank you all for your patience whilst we go through these necessary improvements.



Jon Matthews

Deputy President
(Finance & Services)

dps@imperial.ac.uk

London Marathon Competition

The College has secured a silver bond charity place in the 2007 London Marathon, which will take place on Sunday 22 April 2007. We would like to find a runner who will take part in the Marathon on behalf of the College and help Imperial to raise funds for the Student Opportunities Fund. Since its launch in 2003, the Fund has so far provided entry scholarships for 60 talented students who might not otherwise have been able to come to study at Imperial. The student selected to run the College's London Marathon place will be chosen on the basis of:

- A 300-word statement telling us why you would like to run in the London Marathon on behalf of the Student Opportunities Fund and Imperial College.
- Your participation in our Fitness Challenge event at 12.00 on Wednesday 10 January 2007, which will test both your endurance and aerobic fitness.

The combined results will enable us to choose a runner for the College, who will then receive the full support of Sport Imperial to see them through their training and the Office of Alumni and Development to assist them with their fundraising. To register your interest in running the 2007 London Marathon on behalf of the College, email your 300-word submission to s.corcoran@imperial.ac.uk and get training for the Fitness Challenge on 10 January.

Christmas Carnival 06

Friday 15th December, 20:00 - 02:00

Celebrate Christmas with your friends at our Winter Wonderland!

Room 1

Steve Lamacq
Alex Corr

BBC
RADIO



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femm

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Friday 8th December

Matty Hoban Music Editor-in-Chief
Jenny Gibson & Thomas Whitson Public Relations Music Editors

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"It is sold out and it is far away from London but the independent music festival, All Tomorrow's Parties' Nightmare Before Christmas is happening this weekend." PAGE 10



Matty Hoban

editorial

Another month, another *Felix Music Monthly* then. This week, I decided to introduce a theme of independence. We interviewed bands on independent labels and we had a chat with one of the founders of an independent label, Toby from Transgressive Records. I also took the opportunity to interview Everett True, the editor-in-chief of *Plan B* magazine; this makes up part of a feature on the independent music media.

In designing a front page, I tried to think of ways to convey independence. However, my lady friend came up with a far better idea of

putting some boobies on the front instead. So you get *Liberty Leading The People* promoting indieness; obscurity and lo-fi production for all.

In this month's *bitrate* section, Greg and I had a discussion over what technologically binds the indies; in the end it was voice manipulation. A lot of people (including myself) will associate indie music with a certain type of production, ie. clean, well-balanced and dull. In a lot of lo-fi music the guitars are raw and the vocals even rawer. This independent and DIY ethic is what makes a lot of independent music the way it is, so we thought we'd tell you (albeit negatively) how major labels manipulate their artists.

Of course there is not one way to make music – it would be dull if there was. It all depends on what you are into and we are just conveying a point-of-view in our features. If you want to express your perspective, then get in touch with us through music.felix@ic.ac.uk and write us a feature. I write a lot of features myself so it would be great to read someone else's thoughts for once. True independence is expression of your opinions without fear.

We are all aware also that Christmas and New Year's Eve is approaching and since this is the last *Femm* before Christmas, we are going to give away some CDs. Thanks to the kind people at LD Communications, we've got 5 copies of the awesome *World's Best Mum/Dad* compilation CDs to give away. All you have to do to enter is tell us in 5 words why your mum/dad is the World's

best, send emails to music.felix@imperial.ac.uk with the subject title "My mum/dad is the best because..." It is that easy.

Also some of you maybe back in London for New Year's Eve and might want to go out. For those who want to be a bit 'independent' and go to gig night, I provided a short list and explanations to where you can go that might interest you. There is also an All Tomorrow's Parties preview for those who are going and those who may not have heard of it before.

Next *Femm* will also have a theme of WAG: Women and Guitars. We celebrate all the X chromosome-infused rock music there is. We don't intend to be gimmicky, it's just so much rubbish guitar music at the minute is a result of male melancholia; this has to be stopped. So we will be attempting to cover that. We want as many of you ladies to write in with your views otherwise I will force my girlfriend to write everything and a small child called Alice to lay it all out.

I hope you find some of this month's issue entertaining and enjoy reading some of it. It was turtuous for me to put together as coursework always arrives at the end of the term. I also hope you have a lovely and well-earned Christmas holiday and don't spend all of it doing problem sheets. The *Music Felix* and *Femm* team wish you a very merry Christmas and a rockalicious New Year. Have a happy hanukkah and joyful whatever religious festival you to choose to celebrate!



Gregory Mead

Ever fancied yourself as a pop star? Do you long for the celebrity life, spending your mountains of cash in Hollywood clubs, hanging out with Paris Hilton and Co. surrounded by desperate hangers on, all hoping to catch a glimpse of you? Have you always wished that it was your songs the crappy pub DJ was playing as you drown your sorrows in the corner of some chain night-club? You stay awake at night just wishing to god that you had that PERFECT singing voice but you just know in your heart of hearts, that the horrendously out-of-tune noise you attempt to pass off as singing is not going to be appreciated by any audience apart from that rancid flannel in your mildew encrusted shower at your miserable trailer-park home?

Well, I don't, but some people do; and assuming you could pass as one of the Irish guys who look like they're about to make my dinner in front of the TV with Grandma very uncomfortable by dropping their pants and recreating a scene from "4-Way Bareback Sailor Pimps", or you're a teenage chav's wet-dream eye-candy who's been dragged out of Southern US-of-A via the boob-job clinic and 18 gallons of airbrush foundation, then hooray! You're in luck; you can be a modern pop-singer even if your voice does sound like the dulcet tones of an exploding moose. Anyway, I'm going to run out of derogatory descriptions for pop-singers soon, I'm too tired, and they are just not that fun-

ny, so I'll get to the main point of the article now.

It probably won't surprise you much to hear that almost every single studio recording (and a large proportion of live performances too) from modern pop stars has had more attention from computer geeks and techs than a bittorrent site purely dedicated to hardcore hentai movies, in the form of heavy computer correction of the vocals, and sometimes even the musical instruments. It's not just pop-singers either, so called 'alternative bands' are culprits too: Good Charlotte, Sum41, the list of shite 'pop-punk' bands is endless, and if you think they sound terrible now – imagine what the sound engineers had to go through.

The main tool of the devil is a pitch corrector, a super-clever bit of studio hardware (or software) that by using the wonders that are Fast Fourier Transforms, can automatically detect the pitch of a vocal track, and shift it to the desired note, sound engineers can make a totally out-of-tune vocal sound almost perfect, greatly cutting the time and artist skill required to make a recording. Live pitch correctors even exist, and are often used by the likes of Britney Spears and Cher; they are pre-programmed with a performance and controlled by the sound techs so that the voice channel is routed through the hardware and corrected before being heard by the audience (although lip-synching is also often used). So great, now you can give a performance that resembles the drunken karaoke at the local working men's club, and those clever guys behind the scenes will make it sound wonderful! It must be confessed though, that although pitch correction is greatly overused by some artists, it still has its uses, fixing one or two notes in an album is hardly considered to be cheating, and anyway, if you have a terrible song, performed appallingly then no amount of pitch correction is going to make it sound good (unfortunately we're not living that far in the future yet). But we're rubbish at singing right? Someone else is going to write the actual lyrics so it should be OK, so turn that pitch mofo up to maximum setting, we want to sound like we've had 15 years of the best, most intensive singing training when we release our debut single.

So, now that the pitch is all sorted, another common manipulation to vocals in popular music is the use of a chorus filter, which as long as it is used correctly, can transform your feeble little (already pitch-corrected)

singing voice into a rich, glittering performance. This effect is also used for the musical instruments in some tracks giving them more presence and superior sound. Of course, if the settings are wrong then it'll sound like an entire church choir is performing your number which may not be the desired effect, especially during a live performance. The chorus filter works by analysing the input signal, creating a series of very slightly pitch shifted copies of it and then overlaying them back onto each other, giving the impression of more than one source of the sound. It can sound lovely, or it can sound ghastly, depending where it is used.

Another fun vocal effect we should always consider when embarking on the creation of a new pop song is the vocoder. This smart machine has two inputs, generally one voice input and one instrument input (e.g. keyboard) and by using some very clever mathematical transforms, or some crazy analogue filters if you're living in the 70's, splits up the voice signal into a given number of its main constituent waveforms, which are then recreated using a new fundamental frequency from the instrument. You can create some cool manipulations of your voice pitch shifting to a tune you play on a keyboard, or even better – you can make yourself sound like a robot (see Daft Punk and Kraftwerk for overuse of this effect), so it doesn't matter squat how badly you sing, in these instances you can just speak the lyrics into a microphone and it sounds AWESOME, so if you are a budding pop star and your singing voice is so appalling that not even the pitch corrector can save it from oblivion, you might want to consider electronic pop music as your path to superstardom.

An entire arsenal of other effects and manipulations are available to the sound recording engineer, allowing them to make the perfect track basically from scratch, you don't need to sing for shit, other people will write your songs and session musicians will perform the music! Or, if you want to form a band, your other members don't even need to be able to play their instruments, pitch correctors work even better on musical instruments than they do on voices! So what are you waiting for? Just make sure you shag the right people in the music industry and you might find yourself the next one-hit-wonder this Christmas.

bitrate



album review



Reigns
Styne Vallis
(Jonson Family Records)
★★★★★

Certain things remind me of England; namely, British Rail tea, the shouting of feral kids, and warm ales. To this list, I can add the Somerset duo Reigns and their second album, *Styne Vallis*.

This is no half-comforting Morrissey-esque England of rainy afternoons in city centres and teenage disappointment. No, this is the England of tiny villages, of strange local legends, of country life, and of the sinister hiding just below the mundane. I guess what I'm trying to say, stripped of writer's pretension, is that this is the audio equivalent of the cult 70s horror, *The Wicker Man*.

Reigns' previous record was, on first listen, a collection of reasonably pleasant instrumental pieces constructed from pianos, violins, acoustic guitars, processed feedback and field samples. Further listening revealed a much more complex record, one that seemed squeezed free of any cruft, leaving only gorgeous melodies and a deep sense of that enjoyable, warm-blanket kind of melancholy. There was something there that was much more than the combination of the parts.

As the previous record, *They Lowered A Microphone Into The Ground* was, *Styne Vallis* is a concept album in the best sense of the word – one where the narrative element only serves to enhance your pleasure at discovering how the songs fit into the whole story being created. Styne Vallis is, apparently, a town that was flooded in the dying days of the 1970s to make way for a reservoir. The water, however, turned putrid and could never be filtered, something to do with the town's reputation for incest and violence. The pair have created an utterly believable story (via their MySpace, and in the accompanying booklet) that you're never quite sure whether this record is meant as a documentary effort, or merely an elaborate, Lovecraftian construction.

To the music, then. The opening track, *The Lost Black Mass Footage*, shows this new, refined Reigns. Voices sound as if they're being beamed from the bottom of the ocean, weird and twisted, repeating "and then, the dead, shall die, again" over snappy snare drumming and motorik bass. Oh, and tons of bizarre field samples that sound like mutated crickets chirping. In short, awesome. The whole thing comes across like a group of folk musicians that have just discovered Merzbow and Sigur Ros and are attempting to capture the former's disturbing noise and the latter's, well, brilliance.

Wedding of Weed and Dead Weed is the other side of Reigns; the emotive, heart-string-tugging duo, using their vocoders to sing stories of love and inevitable loss. What stops this tale of young lovers growing old becoming mawkish and awkward is the way the words conjure up the mundane aspects of their lives. The supernatural element is still there: the man dies before Styne Vallis is flooded, and the distorted narrator relates how he still wanders the empty, weed-covered streets underwater. I'm a particularly stony-hearted bastard, and this still gets me.

My favourite by several hundred kilometres is the bombastic *Volcanoes Of Taiwan*. The song opens with pretty guitars set against field samples of flowing water and, best of all, uses the ticking of a grandfather clock as its backbeat. Before you've had time to grow tired of the sheer prettiness of it all, Reigns are pounding out optimistic piano chords over thunderous, stomping drums, as a faraway voice intones something along

the lines of "awaiting.. explosions". I can't tell, but that doesn't matter.

Experimental pieces like *Revised Map of the British Isles*, a song constructed from typewriter noise and a lady's voice intoning the names of places to be removed, added or modified to the map, impress greatly with their originality. The simpler pieces, like *Divorcee*, seem to have an aspect of traditional song about them with their simple, memorable melodies and piano/acoustic guitar orchestration.

I really can't say any more, as it has become impossible to accurately describe Reigns' sound. In a way, you can think of them as "post-rock", but that would do them serious disservice. The range of instruments on offer is huge, and not all songs feel the need to be slaved to a beat; in fact, some of the best tracks feature no percussion at all. The most important aspect of this record is the sheer Englishness of it; I grew up in a small village in the north of England, and the field samples and melodies here remind me of home, of days spent in the woods, and of the melodrama of small village life. Perhaps if you've lived in cities all your life, this record will seem like a charming set of pretty little songs to you. To me, however, it's much more.

Andy Sykes

album preview

Deerhoof
Friend Opportunity
(Kill Rock Stars)

Life is full of the obvious. Our day-to-day activities are littered with obvious conversations, obvious jokes, obvious observations, and we are constantly surrounded by obvious music. The tinny, stray rhythms escaping from many a commuter's white earphones entering our personal areas on the tube; the omnipresent 'edgy' chart hit emanating from the nearby HMV or Virgin Megastore. Music has become so accessible and ingrained into our daily lives that each medium and facet intermingles with another; advertisements and TV programmes have led to many a successful track. Yet do a lot of us think about what we are listening to, or are we succumbing to the obvious nature of it: the typical verse-chorus-verse structure with that catchy chorus and forgettable verses. Do we want more?

I find this is where people often divide. Some of my friends have never wanted more apart from a huge, sing-along chorus and throwaway, rhyming lyrics. I, on the other hand, always wanted more. This might make me a natural critic, but I just wanted more than the obvious; I want to be challenged. One thing that niggles though when I want this is that I also don't want to be, well, bored. A lot of 'challenging' music is frankly boring. It is just magical when a band comes along and strikes a balance between big melodies

and challenging ideas.

Okay, this is all well and good but what about Deerhoof? Well, this band is, in theory, the best band on Earth: they have a female Japanese singer (Satomi Matsuzaki), constantly shifting structures and ideas with a distinct pop-edge and they also come from San Francisco, the hub of creativity. They have all the potential to master the divide between the obvious and the avant-garde. Yet there has always been something that has put me off them. Their 2005 album, *The Runners Four*, was critically lauded wherever it was listened to. I thought it was okay, not amazing, this was due to Matsuzaki's vocals; they often deterred me throughout. The album was apparently an intense experience to record and is equally intense to listen to. So in the end, the album was rather disappointing.

Since their 2005 effort, a lot has changed with the band. They have toured with giants such as The Flaming Lips and Radiohead, and received admiration and confusion in equal measures from fans of both of these arch-groups. They also lost Chris Cohen – to the band The Curtains – in the line-up and so are now refined to a three-piece. These changes may have added focus to the band to produce the goods and be more defined in their song-writing. This remains to be seen.

This is me rambling on anyway; you're probably interested in what this album sounds like. Many have described them as anything from noise-rock to psych-pop, and I guess this is accurate, but I think they are a pop-rock band trying to inject something interesting into this medium. The melodies are catchy and addictive as witnessed on opener, *Perfect Me*, which will have you singing the following lines falsetto: "Me, me, me, meet the perfect me!" It is addictive whilst the music is constantly shifting from foot-on-the-monitor rock riffs to spluttering drumming – an impressive feat considering how sparse Greg Saunier's drum-kit is – with organ stabs and jabs. I really think it is a brilliant song and raises the bar for the rest of the album. Does the rest of the album compete?

Well, yes and no, second track, +81 starts off with a brilliant trumpet intro and then has a chorus including the phrase, 'beep beep'. This can only be a good thing! The verses tend to let it down though as they are a bit boring and just not Deerhoof. A distinctly poppy-funk edge reminiscent of Architecture in Helsinki comes through on *Believe ESP*. The lyrics are incomprehensible but effective use of lala's save it. The rest of the album then disappears into a bit of a blur between long keyboard passages and whispered Japanese vocals. The final track, *Look Away* is 11 minutes and 45 seconds long and harks back at their more psychedelic edge but just has the effect of not going anywhere. Losing Cohen proves to be a mixed blessing.

FOUR PAWS MEDIA



Deerhoof looking jolly; probably because they make jolly music

Yo La Tengo up in Kentish Town

US indie stalwarts accompany Tool and The Sunshine Underground

Yo La Tengo
Kentish Town Forum

It was the turn for Camden to host Yo La Tengo tonight. An American dreamy, noise-pop trio, promoting their last release, *I Am Not Afraid Of You And I Will Beat Your Ass*, on my home turf, I grasped this rare chance to see them.

Hugely consistent veterans of the music world, amassing over 10 LPs - a sign of their talents, variety, and greatness. A premier-league band. Churning out their latest release with quite acclaim it's hard to see when YLT will stop.

Place these guys in The Forum, an old art-deco cinema, a venue with a history for hosting legends of the genre, meant for a spectacle. But standing in the queue outside in the cold for 20 minutes before realising that the ticket in my hand meant I could enter straight away, I missed the support act. Walking past the casual bag inspector into the standing section, I fought my way into the mass of fans to gain a good spot, the 2,000 capacity filling up.

Shortly after 9pm Ira made his way upon stage, followed by

his wife, Georgia and long time friend/band mate, James. YLT began with a mellow, autumnal track, displaying the singing capabilities of their female drummer/vocalist. Switching back from the main microphone to the drums lead to a rockier follow-on, *Pass the Hatchet* - a noisy nine-minute six-string freak-out, supported with a framework of subtle drumming and basslines.

The well-engineered acoustics in The Forum meant my ears weren't deafened after every struck chord; I could enjoy YLT for the duration.

After a marvellous 3 songs, Ira began speaking with the crowd. After the recent hospitalisation of the Bloc Party drummer for presumably going to the edge at one of their tours, they highlighted the physicality of drumming, joking that Georgia was capable of going quite mad - "hopefully this won't happen right here".

Shifting gears, the set continued regardless with *Sugarcube*, a powerful, crunching guitar-led song that stands out as one of their greatest, which was greeted well. The set progressed, punctuated with intervals of dream-like tracks comparable to My Bloody Valentine, bringing together hits from their mass of albums.

With a band like YLT, with such an immense back catalogue, there's always going to be songs that you wished they played but didn't. They've certainly taken the negative reviews of the last gigs (playing mostly B-sides) to heart and certainly made amends, exciting the crowds with fan favourites like *Tom Courteney*, before moving into longer

CHRIS PARROTT



Ah, the famous problem of who is going to solo first. Solution: no solos

melodies with *The Story of* and the hypnotic *Blue Line Swinger*. The latter begins hesitantly as a group of loose musicians playing their own thing, uniting slowly, building up to one mind-blowing climax - as heavenly as music gets.

Thanking the fans before disappearing for a break, YLT came back to deliver a fan favourite, *Today is the Day*. These aging rock stars, getting tired, had another break - well deserved. Maybe three encores was a bit

too self-indulgent, but they came back to play requests from keen front row-ers. Ira gave a look to the other band members, *Autumn Sweater*, a groovy, stand-out track that closed out their second encore. They ended the night with one last song, *Incredible*.

I left soundly knowing that there are some good musicians alive and well and brimming with ideas.

Christopher Parrott



Tool and Mastodon
Wembley Arena

I've wanted to see Tool for a fair few years now, and I've heard quite a lot of conflicting reports about their live act; "mesmerising" and "tedious" are the adjectives I've heard most often. It just goes to show that the one thing that can be agreed on is that Tool excels at dividing opinion. Everything they've ever done has attracted praise and scorn in virtually equal measure. Having shelled out £30 for a ticket, I obviously wasn't a hater, although I must admit that some of the more zealous fans I have spoken to have occasionally shown a disturbingly cult-like adulation for the band!

Arriving at Wembley Arena following a tube journey that was something of an epic in itself, we got to our seats just as the prog-metal monsters Mastodon had kicked off with one of the many anthems from their latest album, ominously titled *Blood Mountain*. Unfortunately, their set turned out to be a bit of a damp squib, as the half-full, half-interested Wembley Arena struggled to hear the tunes past the bowl-emptying levels of bass. A typical problem with loud opening acts at big arenas; yet even taking into account the absence of such

contributors to said album as Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age fame, I felt disappointingly ambivalent over their performance. Fortunately, the last few tracks taken from *Leviathan* made up for this, setting the stage nicely for what would come next.

What followed was a tense, suspenseful wait for Tool, during which everyone who hadn't bothered to turn up for Mastodon filled up the arena. 45 minutes later the headliners appeared. Front-man "Maynard" James Keenan, only 5'7", was utterly dwarfed by the rest of the band (average height 6'4"), but clearly marked out by his bright orange jacket and bright red Mohican. Indeed, it really must be added here that Tool's stage presence really was something to behold, with Maynard sporting the *Taxi Driver* look against a background of video screens displaying the bizarre quasi-mystical-sci-fi-bullshit art of Adam Jones. Thus all doubts about this not being Tool were systematically removed like any kind of termite or roach!

As soon as the distinctive introduction to *Stinkfist* begun to ring out, the arena erupted into mass jubilation; strange when you consider that the song alludes to a sex act! Indeed, the lyrical content on most of their songs has a fairly subversive element to it, such that they have often attracted the ire of religious groups. Then again, the actual sincerity of the implied hedonism or 'Satanism' is quite debatable. They then made the frankly unusual choice of making *Swamp Song* their only inclusion from their first proper full-length, *Undertow*. It certainly sent some people off-kilter, but went down a killer with the crowd nonetheless, even if it was a fairly straightforward hard-rock piece compared with the trance-like progressive metal most fan boys have come to worship Tool for. Before long they had launched into *Jambi*, which was followed by *Schism*, thus showing off their evolution well in the space of four songs' range. So far, so pleasantly surprised!

"Good evening! I have good news and I

have bad news" bellowed Maynard. "I'll start with the good news. Good news: On drums, Danny Carey; Irish! On guitar, Adam Jones; Welsh! And on bass, Justin Chancellor; English! (Got the most cheers, naturally) And the bad news is: there is no bad news!" I'd pretty much guessed from the lack of *Sober* that this was Tool on a high, something confirmed as they proceeded to plough through most of *10,000 Days* in the space of the next hour.

Despite doubts from many, including myself, that this album was leaning too much towards the kind of alterna-pop produced by Maynard's other big project APC (A Perfect Circle), songs such as *Rosetta Stoned* and *The Pot* came across much better live and were fantastically well received, whilst the solemn title track itself was almost overshadowed by the accompanying laser show. But of course, they had come with the intention to rock, and rock they did with their mathematically-derived prog opus *Lateralus* and *10,000 Days* opener *Vicarious*. And then they triumphantly finished with the angst-ridden epic, *Ænima*, a rant against their adopted home of Los Angeles inspired by late comedian Bill Hicks. The band then bowed out for an extended standing ovation at the end, with an intense feeling of euphoria throughout. If there was a song I would have personally liked them to have played, it was *Parabola*; but now that would've been too perfect.

Alex McKittrick

The Sunshine Underground
King's College London Union

The Sunshine Underground are one of a number of new bands coming out of Leeds. They make up part of the emerging New Rave (or, as the Metro describes them, "funk-punk") scene - think Klaxons, but with tunes. We set off on a cold November Tuesday to go to the KCL Student Union, a

cosy venue with a perfect atmosphere for a band of this type, expecting a torrent of drunken indie dance and glowsticks.

Supports Friendly Fires and Ghost Frequency did almost as little to impress as the bar prices. Friendly Fires were appropriate perhaps in style but all their songs seemed to blend into a rather uninteresting twenty minutes. More time song writing, less time buying confetti perhaps? Ghost Frequency were totally out of place with their brand of muddy emo and received little encouragement from the audience.

The Sunshine Underground were therefore received with relief and excitement when they launched into set opener *Wake Up*. This was followed up immediately with perhaps their best known song, *Put You In Your Place*. It was at this point that the crowd really started to liven up - the crowd was jumping in unison for nearly the whole night. The great songs came thick and fast, not least their "smash number one hit" (perhaps in French Guiana...), *Borders*. Perhaps disappointingly, *You Never Party*, not a bad song in itself, seemed a little flat and the crowd didn't respond to it, perhaps because it was the only non-album song in their set. *Commercial Breakdown*, the penultimate song, built the crowd up to a massive climax with energetic singing and dancing, ready for the final song *Raise The Alarm* - complete with trademark manic cowbelling and a stage invasion.

Despite a lack of communication with the crowd, the band gave a great performance, with a tight dancey rhythm section accompanying their indie-pop tunes. As there was, disappointingly, no encore, all that was left to do was for the band to throw microphone stands at each other and for us to claim trophies of an extremely memorable, if exhausting, night before the long journey home. This kind of thing is what indie gigs are all about.

Toby Shaw and Dominic Conquest



album review



The Panic Channel
(ONE)
(Capitol)
★★★★☆

Some albums and in fact many albums I love are like fine art, a delicate montage of strokes, made up of a foreground, subject, background and often naked artists' muses. They layer emotion in thick oils, lead the eye and subject you to vistas beyond belief. But that isn't what (ONE), Panic Channel's debut album is like. No, this is not a Constable, this is a Pollock - a canvas that the artist has thrown everything in the studio at. This is not a child's painting - that beautiful innocence is the realm of Bjork - and it isn't a crap painting either - hell I could splash a bit of paint on a canvas. This is a Pollock, a careful blend of chaos and colour, so dependent on personal opinion.

Modern rock has been defined by the likes of Pearl Jam and when Jane's Addiction released *Strays* the move into the more conventional realm of hard rock lost some of their core fan base. *Strays* was a great album but the loss of Eric Avery meant the loss of funk. His replacement came in the form of Chris Chaney, a bassist who took huge scoops of tone and tube distortion and smothered it over Navarro's sweet licks. The album was still good and Perry's voice still worked so it was a shame to see the band split, again. Alas, all was not lost, the remnants of the Jane's Addiction; Steve Perkins, Chris Chaney and Dave Navarro went on to form The Panic Channel with vocalist, Steve Issacs (of little previous fame). The result is this Pollock of rock. It is balanced, well produced and a wonder to hear. There is no harmonic double flat isotropic scales here, it is just good old fashion riffs and power ballads, yet done well.

Take *Blue Bruises*; coming in towards the end of the album this song is nothing too special, has been done before and is predictable, but performed with relish and talent it sounds pretty darn good. Like Audioslave, just changing the singer of a group will never reinvent it. *Said You'd Be* and *Outsider* both reminded me of tracks from *Strays* and *Ritual de lo Habitual* - laid back melodies, lots of guitar delay interspersed with brief licks and a milky bass line but it never gets as painful as Audioslave trying to perform RATM songs at Brixton Academy. On closer inspection there is depth to the lyrics. *While Said You'd Be* takes a swipe at the possible false promises of Farrell for the brief reformation of JA, *Outsider* is Issac's realisation that the band behind him is exactly that and something their long history will mean he is never an integrated part of.

From the Queens of the Stoneage-esque opener, *Teahouse of the Spirits*, to the closing *Lie Next to Me* it is easy to dismiss this album as generic and just a little bland and on the surface it is - I mean a Pollock is just splashed paint, right? Wrong! Under the surface there is complexity and order and that's what sets this long player apart from all the other American rock band releases.

Nick Simpson

releases

single reviews

AFI
Love Like Winter
(Polydor)
★★★★☆

A Fire Inside have always been a band that has passed me by. Even though I have my finger on the pulse of the American punk scene, I have never bothered to give them

a try. Perhaps I never bought their faux-Goth image, or maybe I didn't want to enjoy the music of someone who voluntarily calls himself Davey Havoc (I never bought stage names either). Probably both. So here I am, trying to make amends for those times I may have been a little judgmental and condescending.

As it turns out, I was right. AFI lack the grit and guts of many of their peers. *Love Like Winter* is full of thin synth orchestra, slow hollow verses and only picks up pace in the chorus. The overall feel is of a band trying to develop a more diverse sound. Of course, this isn't always a bad thing, but it's generally accepted that when punk musicians try to adapt musically it rarely works (i.e. Angels and Airwaves, +44, The Ataris). The song is lyrically bland "*She bit my lip, and drank my war, from years before*", with Davey Havoc's weak whine adding nothing to them.

I come away from this song feeling disappointed. AFI have a large fan base, who must like them for a reason. Their earlier albums are meant to be very good, so why the departure from their hardcore roots? My guess is that these guys are growing up and have had enough of playing music for under-21s. Is this inevitable? I don't know, but let's hope that other punk bands don't go down the same road to mediocrity.

Francesco Padorno

Red Hot Chili Peppers
Snow ((Hey Oh))
(Warner Music)
★★★★☆

The Chilis, you've got to love them, are the age of your parents but still churn out double albums and stadium tours like nobody's business. Their latest release is from Stadium Arcadia, an album which follows their line of increasing commercialism. This is less of a criticism and more of an observation; when any guy hits forty, he is going to have a bit of a midlife crisis and get into easy listening, which is essential what this is. Gone is the genius of *Scar Tissue* or *Other Side* and the funk of original guitarist, Hillel Slovak, that has not resurfaced since it was last seen in diluted form on *Mother's Milk*, the first release after Hillel's death in 1987. To the modern fan this is probably their dream Chili's single though. Catchy, warming and stereotypical of their recent work it is true chart-fodder, but beyond that it is just another milestone in the decline of one of the 90s greatest groups.

Nick Simpson

The Hours
Ali In The Jungle
(A&M)
★★★★☆

Bands like The Hours are ten a penny these days and apart from their art-rock roots displayed passionately by a Damien Hurst design for their EP cover there isn't much else to tell them apart from the crowd. Razorlight, Snow Patrol, The Zutons et al. wrote the book and The Hours are just reading it, but as Alan Bennett can prove, a fine reader can make even a tired book interesting.

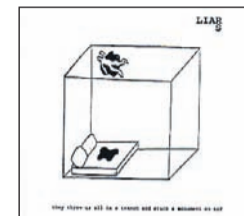
Ali in the Jungle can be summed up as guitar music and emotional men. Bare-bones drumming, a twee piano line and a soundclip from the *Rumble in the Jungle* commentator do nothing for breaking the stereotype. But just like hearing Johnny Borrell's backstage version of *Golden Touch* from Glastonbury I can't help but fall in love with the sentiment which wraps this song in a silver lining.

It is futile telling myself the album is going to be a mush of less thought-out and poorly-penned songs because the single is great and memorable - something popular music lacks in abundance. For that The Hours deserve credit but don't hold your breath for a spectacular follow up.

Nick Simpson



classic album



Liars

They Threw Us All In A Trench And Stuck A Monument On Top
(Blast First)

We now head off on a complete tangent to my last classic album, the indietastic debut by Easyworld. Few bands keep you guessing like Liars (pictured above), and their most recent albums have kept then on the murky side of obscurity (though I know there's at least one other person at IC who is a fan, I Facebook stalked you). On stage you will confront 7ft tall man beast Angus who dated Karen O of Yeah Yeah Yeah's fame and likes to wear night dresses and giant bear gloves. Their back catalogue includes a concept album about witches, a concept album about a drum who journeys to Mt. Heart Attack, and some very obscure and abstract EPs.

Though I love Liars even when they write abstract songs called *If you're a Wizard then why do you need Glasses?* I can see how it wouldn't be to everyone's liking. However, their debut album *They Threw us all in a Trench and Stuck a Monument on Top* is indisputable genius. It eerily predicted the whole New York Punk-Funk-New-Wave-whatever scene, and was indeed created in New York. I can hear the seeds of bands like !!!, The Rapture and LCD Soundsystem in songs like the amazing *Mr. You're on fire Mr.*, and the rest is full of sharp rhythmic guitar music, aped by people like Moving Units and a gazillion others. There is a real deconstructive and abrasive feel to a lot of the album as well, certainly inspiring bands like Whirlwind Heat.

They Threw us... begins with monotone singing and various bits of household percussion in the form of the song *Grown Men Don't Fall in the River Just Like That*, before bursting into machine-gun sharp drums and guitar, with a scene-starting funky bass line and a rousing chant of *Can you hear us!* It's gloriously messy and chaotic. *Garden was Crowded and Outside* boasts my favourite typewriter solo (I actually know of three songs with typewriter solos) and *Nothing is Ever Lost or can be Lost my Science Friend* does something unholy to a drum with a delay effect. Liars continue messing with sound on *We Live NE of Compton* where the whole band seem to be somehow sucked backwards into an aural point before the song bursts into pure danceable punk-funk joy.

Many people have been turned off Liars by their more recent and highly abstract albums, to the extent that they forget how the band started. *They Threw us...* sounds achingly cutting edge even now, five years after its release. It has managed to influence (or at least pre-empt) not only many bands but also several scenes and is more exciting, more inventive and just plain better than any of them. You are missing a vital piece of the musical jigsaw that was the turn of the millennium if you do not own this album, a piece just as important as *The Strokes' Is This It?* And the last track on the album is 30 minutes long... 'nuff said!

James Millen

Meet the future of the indies

ANNA HALL

Going with our independence theme this week, **James Millen** has a word with **Jeremy Warmsey**, who is on **Transgressive Records**, after his recent gig at **93 Feet East** and **Matty Hoban** introduces **Blood Red Shoes** who have released records through many indie labels



Blood Red Shoes: Laura-Mary Carter (left) and Steve Ansell (right) and below; Jeremy Warmsey (far-left)



There was that tingle in the air that told me it was time to head out to East London again, a magical land full of curry houses and trendy accountants. The draw was Jeremy Warmsey, a fine singer-songwriter who combines indie with laptop wizardry. I took my children on the green line (daddy loves you), and we avoided the gauntlet of Indian food outlets that is Brick Lane to reach the trendy warehouse-esque arts and experimental music venue 93ft East.

The first band on was run by Jeremy's keyboardist Tom Rodgeron. It was all rather abstract, with Saxamophone and a drummer drumming with pencils. But then at the end it got LOUD, and you, I and apple pie knew LOUD is good. So they saved themselves.

We missed out on next band Absentee since some brash rogues accosted us from across the street at Vibe Bar. These handsome scoundrels were none other than Future Corpses, Imperial's only decent band (you heard me Jazz&Rock, what ya gonna do about it eh?) They seem to have upped their game from post-rock-by-numbers-+violin to rocking a bit like really early (and I mean really early, scenesters) Biffy Clyro, a comment that I was sure was going to bring me pain, but instead found hugs. Aw, youse guys!

I chaperoned the kids across the road and back into 93ft East for a nifty £3.50 pint of Asahi (I'm so cool), and awaited Mr. Warmsey. Now I was rather excited, being quite a fan, and was curious as to how he'd reconcile his heavily lap-

top altered music live. Another favourite of mine, Martin Grech, gets over the technology boundary by turning all his live songs into metal. One can but dream. So onto the stage strolls young Jeremy, with his indie-boy haircut and black-rimmed rectangular glasses. He launches into the pleasant jangle/marching band song *I promise* to the delight of the crowd.

Live he uses a standard set up, bass guitar, keyboards, drums, an underused laptop and himself switching between keyboard and guitar. The band is very tight, and relies on no fancy effects. The best way to sum up how it sounded was given by Jeremy himself later in our chat: "We do cover versions of Jeremy Warmsey songs". It was perfectly satisfying in general, due to Jeremy's great voice and the general musicianship and quality of song writing. It fell down when he decided to do a slightly limp acoustic version of *5 Verses*, an otherwise amazing song, that would require some technical gymnastics to pull off live.

He's only one album, an EP and a spattering of singles in, so there wasn't so much material. Highlights included forthcoming single *I believe in the way you move* and album opener *Dirty Blue Jeans*. I was surprised at how perfect his voice was, I suspected that it might be a bit hit-and-miss from record, but a heavy touring schedule has kicked it into shape. There was at least one new song featured, and initial thoughts are that he ain't gonna be a one album guy.

I was ushered into the backstage dressing room for a chat, conducted in a rather jaunty side-by-side fashion since we were being filmed. Turns out that Jeremy grew up in the pleasant London suburb of Kingston. He began writing at the age of 16 on his own, a habit he has stuck to (except recent collaborations with his keyboard player). He wasn't really exposed to a scene, just schoolmates with whom he formed the odd, and not very good, band. The experience of being in going-nowhere bands, and the freedom of not having to make compromises kept him focused on solo work. He had a quite brilliant club night called *Jeremy Sings the Hits* where he would do covers of songs by Bob Marley, At the Drive-In and the Smiths.

All his composition is now done with your standard bedroom gear and an acoustic guitar for the very cool Transgressive Records. Jeremy doesn't stick to a set compositional style, little scraps of lyrics build with little scraps of melody and then are thrown together to make something beautiful. He prides himself on never having written a lyric whose purpose he couldn't explain. You should check out *5 Verses* in particular, where quite a beautiful story is spun.

I ask Jeremy whom he considers his musical peers and he clearly struggles, in the end deciding to say his music life is too self contained to be thinking about others. He

worries enough about losing inspiration, about the day when the first two barren hours in the studio turn into a barren day, a barren year etc. Perhaps he finds comfort in his supportive fan base, built up on the internet, using forums such as MySpace and a blog. He likes to demystify the concept of a musician up on a stage by familiarising with people, and admires Lilly Allen for her very human blogs (though he is seemingly unaware of the hideousness of her music). Plus a blog gives him something to do when he's off tour!

And it has been quite a tour, starting in the summer with festivals, supporting various bands through September (such as the Mystery Jets), and culminating with his headline tour, of which tonight is his last night. Now he will head back into the studio do some remixes of a Larrakin Love song, and a Tilly and the Wall song. Busy times ahead for this imaginative young man, it's certainly worth going to the link below.

Jeremy's new single "I believe in the way you move" is out on December the 18th and his debut album "The Art of Friction" is out now

www.myspace.com/jeremywarmsey

Brighton knocks out band after band with ease. There is a good chance though that you only know a few of them. You may know the likes of The Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster – who are apparently still going – and the naughty things they want to do to your mum. There is also Electric Soft Parade who are now releasing records through Truck Records. On the female front, there is Electrelane who had albums recorded by Steve Albini (he recorded Nirvana's *In Utero*

and The Pixies' *Surfer Rosa*). Along with these better known bands, there was also another great group called Cat On Form (2001-2004). This short-lived band were young, energetic and frankly what everyone needed at that time. They have since produced many off-shoots and here is one of them, Blood Red Shoes.

Blood Red Shoes could exceed the popularity and brilliance of Cat On Form, but to compare them to their old bands is besides the point – especially considering that of the two of Blood Red Shoes only one has been in the aforementioned. This duo – Laura-Mary Carter, guitar and vocals and Steve Ansell, drums and also vocals – make music that is simultaneously melodic, raw and accessible. By their own admission they say that, "We don't tend to sit on straightforward structures or ways to play our instruments because we'd get bored and we don't want to make cheap-shit predictable music."

They also have an impressive work ethic; I saw them play three times in what must have been a month-and-a-half, and mostly unintentionally. They say, "We've notched up about 120 live shows and 4 singles. We reckon we've worked pretty hard." I'd agree with them and they're determined to not rest on the laurels of their former bands.

It is also a well-meaning determination when they say, "We want to move people; make them dance or shout or get excited, and we don't want to come off like rock stars or some amazing otherworldly beings!" Otherworldly? Never, when they make this world so much fun.

Their latest single, "You Bring Me Down" out now

www.myspace.com/bloodredshoes

DARKDAZE



Transgressive behaviour

Now meet Toby L, co-founder of Transgressive Records, the independent label that signed Jeremy Warmley, Gregory Mead had a word with him

Starting out with an ambitious plan creating a label that was "ethically sound and that would release the best records in the world", Transgressive has progressed beyond what most people would expect. Currently responsible for putting out a seemingly endless list of great artists including The Young Knives, Ladyfuzz, Rumble Strips, Mystery Jets and Regina Spektor, they seem to be going from strength-to-strength with every release. With the recent signing of The Shins, Foals and Jeremy Warmley we're sure to see some great things from this independent London-based record label in the future. With an emphasis on allowing bands to create their own sounds without label interference, they are an ideal match to artists who don't want to end up sounding like every other commercialised band. A proper indie label.

Transgressive records have come a pretty long way since you started out, has it turned out anything like you expected it would back then?

We were always ambitious to create an important, iconic, and trustworthy music source - purely because we want to help represent artists the way we feel they're supposed to be portrayed. So many quality acts become disillusioned in the music industry - we try to fulfil our acts' desires accurately and enthusiastically, whilst also providing great quality packaging/artwork, treats for those that buy the music... It's easy to be stagnant and do things on auto-pilot, but being involved with music/releasing artists is a gift and a wonderful opportunity - why be mediocre?

To now be in a position where we can compete in the charts with original, vital new music, that's subversive and challenging, yet infectious, as well as still release music on a very limited, collectible scale... It puts us in a unique and fascinating position. We've released over 50 records in two years, and we've poured our heart and souls into ensuring every single release is as strong as possible.

I assume you get plenty of demo discs sent in to your office regularly, what sort of factors would you be looking for in a demo before you decided to sign the artist (apart from them sounding good obviously...)

To be honest, don't over-hype yourself; good music talks, not a self-penned press-release or fancy sellotape to seal the Jiffy Bag. although, that said, it's nice to occasionally receive 'bribery' - such as miniature bottles of alcohol or chocolate. Although these tend to serve as distractions from the bands that do this elaborate/pricy procedure (perhaps that's the motive!).

But, jesting aside, be honest about what you're wanting to achieve, why Transgressive is THE label for you (if you feel it is!), and that's it.

We sadly don't accept many artists via demo submissions as we get sent a volume

which is insane. Best bet for new bands is to gig locally, build a following, gets lots of friends on your Myspace, send us a link, and we'll try our best to listen... Apologies that we're a bit crap sometimes - we don't spend huge amounts of time seeking out lots and lots of new things, as we have a lot of projects on at the moment... Maybe it'll change in a few months!

Up and coming and super popular London type bands seem to dominate your catalogue, are you looking to keep this format, or are there any plans to conquer the world with any big future releases?

This is a bit of a misconception we suffer with at the label; we're not THAT London - the bands we have are from as varied places as New York (Regina Spektor), Austria (Ladyfuzz), Brighton (The Pipettes) and New Mexico (The Shins), even the ones from 'London' are from the real suburbs.

We're just into music being good - where it's from is irrelevant... There's no map on our walls stating, 'Next - JAPAN!'. It's what-

It grows all the time! Doing a TV show was a natural one, too - 'music TV is lame... let's do our own!' And now 'rockfeedback tv' is on not just MTV2, but Channel 4, too. It's very humbling. Club-nights are great fun - whether our monthlies at Buffalo Bar, under 'the basement club' moniker, every 4th Thursday of the month, or the Transgressive Roadshows... It's so exciting to have that direct connection with music in the live capacity. Management is equally rewarding - Johnny Flynn, who we've just started working with, is a genius. We also publish The Noisettes, too - a former one-off singles act... They're touring with Muse in Europe as I type; blimey...

Being an indie record label, how do you deal with the actual business side of things (artistic control etc) do you have any sort of model for this?

The model is the artist comes first, and we're slaves to their cause (or thereabouts). However, we will step in and give advice/prodding when we feel it is necessary - just trying to motivate/encourage, and make sure whatever magic it is they've unearthed for themselves, that it stays intact and that we might be able to help preserve/enhance it!

Anything we should keep an eye out for in the near future from you guys?

2007 is going to be stellar. This is why:

FOALS. Our amazing new signing. The best dance-rock band for years, so intelligent, so visceral, and shockingly stunning live.
MECHANICAL BRIDE. She's awe-inspiring, and so talented for years so young.

THE SHINS. Third album in, and we're lucky to be putting out this incredible record.

JEREMY WARMSLEY. His 2nd LP is due in 2007 - he's a genius, and a father to the emerging folk scene. A true star.

BATTLE. At long last... the astonishing debut LP. It was worth the wait.

Finally, where do you see yourself in 10 years time? Still working in the music industry, TV or both?

Goodness knows; it's day by day, the only masterplan is to keep rep-ing amazing musical talent, and trying to do things the way we feel they should be done. We're probably deluded beyond belief, but - so far - it's feeling good.

Other independent labels

The Beggars Group is the largest independent label in the UK, it consists of 4AD, XL recordings and Beggars Banquet. They possibly will be putting out future releases of Blood Red Shoes. Rough Trade are consistently good and have been going for ages. Matador has put out Pavement and Interpol amongst other goodies and Southern are excellent for your more avant garde music.



Clockwise from top-left: Foals, The Shins, Ladyfuzz and The Pipettes

ever's unique and special. I'm from High Wycombe (urgh), and Tim who I co-run the label with, is from Essex.

I know you got into the music industry at a young age, but how did you actually get started with Transgressive Records?

Tim + me + meet at a gig = chat in a pub = TRANSGRESSIVE! We felt like we'd known each other for years, before we had... It was a real meeting of tastes and insights... And several years experience of blagging on guestlists for our music-writing (Tim used to write 'Roadkill', a great fanzine; I used to edit, but still overlook rockfeedback.com). The label naturally progressed...

Any advice for budding young record label executives out there?

Only release music you know innately is important and vital, or you'll flounder. There's no such thing as an easy shilling, and people will smell a fake. Just work with artists that you know HAVE to be making music, and whose motives are pure and undying towards their cause. Greatness is universal.

You seem to be branching out into other aspects of the music industry, broadcasting, managing etc, any future plans to expand on these?

Independent Thought

The independent music media is broadly described as the music media that is self-contained – and tends to be of smaller scale – and not belonging to mainstream thought and large media companies, either in print or on the internet, **Matty Hoban** looks into the alternatives to the mainstream music press

This may seem obvious but just as music needs independent labels; it also needs an independent music media. The spirit of independence comes from often being opinionated and outspoken about music and promoting bands that are making music that may not get recognised by the mainstream. I think it is fair to say that those who care about music will work that little bit harder to discover more and the independent music media can be a great tool for that. The people who tend to work within the independent media tend to be just as enthusiastic about music as those willing to seek out alternatives.

It may surprise many that the *NME* belongs to IPC media which is a large publishing firm which also puts out *Loaded* incidentally. I say it may surprise because the *NME*'s focus tends to be on male guitar bands, that have been known to be called 'indie-rock', despite many of these bands being on major labels (as always, there are exceptions). With more mainstream publications, the communication of opinions and thought can be controlled and there have been some examples of this influence in the *NME*, in certain album polls and various features. Being an independent publication means retaining independent thought and focussing on what makes music brilliant and communicating this in an enthusiastic way.

Before you start accusing me of major label and publications bashing, I am not writing to criticise but merely to inform. If

my opinions occasionally come through then that is all they are: opinions. In fact, I invite criticism from others; anything but apathy. So, if you like your music but constantly want to hear new things and experience new and interesting ideas then it is worth investing a bit of time and maybe a bit of money (if you're buying a magazine) in something that may challenge your initial ideas of what those same old chords and melodies can be.

You may also find it counter-productive for me to talk about other publications when I could be talking about bands making new and exciting music. Well, there is a grain of truth in that, but *Femm* is run off the volunteer writers' efforts and so we are limited in the amount of time and energy we have; it is far more worthwhile of you to go out and seek new pastures of ideas, which can be presented in a better way than in these pages. It is also good to know that there are alternatives and knowing what you are looking for considering most of the publications can't afford advertising.

So what is there for you to find out? There are fanzines, e-zines, online communities, pamphlets and more traditional looking magazines. Now you know pretty much everything, I can only elaborate. Fanzines (or zines) are what they sound like: magazines written by music fans and they're usually very cheap as it is very easy to word-process a few articles and put some pictures in and photocopy the results. When punk came along (thankfully), more fanzines were put out such as the famous *Sniffin' Glue*. Distributions of fanzines often just depend on the dedication of the creators and in London currently there is a deficit of zines.

One journalist who started off writing for a fanzine called *Communication Blur* – a zine run by the Poptones and formerly Creation record label boss, Alan McGee – is Everett True (originally known as Jerry Thackray). True has written for the *NME* and *Melody Maker* (when it was still around) and reported on the music emerging from Washington State,

USA in the late eighties and early nineties ie. the 'grunge' and early Riot Grrrl scene; he has very recently released a definite account of Nirvana called *Nirvana: The True Story*. For those who want more iconic background information, Everett True pushed Kurt Cobain in a wheelchair onto the stage at that Reading Festival performance. I had the good fortune to have a few words with Everett about the music press and various other independent media related things.

In more recent times, Everett was editor of *Careless Talk Costs Lives*, an independent magazine that lasted 12 issues (on purpose) and was published between January 2002 and November 2003. He [Everett] is now editor-in-chief of *Plan B* magazine which is now released monthly; is a good alternative (in my opinion) to the *NME* and *Q* if you ever grow tired of their bland journalism.

Since Everett has been involved in many publications – both independent and mainstream – I inquired as to which publication he is most proud of. He replied: "Probably *Careless Talk Cost Lives*, simply because that was the magazine we created out of nowhere; we had a specific plan and also, personally, that was the one [*Careless Talk Costs Lives*] I wrote every single cover story for. We viewed it specifically as art and we knew it was going to exist a specific amount of time. We had a sense of creating history with every issue."

Careless Talk Costs Lives was intended as a replacement to what the creators saw as a decaying British music press. By limiting themselves to 12 issues of the magazine, they created a sense of purpose. Also by running a magazine for a short amount of time, does it reflect music as disposable and Everett exclaims that, "Music is disposable. There is nothing wrong with seeing music as disposable. It is only the importance you choose place on it as a listener." Whilst saying this I feel True pipe into punk ethic as a reaction to over-pretentious music.

This becomes evident when he says, "In the late 60s/early 70s there was a pop-rock divide when bands started thinking that what they were doing was really important, with some kind of worth." He then goes on to mock the "Beard-stroking men playing 20-minute guitar solos because it was, 'Really important, man!'" Everett asserts that, "I'm not on the side of those people, I'm on the side of the disposable pop-kids, like Phil Spector and early Beach Boys. I think pop music is important, I still listen to things I listened to 30 years ago, but it should not make them anymore important. I think more people should treat music as disposable then you might not have people like

Bono or Chris Martin around. If people took them at their value they wouldn't have a career, because as soon as you have a career you take things for granted and stop trying."

This vitriol is what Everett is partly renowned for; it seems a product of a music fan going into music journalism, starting from opinionated zines and being disillusioned by the music business. I was interested in what he thought of the mainstream British music press at the moment (as he worked both at the *NME* and *Melody Maker*) and he replied, saying, "I don't really see the music press in Britain, I have no idea what that is." He expanded on this: "I saw a news story in my local free paper, saying that the *NME* had discovered women, which is nice, but I do wonder if they risk alienating their readership by writing about women. Of course, you have the *Observer Music Monthly* which is for people who listen to music once a month. I really just don't understand *Q*; if you hated music that much why would you bother putting together a magazine?"

On the subject of women in *NME*, he thinks that, "One suspects they [*NME*] think females making music is a fad, which is weird, because personally I think males making music is a fad and I wish it would stop. I think *Plan B* next year is not going to cover any men making music at all." This attitude is easily noticed from a lot of *Plan B* covers; bands with female members dominate a lot of the covers eg. The Gossip, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Cat Power and The Research recently. I chuckled at all of these unashamedly, but more matter-of-factly: "In terms of the role the music press plays overall. Well, everyone exists in their own tiny world; *Plan B* exists in its own world, so does *NME*. We [*Plan B*] happen to write about more bands. Which is kind of weird as the *NME* comes out every week." Of the [*NME*] now, he gets the impression that, "Conor [McNicholas, *NME* editor-in-chief] is a fan of music, which is good." He does concede however that, "I don't actually pick up the *NME*, it's not aimed at me, I'm not 13-years-old and illiterate." Personally for Everett, the music he discovers is through word-of-mouth and for me, that is also true



All Tomorrow's Parties preview

It is sold out and it is far away from London but the independent music festival, All Tomorrow's Parties' Nightmare Before Christmas is happening this weekend. If you are lucky enough to be going then here are the artists that will be playing, if you are not going then here is something to make you feel bad

All Tomorrow's Parties is the name of a brilliantly melancholic song by The Velvet Underground and also a Gibson novel; it is also the name of a music festival that has been going for 7 years.

Founded by Barry Hogan in 1999, it was created as an alternative to the large corporate faced festivals around at the time such as Reading. The setting was also in entirely different approach, it was to be based at a holiday camp in Camber Sands (now in Minehead, Somerset for this weekend). This provided a very intimate setting for bands who wouldn't necessarily be playing the main stage at V Festival.

Another simple premise of All Tomorrow's Parties (or ATP) is that they generally have musicians (or occasionally visual artists) to curate the festival. This means that they invite their favourite bands and performers to come along and play at the festival. This idea was best described by Thurston Moore (who is curating this weekend's Nightmare Before Christmas), when he said, "It's [ATP] the ultimate mixtape."

So, for those who can't stand being disgustingly muddy in a field surrounded by drunken idiots and being numbed by stadium rock, then ATP seems ideal. Previous bands/artists to curate the festival are Mogwai, Tortoise, Shellac, The Mars Volta and Autechre. This might give you some idea of the music you could expect to hear; if you've never heard of the above bands, then you may not have heard of a lot of the bands playing, but that doesn't mean they're rubbish. *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening also curated in the US version of ATP, so the festival does throw interesting line-ups. It is the personal approach which endears the festival to so many; it has more of a community than your average mainstream festival.

Anyway, onto this weekend, where a plethora of psychedelic, noise, punk and noisy-punk bands are playing. As I mentioned, Thurston Moore (guitarist and vocals of Sonic Youth) is curating and he

runs his own label called Ecstatic Peace, so a lot of the bands due to play at the festival are on this label. Other bands playing are performers that Thurston just loves, so if you know what Sonic Youth sounds like, you might know what to expect.

It might not surprise many to hear that Iggy and The Stooges are headlining, since they are one of the main influences on Sonic Youth. Iggy et al may be getting on in years but they still can tear it up like back in the day, so expect all the classics from *Raw Power* played loudly and also, statesman-like; their power has not yet diminished.

Obviously Sonic Youth will be playing, and so will The Melvins (pictured below), who have been around almost as long as Sonic Youth and inspired Nirvana (they both came out of the Washington scene in the 80s). It could be described as grunge but it is a dull and cumbersome definition when it is a lot more. The Melvins have a new album out (came out in October) called *(A) Senile Animal*, this may be a reflection on their age but I've had a listen to it and it doth rock muchly; look for a track called *Blood Witch* from the new album, I love it.

Another band that have been around for over 15 years are Bardo Pond, an American

psychedelic group with female vocals (and occasionally flute). But don't let the tag, psychedelia put you off, if it does, the guitars are edgy and the sound is large like early My Bloody Valentine. Their tracks are on the long side but their expansive sound needs it so they can get inside your head, have a fiddle around and exit through your earhole.

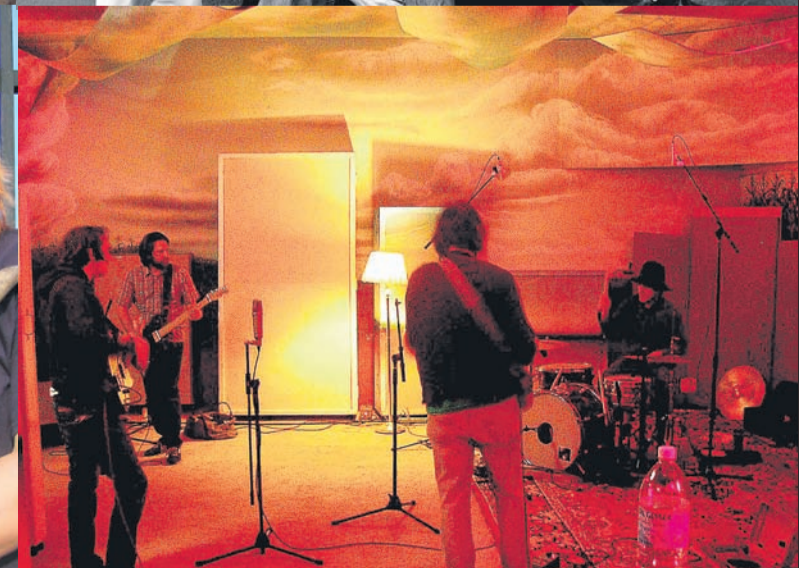
If psychedelia isn't edgy enough for you then hardcore pioneers Negative Approach who reunited this year. They along with Mi-

nor Threat (Fugazi's predecessor band) helped define hardcore in the 80s, and their experience will win you over easily.

This is just a small taster of what to expect, acid-drenched folk can be found in the form of Six Organs of Admittance and instant garage-punk tunes are presented by Be Your Own Pet (on Ecstatic Peace records). If you like psychedelic solos then go for Comets on Fire or if you want classic post-punk then go for Gang of Four.



The delightful chalets of old residence of ATP, Camber Sands in East Sussex



Clockwise from top-left: Be Your Own Pet, Sonic Youth (Thurston Moore is curating ATP), Comets on Fire psyching it up, The Melvins and Iggy and the Stooges in action

Bringing in the New Year

New Year's Eve is another chance to go to a house party full of strangers or a chance to go out, and get responsibly drunk and dance to *Billie Jean*. What alternatives are there for anyone? **Matty Hoban** looks into it from a music fan's perspective

I hate house parties. There are rare occasions when I enjoy a good house party, ie. the times when they have good music taste and give me lots of free beer. It is a rarity when this happens though. So I try to steer clear of these events and prefer to go to a gig. But when it is New Year's Eve, I do get invited round to a house party. Yeah, it was fun when we were underage and your parents are out on a Christmas cruise, but getting stoned and watching Christina Aguilera videos isn't my idea of fun.

What are the options open to you instead of a house party on New Year's Eve? Well, you can always go out into London and end up at an overpriced club or you could go to a gig that – now thanks to the new licensing laws – runs over the midnight hour. There are a few options open to you and in the spirit of this month's theme of independence, there are smaller gigs and an alternative to exploitative super-clubs. Enjoy this small selection.



Charlottefield: they are friendly really

Silver Rocket New Year's Eve Party
Charlottefield, [pockets]
Kentish Town Bull and Gate

This is personally where I will be heading as I often frequent the Silver Rocket club-night as they put on bands that I like: loud, noisy and angular rock. A band that make music like this is Charlottefield, from Brighton. They are like Dischord hardcore punk, but have a distinctly British post-punk edge. Also playing are [pockets], a two-piece from London who make a good racket. Along with this live musical feast, the Silver Rocket DJs provide a delicious combination of al-

ternative rock from the early 90s, proper indie rock, post-punk and Girls Aloud (the ultimate pop band). It is £7 advance, but cheaper I imagine if you sign up on their mailing list (google Silver Rocket). This is a steal considering your average New Year's Eve club night will cost around £30000 entry. But then because I am going, I don't want a load of idiots turning up and spoiling my fun; if you're nice then come along.

Frog New Year's Eve Party
Young Knives, Larrikin Love
Kentish Town Forum

Since we've interviewed one of the founders of Transgressive Records and introduced you to Jeremy Warmley, you may want to attend this Transgressive Records themed party. Frog is usually found at The Mean Fiddler on a Saturday and many of you will remember the nights queuing in the urinstink of the alley round from The Mean Fiddler. Maybe you will be happy to know that Frog are hosting their New Year's Eve party at the Kentish Town Forum (just down the way from the Bull and Gate); a fantastic venue where I have seen many a brilliant gig at.

For your aural pleasure, there will be Young Knives playing, as well as Larrikin Love and Rumble Strips. If you are into your British indie-pop then this should be on your wish-list. There will also be post-punk and danceable indie being DJed throughout I imagine.

For £25, it may seem a bit on the pricey side for a gig, but remember it is New Year's Eve and there is a lot of fun to be trampled on. So put on your skinny tie and get yourself down there.



Another New Year's Eve, another bunch of anonymous geriatrics

Spitz 10th Anniversary NYE Party
Billy Childish, The Chatham Singers
Spitz, East London

As mentioned in last month's *Femm*, Spitz is situated in East London. It has been home to many a greater band and performer and now it is 10 years old, it wants to celebrate that with a garage-blues legend, Billy Childish. The theme of the night is called 'Not the same old blues crap' and they didn't lie with the entertaining Chatham Singers in tow, it will be a different way to celebrate the new year.

Mad Hatter's Tea Party
And What Will Be Left Of Them?
Camden Barfly

If Camden takes your fancy then pop along to this and watch a band knock together rock, indie and electro in one unholy mess. Things are always messy up here though, if you like that kind of thing.



The Young Knives will be performing at the Frog NYE party

what's going on?



December 8th

The Charlatans at *Brixton Academy*, £25
Peter Bjorn and John at *ULU*
Theoretical Girl, Kaputt, Awful Sparks at *Pleasure Unit*, £5
Morrissey at *Wembley Arena*
Chechny and the Rebels at *Metro*, £6/£5 flyer & cons
Xerox Teens, Chow Chow, Quad Throw Salchow at *The Fly*, £5/£4 adv
Scanners at *Brixton Academy*
Josh T Pearson, Tenebrous, HTRK at *Brixton The Windmill*, £5/£4.50 adv
Club NME: The Mighty Roars at *Koko*, £5
My Life Story at *Astoria*, £12
CSS at *Kentish Town Forum*
Children of Voodoo at *Archway Tavern*, £4/£3 NUS
Action Plan, Ripchord, Pull Tiger Tail at *Camden Barfly*, £6
Karim Fanous at *Spice of Life*, £6/£5
Concentration Face FREE GIG spectacular! - **Junkplanet, Pfaff, 4 Or 5 Magicians** at *Barden's Boudoir*

9th

Damn Shames at *The Macbeth*, £5/£4 before 10pm
1990's at *Camden Barfly*, £7
Untitled Musical Project, We Are The Physics at *Buffalo Bar*, £5
Adventures in the Beetroot Field: FREE Warehouse Party - Rebus, Fields, Xerox Teens, Foals, Shitdisco, Adventure Playground, Trash Fashion, Goose, Pull Tiger Tail at *Canvas*, FREE
Tapedeck at *93 Feet East*, £5/FREE before 8pm
Club Motherfucker - Planningtorock at *Barden's Boudoir*, £6/£4 before 9pm
Placebo, Howling Bells at *Wembley Arena*, £25
The Tacticians at *The Luminaire*, £6
Lostprophets, From First To Last, Bring Me The Horizon at *Hammersmith Apollo*, £18.50
The Low Edges, the Lea Shores at *Brixton The Windmill*, £5
Plaid at *The Bridge*
Metro Riots, Fear Of Flying, Laura Marling, Jack Penate at *93 Feet East*, £7

10th

Johnny Mental at *Camden Barfly*
Agaskodo Teliverek at *Buffalo Bar*, £5
Kaputt at *93 Feet East*, £2
Damien Jurado at *The Luminaire*
The Levellers at *Shepherds Bush Empire*
David Hurn and Four Seasons Television at *Bethnal Green Working Men's Club*, £4
586, Neon Plastix, Look Look (Dancing Boys), Smatka, The Total Drop, Bono Must Die, Bolt Action Five at *Brixton The Windmill*, £5
Shack at *ULU*, £16.50
WRECKfest all-dayer: Pale Horse, Trencher, Kill Kenada, Akira, twentysix-foot, Optimist Club, DJ Scotch Egg, Vessels at *Club Pop/Everything Must Go*, £8/9

11th

The Melvins, Flipper at *King's Cross Scala*
Eight Legs at *Notting Hill Arts Club*, £5/FREE before 8pm
Full Time Hobby Christmas Party - Tunng, Viva Voce at *93 Feet East*
Slovo at *Hoxton Square Bar and Kitchen*, £5
The Roots at *Shepherds Bush Empire*, £20
White Rose Movement at *Islington Academy*
AIDS wolf, PRE, Collapse, Look Look (Dancing Boys) at *Camden Barfly*, £6
The Books at *Queen Elizabeth Hall*, £15.00
Chris Corsano at *LSE Shaw Library*, £3
28 Costumes at *Camden Dublin Castle*, £5/£4.50 concessions
The Dirty Long Weekender - Open Mouth, Malachi Doyle at *Lewisham Dirty South*, FREE

12th

Mr David Viner at *The Enterprise*, £7/£5 adv
Birdpen at *Bull and Gate*
My Alamo at *Metro*
The Victorian English Gentlemens Club at *93 Feet East*
Charalambides, The Dead C at *The Luminaire*
The Roots at *Shepherds Bush Empire*, £20
Artrocker - The Video Nasties at *Buffalo Bar*, £5/FREE for members
Peter And The Wolf at *The Betsey Trotwood*, £6
Assembly Now at *Camden Dublin Castle*

13th

Jeremy Warmesley at *Kings College (KCLSU)*, £10
Clara Day at *The Gramophone*, £3
KIDS Christmas Party - The Young Playthings, Findlay Brown, The Wombats at *93 Feet East*
Daddy Long Legs at *The Wilmington*, £5
Darkest Hour, Between The Buried And Me at *Islington Academy*
Pete and the Pirates, Shake My Hand, Mexico at *Brixton The Windmill*, £4
The Mighty Roars at *The Fly*, £5
Dragonforce at *Astoria*, £14

14th

Airhammer at *Brixton The Windmill*, £4
David Hurn at *Clerkenwell Slaughtered Lamb*, £5
Black Wire at *Water Rats*
One More Grain at *Lewisham Dirty South*
Silver Springs at *Bull and Gate*, £4
Wry at *Buffalo Bar*, £7
Dr Octagon at *Cargo*
Part Chimp, Esquilax, Cutting Pink With Knives at *Barden's Boudoir*, £6
Moneen, Cancer Bats at *Camden Barfly*
Fionn Regan, Kid Harpoon at *Union Chapel*, £10.50
Clinic, Archie Bronson Outfit, These New Puritans at *Central St. Martins College*, £12.50

15th

The Walk Off, The Be Be See at *New Cross The Venue/Basement Bar*, £4/£3 NUS & flyer
Sky Larkin at *Camden Barfly*, £5 adv/£8 door
The Gemma Ray Ritual at *Lewisham Dirty South*
Pitchshifter, SikTh, Breed 77, Architects, Gallows at *Astoria*
The Sleeping Years at *12 Bar Club*, £5
The Rocks at *Camden At Proud*
The Bleeps at *93 Feet East*, £5/FREE before 9pm
Yeti at *Camden Barfly*
Silver Rocket - Reynolds, Kling Klang, Twinkie at *Buffalo Bar*, £6/£4 with flyer or NUS
Roland Shanks at *Brixton The Windmill*, £4

16th

The Tailors, Treecreeper, The Cedars, The Memory Band at *Brixton The Windmill*, £4
The Madeleines, The Wombats at *Nam-bucca*, £5
Northside at *ULU*, £11.50
Luxembourg, The Rocks, Piranha Death-ray at *Metro*, £5/£4 flyer
RoTa: Pfaff at *Notting Hill Arts Club*, FREE
I Was A Cub Scout, Letters at *Camden Purple Turtle*, £6
They Came From The Stars I Saw Them at *93 Feet East*
Hush The Many, The Chemistry Experiment at *Buffalo Bar*, £5/£4 adv
Thomas Tantrum at *Camden Barfly*, £8/£6

17th

The Pogues at *Brixton Academy*, £28.50
The Fontanelles, OnlyTheLonely, The Ripps at *Islington Lark In The Park*, £5
Cock 'n' Bull Kid, Miss Odd Kid at *93 Feet East*, FREE
Gallows at *Tufnell Park Dome*
Secondsmile, Meet Me In St. Louis, Yndi Halda at *Camden Barfly*
Dana Immanuel & the Greeks, David Goo, Matt Kebbell, Smoke Feathers at *Clerkenwell Slaughtered Lamb*, £5/£4
Music For Vampires: Black Christmas: Errors, 4 Or 5 Magicians, My Psychoanalyst, Dibidim at *Buffalo Bar*, £5

18th

Tenacious D at *Hammersmith Apollo*
The Dirty Long Weekender Christmas Party: Love Ends Disaster!, Open Mouth, Malachi Doyle at *Lewisham Dirty South*, Free!
Snow Patrol, Elbow, Fields at *Wembley Arena*, SOLD OUT
The Pogues at *Brixton Academy*, £28.50
The Battles Of Winter at *Pleasure Unit*, £5

19th

Snow Patrol, The Crimea, Guillemots at *Wembley Arena*
Silent Front at *The Vibe Bar*, FREE
Patrick Wolf at *Union Chapel*
Drugdealer Cheerleader at *Camden Underworld*, £10/£8 adv
Tenacious D at *Hammersmith Apollo*
James Yorkston at *The Luminaire*
Artrocker - Korova, Awful Sparks, Shock Defeat at *Buffalo Bar*, £5/FREE to members

20th

The Shadow Puppets at *The Vibe Bar*, FREE
The Foxes at *Camden Underworld*
Pharrell Williams at *Brixton Academy*, £35
Wry, Kaputt, the Lea Shores, Chow Chow at *Buffalo Bar*, £5/£4 flyer & NUS
Raging Speedhorn, Shaped By Fate at *Camden Barfly*, £7

21st

Prego at *On the Rocks*, £5/£4 flyer & cons
Mr Hudson & The Library, Invasion at *Buffalo Bar*, £5
Former Bullies, it's a buffalo at *Brixton The Windmill*, £4
Parker, The Haiku at *Purple Turtle*

22nd

Scout Niblett, Todd, Tenebrous, Viking Moses! at *The Luminaire*, £5 adv/£6 door
Ciccione, The Video Club, The Indelicates at *The Fly*, £3
BRNLV CLB III - Xmas Party - Applicants, Fuck Buttons, Keyboard Choir, Power Up! at *Water Rats*, £5 advance/£6 door

30th

Shit And Shine at *London Buffalo Bar*, £5

New Year's Eve - see feature

For more listings we recommend you go to Ents24.com for a huge, comprehensive list of what's going on. Our list is limited through time and study constraints and we try to give you an idea of what's on.

what's going on?

at the union dec 8th - dec 15th

WEDNESDAY 13TH

Pornstar Party

with bed and confession booth



Carlsberg, Tetley's & Blackthorn only
£1.30 a pint

Reef (all flavours) £1.75

FRIDAY 8TH DEC

MURDER MYSTERY

Theme Night

Friday 8th December 2006 20:00 - 02:00

Can you find the Murderer?
DramSoc Actors will be acting out blood bath murders all night!

Free entry all night if you are dressed up as a famous killer or murdered victim.

Drink offers include...



THURSDAY 14TH



JAZZ BIG BAND

ALSO ON

Fri 8th	Murder Mystery Theme Night
Tue 12th	Da Vinci's - Quiz Night
Wed 13th	Pornstar Party
Thu 14th	Jazz Big Band
Fri 15th	Christmas Carnival

FRIDAY 15TH DEC

Christmas Carnival 06

Friday 15th December, 20:00 - 02:00

Steve Lamacq



buy your tickets online now from
imperialcollegeunion.org/ents

£7

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Imperial College Union, Beit Quadrangle, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BB
The Union encourages responsible drinking. R.O.A.R. Student I.D. Required.

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I, Gamer



Michael Cook
Games Editor

I mistakenly signed up to the video game voters network a while back, not realising that they were American only, and additionally did very little indeed. The original idea was great – if gamers get democratically involved, they can help change their image. But at the end of the day, it boils down to no-one really caring about “the image”. Rock music went through far worse periods of unpopularity than being a target on the Daily Mail’s slow news day.

I think it also underlines the fact that we can be a bit hypocritical sometimes too. As much as we bemoan the business policies of Electronic Arts, no-one ever has the conviction to really boycott them en masse. Is it because they’ve used money to create a powerful monopoly over the market? Or is it simply that we’d rather play games than get bogged down in protests and politics? A bit of both? Maybe.

But maybe it’s just that gamers don’t know what they want any more. There was a time when we didn’t need to know – games were games, and you either played them or you didn’t. That’s a large contributor to a game’s status as “classic” – not just good design, but a lack of any real alternative.

So now that the Wii has finally made its way to these shores (pulling off the most impressive worldwide release out of all the next-gen consoles) are we really sure we want it after all? The Wiimote isn’t going to be an extension of your arm, and the virtual console isn’t going to be a cheap one-way ticket to retro heaven. Have we really thought about what next-gen means, or are we letting Nintendo play the gimmick card one time too many?

It seems unlikely that the Wii will beat the marketing machines of Sony and Microsoft, whatever happens, but both sides of Felix’s argument this week note the same thing – innovation, gimmicky or not, is required to keep the game alive. So whether you think we’re being played for fools, or whether Nintendo is finally going to take a risk that pays off, one thing seems certain – change means that someone is thinking, for better or worse. And if that doesn’t deserve being given another chance four years from now, then nor does FIFA.

Wii’ll be back in January. Fresh out of good puns though.

You can’t handle the truth!

Bigger kids make you hate them. Michael Cook in search of (E)A Few Good Men

There’s something very strange about people. Individually they all know, deep down, that Grim Fandango was a fantastic game, that Radiohead is whiny shite, and that Jude Law is as attractive as rotting sewage in a man thong. But get enough of them together, and by god you can be sure they’ll be lapping up the OK Computer Special Edition, and buying the Scratch n’ Sniff Jude calendars by the bucketload.

And it’s not that they’re buying rubbish that’s the problem. It’s the disturbing, twisted pleasure they seem to get from purchasing something that they know is utterly terrible. A question for you holier-than-thou readers sitting on the prosecution bench – if I gave you the chance to make a ridiculous sum of money out of this simple fact about shoppers, do you really think you’d turn it down?

Worse than this though – if you weren’t even gamers, if you were businessmen first and foremost? What then? Would you feel any guilt? Because there’s a lot wrong in Electronic Arts’ past, but the most common criticism – that they tend to churn out the same rubbish over and over just to make money – isn’t much of a criticism when you stop looking at them as a games publisher with a Markey share and PR issues, and start looking at them as something much simpler – a stock market value, and a six-month performance graph.

Fine, you can’t absolve every businessman of responsibility to the markets, but let’s make that point again before we go any further, just so everyone is clear on it – The Sims has sold, to date, more than sixteen million copies. You don’t need to know how good or bad a game is to work out that an expansion pack is a good business move.

So if you really want to get EA behind bars with an empty bank balance, you’ll need to get deeper within the problem. Why do people hate EA? Because they think they’re ruining “the Industry”.

It’s true that EA do themselves no favours in the press department. When they make the news it either involves the phrase “hostile takeover” or “employee conditions”, and they have acquired a large number of development houses in the past, it’s true. At a recent presentation to Imperial’s computing department, Rajan Tande, a lead programmer at Electronic Arts, said “I think they probably do deserve a lot of [the bad press]. But it’s also out of proportion.” In many cases, Electronic



Would Half-Life 2 have been released if Valve had lost to Vivendi and EA hadn’t stepped in to publish?

Arts has saved development houses from collapse, and brought together more effective groups of designers – long working hours are a fact of life for any games programmer. But hey, it’s easy to kick a multinational media corporation when it’s down.

A quite prominent example is their purchasing and liquidation of Westwood Studios. Many key figures left the studio after EA took the group from Virgin in the nineties – but those that stayed went on to create an award-winning sequel to Red Alert, and then went on to form EA Los Angeles with Dreamworks – a team that now has a track record including much of the Medal of Honor series, The Battle For Middle Earth and Command and Conquer 3. Did they break the magic of a well-oiled development studio, or did they find a new way to

use the talent, giving a chance to a team that wanted to stay isometric with Red Alert 2, even though the pressure was on to move to 3D?

And if you think Electronic Arts have got worse since then, then fast-forward to 2002 when a long process of lawsuits began between Sierra (later Vivendi Universal) and Valve Software began, beginning over a simple argument about license selling, and ending up with Vivendi attempting to wrench control of the Half-Life intellectual property from Valve. Evil corporations attempting to take control of franchises from developers? This sounds familiar. But Electronic Arts stepped into the ensuing chaos and signed a deal to publish Valve games on the high-street for the next few years. No asset-stripping. No design breaking. Just a mutual

co-operation that both companies benefited from without either taking any financial hit.

Why did Electronic Arts agree to step in and publish the games? For the money? The high-street version wasn’t in huge demand, and helping out Valve – a company that has now used Steam to rival EA as a games distributor – doesn’t seem like fantastic business sense from the company whose stock value rose by 300% in the first year of floatation. And yet, at the same time, it just doesn’t feel all that likely that they were just really big fans of Gordon Freeman. Maybe EA saw what was good for the market, for the industry, and decided to do it?

Or would that be too human a move for you all to handle? The defence rests.

Exhibits A-C : Maxis, Will Wright, and The Sims franchise

In the late eighties, Will Wright got together with Jeff Braun and published a game called *SimCity*. It was a huge hit, spawning a 1993 sequel and securing both Wright and the Sim brand as defining moments in gaming history to date.

However, the franchise began to decline in the mid-nineties. Games such as *SimCopter*, though ambitious in some ways, failed to meet well with the market, and the company began to run into trouble.

In 1997, Electronic Arts complete the acquisition of the Maxis brand, allowing them to give direction and funding to a development house that they knew had potential.

Will Wright wasn’t moved around, the company wasn’t liquidated, and until the release of *The Sims 2: Pets*, the

Maxis brand remained in all of their games.

Electronic Arts didn’t just see potential in Maxis itself - they saw potential in the structure of Maxis, in the people working in it.

Will Wright is considered as one of the leading lights in game design today, and The Sims has changed the face of both

casual gaming and simulation gaming forever. Could this have gone on without Electronic Arts’s power and funding? It doesn’t seem very likely.

And while many gamers would rather not have The Sims on shop shelves, far more are looking forward to Wright’s 2007 release, *Spore*. Great ideas only go so far – Electronic Arts has the power to prop up and support what they see as good gaming.



Hold it! Objection, m'lud!

Electronic Arts don't deserve sympathy nor money, explains James Freedman

Electronic Arts has over twenty-four years grown to be the largest third-party software publisher in the world, producing some of the most recognisable titles in the industry: The Sims, Medal of Honor, Battlefield 2, and the FIFA series to name but a few. However, despite its apparent popularity, it has achieved its position through a series of hostile market practices and is now abusing its position for its own short-term success – possibly putting the future of the entire industry in jeopardy.

EA pursues an extremely aggressive policy of securing intellectual property rights to popular franchises. This often takes the form of exclusive deals with sports governing bodies – for example, FIFA and the NFL or film studios – EA holds the rights to all Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter films, but also involves buying up smaller development studios purely for their trademark games. Over the years EA has purchased Maxis (Sim City and The Sims), Westwood Studios (Command and Conquer series), and Origin (Ultima and Ultima Online), often disbanding the studios and leaving understaffed teams to produce poor-quality sequels.

These sequels are the core of EA's current business plan. So many of its franchises are based on household names that represent once-good games: The Sims, Need For Speed, Ultima and Command and Conquer have all been fantastic in their time, but are now burdened with a slew of cheap follow-ups. The Sims 2 is now accompanied by no less than nine add-on packs, and C&C: Generals pales in comparison both to its genre contemporaries, such as Act of War: Direct Action, and even its predecessor in C&C: Red Alert 2. These sequels and add-ons typically feature marginally improved graphics to keep up to date with the latest hardware, the occasional new feature (although not generally fixes for bugs or exploits), and updated artwork – whether that be new furniture for The Sims, or this season's team kits for sports games.

The most crucial element of this is their ultimatum: When a yearly update is released, support is immediately pulled for the previous version. Microsoft still release security updates for previous versions of Windows, yet owners of EA's FIFA World Cup 2006 will not be seeing any updates now that FIFA 2007 is out – even though it was released only six months ago. Additionally, multiplayer game

servers are switched off, disabling what for many is the best part of a game, and these combined effectively forces people to upgrade every single year.

Even Battlefield 2, with its admittedly fantastic ranking system, faces discontinuation in the face of Battlefield 2142 – despite the fact that it has retained most of its playerbase due to its contemporary setting and realistic gameplay.

EA's most recent "crime" involves the Xbox 360 Marketplace. On older consoles, and on the PC, extra features in games are unlocked by either completing objectives or entering cheat codes. However, on the Xbox 360, players are forced to pay small amounts (£1-2) for each feature, leading many to accuse EA of selling incomplete games, almost conning people into handing over far more than their original £40.

So how does Electronic Arts get away with this? The answer to this is simple: Their exclusive licences give them a dominance of so many areas of gaming, effectively giving them a monopoly in individual genres. Games based on Harry Potter or The Lord of the Rings are practically guaranteed to sell, regardless of review scores or the



James Freedman, at the weekend. If only all journalism was this fun

actual quality of the game. Their pragmatic mindset prompts them to save money by not bothering to develop a high-quality game – to them, it is simply the numbers that matter. Many of their games sell on the success of predecessors – Command and Conquer, for example, and many prey on the ultimate of all salespersons – the screaming child. Every add-on for The Sims, is of course, a must have for every young fan, regardless of their minimal addition to gameplay. EA have also been known to stifle user-generated content – particularly in the case of Battlefield 2 – perhaps in the belief that (contrary to the obvious success of Half-Life's modifiability with Counter-Strike) the scarcity of

additional replayability provided by this will increase the sales of their rushed add-ons and sequels.

At the end of the day, Electronic Arts can get away with all this because the gaming community is, in general, fickle. Most potential customers will be swayed by a few stunning screenshots and the latest season's player stats, and this renders the hardcore community's only real option – voting by wallet – powerless.

Even those who would like to take a stand will find themselves grudgingly purchasing the latest game in a franchise – after all, it may be shoddy, but it is apparently better than the nothing EA are offering as an alternative.



EA generic sporting franchise No. 49802819274.3, now with copiously pouring sweat glands

Exhibits D-F : Battlefield 2, EA Sports, and online support

When you buy a game, you're told in almost every way possible that you're bound by legal and moral obligations to play the game once a day, every day, alone, where no one else can so much as hear it, and not to tell anyone else you own the game and *god forbid* you should lend the game to anyone without a copy themselves.

Of course, when it comes to what you can expect, they couldn't give a toss. Electronic Arts launch a

game, make claims as to what they're going to do in the future, and then sometimes do them. In the past, it didn't matter all that much if EA forgot about the game. You missed out on a patch, or an expansion pack you didn't want anyway.

But when most of the game's draw is an online



mode, and when you're playing on a console that completely relies on EA to keep the service going, it hardly seems fair that the ones profiting from you purchasing games are also the ones with the button that switches off the very thing you bought the game for in the first place.

It is, of course. It's plastered all over the EULA – you remember, it's the thing you scroll down very fast whilst chuckling during installation or, if you're a console gamer, the lines of text that flash on the screen for a fraction of a second before startup.

But legal documents don't excuse what is, essentially, wringing money out of gamers for something they've already bought countless times before.

Out now

With the Wii now on the shelves, the release schedules are erupting with quality launch titles that were held back, as well as the dregs of the Christmas launch window. The Wii hits the UK with *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, *Red Steel*, *Wii Sports*, and *Wii Play* all finding their way, if all goes to plan, to the EU region for launch.

Zelda has been described as "by far the best Zelda made", and despite the revised control system, is still going to be a key release game for the Wii. If you've liked it in the past – even if you haven't liked it in the past – the new Zelda is worth a look.



Red Steel - Pow! Zap! Kaching!

Red Steel, however, gained almost as much press coverage as *Twilight Princess* after it released enough press statements and explained just how its control system would work. By controlling a gun or a katana with the Wiimote/Nunchuk system, you're given an unprecedented control over what you can do.

But like all Wii titles, don't expect to start busting moves like *Kill Bill* on a sugar rush – you'll need to get used to the new control system before you can start disarming enemies instead of lopping bits off them.

You'll find *Wii Sports* bundled with the console itself, and if you buy *Wii Play* at release you should get a second Wiimote with it, making the entire package far more multiplayer-friendly for the festive season.

Sports and Play are the best way to show off what the Wii can currently do – *Zelda* is a solid adventure, and *Red Steel* has a great visual appeal, but for sheer variety and colourful Nintendo



It's been a long time coming.

inventiveness, the *Wii* range of titles are probably the games to be looking for first and foremost this Christmas.

If you're not a Wii player, then there's still other games being released, but you might find that the best are long released. *Captain Scarlet* for the PS2? *Ghost Recon* for the 360?

It's the dregs. Like that cheap Christmas chocolate you find in a Disney advent calendar, you're into Christmas now whether you like it or not. Best to save for the new year.

Unreal Tournament 2007's coming, after all ...

A long, long road to Revolution

What makes Nintendo's products so timeless? Tony Plana checks the odds on Nintendo's latest gamble

The pre-orders were filled weeks ago, and now wii finally have a chance to play Nintendo's latest step in the console tree.

With inferior technology, but several innovative twists, Nintendo once again are staking their success on lateral thinking, and by standing in a very different corner to Microsoft and Sony.

Finally, people are talking Nintendo again. In the past, way in the past, they were gaming. There was nothing else worth talking about. But as new technologies game in they were pushed out by a greedy pursuit of shinier surfaces.

Don't get me wrong – Nintendo made a lot of cock-ups, and in some cases their stubborn desire to oppose certain changes has just shot them in the foot. They snubbed the CD, they snubbed the DVD (and still are) and they pooh-poohed the internet. But one thing never changed – they always played.

Nintendo lovers are a special kind of fanboy. It's groupieism that's gone bad, eaten too much sugar, and then watched an entire season of South Park in a day. But read anything written by Nintendo guru designer Shigeru Miyamoto, and in an instant you can understand where that love springs from.

They loved the SNES, the N64, the Gamecube. They loved everything, whether it was good or not, and that worldwide dedication is what let Nintendo take a new chance each time around. They've never stopped pushing the ideas they had, no matter how much they were ridiculed.

So the question that everyone seems to be asking, as they do every time Ninty make a new stride, is "is it the Big One?" – is it going to fall into Great Gaming Mistakes of History, or will this take us into the realms of playing that we couldn't even conceive of previously? And even though we always ask it, out of a kind of courtesy, this time they really seem to have struck a chord with the public. They can boast about a \$200 mn marketing budget for the Wii, but the truth is this: this console has marketed itself.

You don't get that a lot. The 360 pissed cash all over the American media, until you couldn't switch on a TV without seeing a grinning bald guy. Sony – well ... Sony are just Sony, and in a respectful, mafia-like way, if Sony bring out a piece of electronics, then you feature it if you can. But Nintendo really only hold sway with people who are already gamers. The Mainstream don't need to mention them unless they're talking about the eighties.



Zelda: Twilight Princess is one of the most anticipated games for the Wii's launch window. No-one does first-party gaming like Nintendo

And this is why the Wii fascinates me. I'm kind of interesting in playing Tennis with the Wiimote, I guess. And I like Nintendo as much as the next gamer. But the Wii has got people gaming almost without them realising it. And that's going to prove invaluable in years to come, both for industry profits and for gamers, too – a richer demographic means a more varied release schedule.

There is some concern, though, because in Nintendo's quest to take over the non-gamer they may find ... not much else. Should you get a Wii? Yes, probably. Zelda is

as swords-and-shields-y as you've come to expect, and Super Mario Galaxy will be a brilliant use of the controller, no doubt. But don't be fooled – this technology isn't perfect. And ultimately, if Nintendo want to woo non-gamers, they're going to need a different kind of game than we're used to. Sure, Super Smash Bros. Dojo is going to be as frantic as you'd expect. But the other console contenders probably aren't too worried.

Why? It's not because they're just going to throw cash at the problem until it goes away. Well, not entirely, anyway. It's mainly because they know that the Wii won't satisfy you.

And that's the bottom line. You'd have to have a very good argument to deny that Nintendo's offerings are some of the finest first-party software ever devised. But despite this, there's never enough substance. Smash Bros. will be a great party game, and Zelda will, of course, be gripping single-player. But there's nothing as weighty as Halo 3, nothing as deep as Final Fantasy, nothing as epic as World of Warcraft. Nintendo can easily get a Wii in every home, but it won't be alone for very long.

And so that's the question you need to mull over if you weren't fortunate enough to get a pre-order in

for December 8th. If you decide to get a Wii in the new year, you'll be hard pushed to regret the purchase. But you're also going to wind up wanting a Playstation 3 or an Xbox 360 before the end of the year.

In amidst all the bitching and name-calling of the run-up to next-gen, Microsoft's Peter Moore told Reuters, "People are going to buy two [machines] ... they're going to buy an Xbox ... and a Wii. For the price of a PS3." That wasn't idle smack talk. Whether the Wii really woos the public will be seen, but gamers may need to get "the good stuff" from more than one dealer – and Sony and Microsoft know it.



Nintendo's entire philosophy has been that of fun, and this came up again and again in the press releases and build-up to the release of the Wii. It's hard not to be drawn in

Hands on: Why Wii will rock you

A wiivolution? Hugh Stickley-Mansfield's been there and done that, and it's all in the wrist apparently

For years, people have been saying that games aren't as good as they used to be, and for years they have been wrong. The most common complaint is a lack of innovation – that modern games rely too much on swanky graphics and neglect innovative or engaging gameplay, while in retrospect it is considerably harder to spot the older games that were sold on grounds of their shiny graphics since, after a couple of years, they all begin to look equally unimpressive.

But these blinkered retrophiles seem to ignore the vast swathes of innovative games that have come along over the years as well as the formulaic pap of yesteryear, though in many ways the latter is for the best. But all the same – how can one deny how original games such as *Worms*, *Black & White*, *Pikmin*, *Radiant Silvergun*, *Rez*, *Grim Fandango*, even the likes of *Super Mario Sunshine* and countless others have been?

The clichéd complaint in these circumstances is of “selective amnesia”, but this is exactly the sort of thing that goes on; new games in the *Metal Gear / Metal Gear Solid* franchise are criticised as being indicative of the insistence on constant sequels to a successful idea instead of being praised for constantly pushing the envelope and innovating more and more with each iteration; retro obsessives rejoice in criticising the slew of drab first-person shooters of recent years whilst ignoring similar occurrences such as the slew of derivative platformers of the late-eighties / early nineties.

Of course not every FPS is going to be a patch on *Half-Life*, or even *Wolfenstein 3D*, but many retro games aren't worthy to be mentioned in the same sentence as *Elite*, *Pac-Man*, or dear old *Pong*. So I shan't.

So does the Wii, released this week, herald a possible end to this backward-thinking grumbling? Certainly, it's the most revolutionary console to be released, at least since the death of the cartridge, possibly ever (though mention must be made of the Virtual Boy, also from Nintendo, which was innovative without being in any way consequential).

Whilst other leading manufacturers fill their consoles with faster and faster processors and more advanced graphics chips and simultaneously add features to turn their consoles into fully-fledged home entertainment systems, Nintendo have focused on what should be the most important thing when creating a console – fun.

The very idea of the console, from its bizarre controller to its childish name and even its stand for holding it up at a jaunty angle, not content with formulaic notions such as “lying flat” or “propped on its side”, is very carefully calculated to bring across



The Wiimote in the elegant lady gamer's right hand is where most of the action goes on, but the Nunchuk in her left is a key add-on

the notion of fun, either through psychology or by providing it outright. Certainly, wireless controllers are nothing new, nor even infra-red ones, but never have they come as standard with a console instead of separately for use only with the likes of *Duck Hunt* or *Turbo Bass Fishing Deluxe 3*.

That the very hardware that comes as standard is necessarily immersive cannot fail to make the games manufacturers conscious of the potential of these devices for non-standard gameplay, in a way that hasn't been provided by add-ons to previous consoles such as the *Eye-Toy*.

The notion that anyone could fail to have more fun swinging the controller about as though it were a sword as opposed to repeatedly pressing buttons to hack and slash is utterly laughable, though this view seems to be held by many serious gamers (an epithet which shows their position up as ridiculous - the

point of games is quite deliberately not to be serious), though that's not to say they won't themselves be won over by a control method which immerses them physically into the game through more than a rumble function in the controller. It is this immersiveness that is key to the charm of the Wii; whilst more traditional control methods draw players out of the game by forcing them to translate what they wish to do in the game into a combination of buttons and joystick movements, an intuitive system of essentially acting out one's role pulls one further in.

Sadly, I doubt anyone who already feels the same way as I do will read this, what with it being published on the wiilease date, and those who have pre-ordered one will be too busy battling their way through *Zelda* to bother with anything so mundane as a newspaper. But they already know I'm right.



Super Mario Galaxy will take the series yet another step further

Machinima producer? Clan gamer? Internet addict? 1337? Or a writer? Felix Games is planning 2007 and we want gamers at Imperial to get in touch. Email games.felix@imperial.ac.uk for more information.

Shaken, certainly not stirred

Folake Adegbohun checks out the Afro-Caribbean Society's spectacular fashion show

The Afrogala, hosted by the Afro-Caribbean Society on the 25th of November 2006, was one of ICU's biggest events. The main highlight of the show was the Fashion Show which was in theme with the recent Bond movie "Casino Royale".

This was, unlike most fashion shows, certainly unique. How ironic that a show based on demonstrating the African and Caribbean cul-

ture decides to use a theme from a western film to showcase it's finest of all finery. However do not be fooled by the contradicting theme. The action film theme gave a mixture of electric sexiness and explosiveness to the show.

The show began with Grace Jones (Wendy) wearing a red jumpsuit and bullet belt from Twinkled. LSE's very own ACS President Nnamdi

Awa-Kalu, was a bad guy, wearing a waistcoat and trousers, both in black, accompanied by 3 bad girls Erica, Amaka Akobundu and Odiri Obrutse. All were wearing identical outfits; silk Chinese gowns and vintage blue brassiere from Twinkled.

The show had a general theme for the guys, which was quite boring. It consisted of standard pin-striped waistcoats and plain trousers but the accessories, such as the bowler hat worn by Remi and the blue lion tie, from Twinkled, were thrilling.

Fortunately the same cannot be said for the female models. The outfits were extraordinarily electrifying with KCL's epitome of sexy, Charissa Hu, spotting a jaw dropping Dolce and Gabbana bra with silk shorts and an Aquascutum trench coat. IC's Vese Aghoghovbia and Louisa Awolaja were both wearing a brownish red leather jackets, berets and white dresses with neck ties, both outfits from Twinkled.

The Bond girl played by Ojuigo Ndukwe bewitched us with an elegantly worn Sue Wong, hand beaded, beige silk dress. Shaun Githuku emulated Bond to perfection as he graced the stage in a white tux jacket, worn with black trousers and a black shirt with a black bow tie. It most certainly gave him a licence to thrill.

The show was undoubtedly a success, with something for everyone, from retro to sheer class. Even if the scripted scenes did momentarily detract the limelight from the outfits, one hardly noticed as the overall effect was dazzling. With all the pizzazz oozing from the models, the funky outfits and the melodramatic acting onlookers can only wish that they too could look so effortlessly chic, who says Halloween can't be everyday.

A big thank you to Amena Imasekha and Ngozi Ofili-Okonkwo the organisers of the show. Most of the clothes worn and all the props were kindly provided by Twinkled (www.twinkled.net), a vintage shop in Kingly court on Carnaby Street.



Students looking swish at the *Casino Royale* themed Afrogala



Ooh la la. Suits you sir and ma'am

COOL



90s style

Fashion is cyclical, and we've already done the 60s, 70s and 80s to death. The 90s time is now. I can see the sceptical look upon your face, but you'll come around. After all fashion is linked to music, and with all the 90s group comebacks, fashion is not far behind.



Unicorns and magical things

Especially in the form of jewellery. As seen at Topshop, with silver chain necklaces and earrings with plastic & mirrored charms of unicorns, stars and other magical paraphernalia attached. Also see, *Pan's Labyrinth*, a film out now, split between two tales; one fantastical, the other a civil war.



Lela Rose

Her New York Collection is super-cute, with ruffled necklines, and pastel colours paired with black and olive tones.



Sarah Harding for Ultimo

So trashy. I have to say, I hate Girls Aloud. Even if their songs are vaguely catchy, I can't stand their chavy hair and style. Harding even has a copy of chav queen, Victoria Beckham's hairstyle. Do Ultimo really want this image? Then again, chavs buy underwear too.

LAME

Felix fashion police: what not to wear



Will.I.Am and Justin Timberlake

Will.I.Am looks like he's channeling Willy Wonka here. Actually, he just looks like he wants to be him. He's probably having a house made of candy being built as we speak. Justin Timberlake, however, looks good enough to eat in grey, red and black.



Lindsay Lohan

OK, her face looks a bit like a foetus. I hear prolific "partying" (or snorting a small country's GDP worth of drugs) does that to you. But the monochrome look is hot. Just remember to put some pants on when clambering out of a limousine in front of the leering paparazzi.



Fergie from the Peas

Wonderful dress on Lily Allen or anyone below 25. Seriously, how old is this women? You'd have to carbon date her! You can't tell from her botoxed face, which is probably 90% plastic and animal derivatives, 10% human. This fact is only highlighted by her lolita-style dress.



Gwen Stefani

Gwen Stefani looks super kawai! I'll be disappointed if Japanese people don't actually say "super kawai". I used to think French people say "hyper-cool", a phrase used in my 70s era french text book. Apparently it's the french equivalent of "fab". Whatever. Gwen looks hyper-cool.

Fairytales, fauns, and Franco's fascists

Pan's Labyrinth – brutal, cruel, innocent, and unnervingly beautiful. A fairytale fit for the the Brothers Grimm

Hugh Stickley-Mansfield

It says a lot about a film when the reviewer's only real problem lies in its marketing. *Pan's Labyrinth*, Guillermo del Toro's latest work, has suffered somewhat from being trailed as a surrealist fantasy along the lines of *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Dark Crystal*, and the like. Whilst this is obviously not wholly without basis, the surreal elements are few and far between. The majority of the story is firmly based in reality, concerning resistance against Franco's fascist regime in the countryside of post-civil war Spain. Furthermore, the Wonderlandesque diversions are not the light-hearted escapism one might expect, but every bit as brutal and unforgiving as the real world. Rather than the historical context providing a backdrop for a straightforward fantasy tale, it is the fantastical aspects which frame a sober tale of conflict.

As with so many tales following the *Wonderland* archetype, the story concerns a young girl, Ofelia, somewhat neglected by her family: her expectant mother, too distracted by her problematic pregnancy to pay much attention to Ofelia; and her new husband, the sadistic Captain Vidal in the 'wicked step-mother' role: concerned neither for his wife nor stepdaughter, but only for his as-yet unborn son. While Ofelia's mother is laid up in bed and



The eponymous faun. Plus knife

Captain Vidal combs the countryside for rebels, Ofelia herself is left to explore the surrounding area. Nearby she finds the eponymous labyrinth, at the heart of which resides a fawn who, in the nature of these things, sets her certain tasks.

The body of the film alternates between the continuing guerilla war between the anti-fascist resistance and Captain Vidal's troops, and Ofelia's semi-Herculean undertakings; never settling for too long on any one plot strand. This constant shifting between grim reality and what could be called a Grimm reality serves to unsettle the viewer even further than the strands do individually. While the contrast is sometimes jarring, it never feels as though the two sides to the story

are at odds, and the parallels between the historical and folkloric elements are suitably highlighted, especially when the stories run back into each other.

There are a few minor irritations, however - the use of folklore occasionally drifts into cliché at the expense of characterisation and not a little goodwill on the part of the audience. It is generally held that the protagonist will receive a dire warning and will fail to heed it, and here is no exception, but the manner in which it unfolds is utterly out of character, especially after the warning had been very deliberately repeated beforehand and again at the time. Perhaps the irritation lies more with the anticipation of the failing than with the act itself, and that its inevitability is the source of the problem rather than mere predictability. Regardless, it proves a distraction from an otherwise highly immersing film, drawing the viewer away from its carefully constructed world.

Del Toro's use of imagery and folklore runs throughout his work, though nowhere is it quite so pronounced as here. Motifs from his previous films are instantly recognisable: most notably the labyrinth itself echoes a similar construction in his unfairly maligned *Hellboy*, as do many of the creatures which inhabit the film. This serves to highlight their differences all the more

- whilst his most recent English language films have been contemporary urban works, *Pan's Labyrinth* is a return to the historical settings of his earlier works: particularly *The Devil's Backbone* - also set in the aftermath of the Spanish civil war and to which it forms something of a thematic sequel. It too eschews any urban trappings for a wholly rural setting, lending the work a deeply organic feel. The cinematography plays this aspect up to its fullest, and everything from the most mundane clearing to the grandiose world briefly glimpsed at points throughout the film are stunning in their realisation.

For all its visual splendour however, this is a film about barbarism and intense cruelty. Made manifest in Vidal and some of his more esoteric brethren, there are sequences of severe brutality that feel calculated to shock and make the experience deeply uncomfortable and unsettling. At points it even approaches the realm of the genuinely harrowing. But for all this, it is a thoroughly entertaining film - its inconsistencies and incongruities lend it even greater texture, and while it wants for humour, it never descends to the bleak. Sober, but never depressing. A deeply rewarding film.



A Monster. Those are its eyes on the plate, guess where they go

Win Babel tickets

To celebrate the January release of *Babel*, Felix, in conjunction with Accommodation For Students and Paramount Vantage, has 5 pairs of tickets to the London preview screening to give away.

The third film from the writer/director team of Guillermo Arriaga and Alejandro González Iñárritu, *Babel* follows in a similar fashion to its precursors: *Amores Perros*, and *21 Grams*.

Using the device of a single cataclysmic event, the pair have previously explored such general ideas as responsibility and for-

giveness by linking characters and storylines that are separated by seemingly insuperable boundaries of class, race, economics, family, and geography. *Babel* turns the attention towards communication itself in an emotional and realism-saturated film that was shot on three continents and in four languages.

Babel is one of the most eagerly anticipated films of the year and has already achieved a large amount of critical acclaim, winning the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival.



ICU Cinema

Christmas All-Nighter 2006

6:00PM
Hoodwinked!

7:50PM
Clerks II

9:45PM
The Departed

12:30AM
Crank

2:10AM
Children of Men

4:15AM
Little Miss Sunshine

Tuesday 12 December

Union Concert Hall, Beit Quad

<http://www.union.ic.ac.uk/cinema>

Advance Tickets just £10!

See website for details

Babel preview ticket competition

To win tickets to the January 15th preview screening of *Babel*, simply tell us about the most influential or entertaining (possibly fictional) coincidence that has happened to you.

Email all entries, subject heading: 'True Story...' to:
film.felix@ic.ac.uk



Alex Baldwin Nightlife Editor

Merry Christmas all! Although we're not quite there yet, this will be my last nightlife page, since Greg gets out of rehab in time for the first issue of next term. Maybe I will dust off my pen in the new year and write some reviews for a change, but otherwise this might be the last you ever hear of me.

I may be saying goodbye, but on Friday night I welcomed And Did We Mention Our Disco? back to a regular spot in London for their now monthly parties. Despite a slightly disappointing venue (a rather dingy part of London Metropolitan University student union, tucked away near Aldgate), they are still doing their best to attract some very fine DJs and they certainly need no help attracting a large crowd of people to hear them play. Good music and a good atmosphere made for an entertaining clubnight, if not quite as good as back in the good old days at Plastic People.

That's enough of that pseudo-review anyway. All that remains is for me to wish you all a delightful holiday, whether or not your entertainment occurs during the night time.

Welcoming the festive season

Greg Mead

So it's finally (nearly) Christmas, and since this is the last issue of term, we're going to assume that the holidays have already started, unless you are actually reading this issue of *Felix* on the last day of term in which case it will be true that the holidays have started, but it's fairly unlikely that there will be any copies of *Felix* left around campus by that time, considering last week I saw a bunch of rugby/football/public-school types destroying about 50 copies of our beloved paper in Beit Quad after an all night lager downing session in the Union Bar. If the culprits are reading this, I'll have you know that each copy of *Felix* now costs £58 to print since we've joined the NUS (as opposed to 20p before) I have no evidence supporting this fact, but it's probably true.

Anyway, the point of this article is to act as a guide to the festive season around this lovely town otherwise known as London. Of course, as usual - we've got a wonderful competition prize for you people to win in this issue, so you could always consider checking that out, but unfortunately *Felix* does not yet exert enough influence to give away prizes of tickets for every single event in the capital, so we're going to give you a few ideas as to where some of your beloved Nightlife team will be visiting this holiday.

First of all, let's start with Christmas parties, since that comes first chronologically. Last year's Trash mailing list party was great, which can only mean one thing: This year will be even better. It's a mailing list member only event, so if you want to go - make sure you sign up on the website. Decent music, the smell of hairspray, fashionistas ga-



You could always go and watch the London Eye catch fire

lore, a late licence open until 6am and free punch for everyone, what more could you want? Admission was free last year, and it most likely will be this year too. Check their website for a host of other Christmas events they've got organised.

Another great bet is the Afterskool Christmas party on the 18th December. It's a great night out, loads of people are dressed up and they give away presents to everyone! Last year I was given two amazing battery powered candles, two plastic aeroplanes, 3 bouncy balls (which smell really nice), a big box of chocolates, 12 mince pies and a miniature green rugby ball! Of course, the drinks are super cheap, and the music is great too, which is also a bonus. Definitely the friendliest Christmas party I've ever been

to. The Panic! Christmas party is always worth a try too, so you could check that out if you can't make any of the other dates I've mentioned.

New Years Eve is next, and assuming you haven't decided to study on this wonderful excuse to go out and get completely hammered and wake up having spent your entire student loan and overdraft, then you'll want to be going to some super badass ultra cool mega-party. If you like hard dance then we suggest Heat NYE at the Brixton Academy (see our competition a bit further down the page to win tickets). At 4000 capacity is should be pretty awesome, and you'll be sure that when you leave the club at noon the next day with happy memories, giant pupils, wobbly legs and 4 new best mates you won't regret going

for one second. Of course, if that's not your thing then there are plenty of other events going.

This year, Afterskool team up with White Heat to deliver what can only be an amazing New Years Eve party. As they put it you'll be having a spectacularly sexy 6 1/2 hour joyride, starting at 9.30pm, tearing into the year 2007 at midnight, then bursting out onto the streets at 4am with more sweets, balloons, glow sticks and party poppers en route than is legal. Well I'm sold. Another good bet is Fabric New Years Eve, the wonderful French duo Justice will be DJing room two, along with Craig Richards and Terry Francis headlining the main room.

As is the case with most New Years Eve parties, they will all be extremely popular, so if you've really got your heart set on going somewhere, we suggest you buy your tickets far in advance, or you'll end up spending your evening standing in the street queuing up for entry to some hell-hole like Walkabout, or paying three times more to get in where you actually want to go. Also, expect to spend money, lots of money.

So, that's the end of this pointless guide, and if you've read this far then I congratulate you on having so little else to do, but hopefully it'll have given you a few ideas as to what you might do, or at least prompt you to organise something of your own. Incidentally, in totally unrelated matters, Alex will be resigning his position as temporary Nightlife editor after this issue and I will be rejoining the ranks of the *Felix* team to replace him, so happy Christmas everyone and I look forward to writing more diatribes for the reading pleasure of all my lovely readers in the New Year.

Follow the bubbles to... King's Cross

Buttomed Down Disco
Scala
★★★★★

Stood, quite cold (freezing my arse off, more accurately), on Pentonville Road, I turn to my associate, who has led us out of this particular exit of King's Cross. We're in a rush, the place starts charging in a mere twenty minutes, and we can ill afford to head in the wrong direction. He contemplates the situation, peruses a choice few signs, and finally points to the right. Before I can decide whether to listen to him, I look to the left, and swear I can see snow falling. I gape wide-eyed at the spectacle from above, because that's definitely not snow. My hand lingers weakly as I point to the machine attached to the forth floor of the building next to us, spreading bubbles over the entire street, and urgently shake his shoulder. The invites said: "Follow the bubbles".

Buttomed Down Disco has come a long way since I last visited properly, this time last year, when it was hosted at The Purple Turtle, in Camden. For a start, Scala is a significantly larger venue, and secondly, there were a lot more people. There were three main rooms, with innumerable corridors and sub-

rooms, which at first can be bewildering. When you first enter, the main bar lies in front of you, and to the right is a ponderously large staircase that leads right the way up to the top of the venue.

The main bar is the first room, with the formidably large cloakroom queue, and a small, seemingly pointless, dance floor in its own room on the side. I say pointless, it wasn't until a few hours/drinks later that I discovered what a simply joyful little place it is. Firstly, the room has fantastic acoustics, and perhaps more importantly, two opposing walls are each flanked with a line of square lights, that flash in different, hypnotising colours (think *Close Encounters of The Third Kind*). Disappointingly, this little joyhole was also terribly sparse throughout the night, which I find desperately ironic considering that the music was also the most obviously danceable, being a variety of glitchy electropop (played by the lovely Speakerboxx DJs), which the kids who visit Trash and Our Disco enjoy so much these days.

Corridors run from each of the other rooms that lead onto the main room, a converted cinema, with a large stage and the usual array of balconies dotted around the place. The main room has Dollyrocker, the resident Buttomed Down Disco

DJ, playing a mix of popular electro and danceable alternative rock, Pixies, Le Tigre, Strokes, Soulwax and everything else you would expect from Buttomed Down Disco, really.

I mentioned a staircase off to the right, I think. It leads off right to the top of the venue, where there is another room, big enough to stand on its own as a club. Playing in here were the impressively named Pirate Soundsystem, although one questions the glorification of piracy; if you ask me, raping and pillaging is not something to be proud about, but there's no telling some people). Their music was a bit more on the hip hop and funky side of things, although, if memory recalls correctly, still quite electronic at times.

Near to this was my favourite room - the chillout room. Just above the main room, with magic sound reducing glass, comfortable leather chairs, and these odd stepped floor things on the side that you can sit up on (a while after sitting on one of the embedded lights, it was quite surprising to look down and notice that light was shining out of my arse). I must admit that this is the kind of place a lot of clubs could do with, somewhere where the volume is just right, you can converse to people freely, yet the music from below is still distinctly audible.

Anyway, here's the clincher, do I really honestly approve? Well, frankly, I have had an awful lot of fun both times I've visited, and the crowd is an unusually friendly one, and they do have great choice in venues. However, it is very difficult to distinguish the clubnight from the club itself in this case, because of the nature of Buttomed Down Disco - it's a secret nightclub, so it changes venue sporadically around London (by the way, you sign up for invites at buttoneddowndisco.com). So that means it is really quite a game of pot luck, because it changes every different club that they hire. I have to say, Scala was impressive though, and there's no shortage of regulars, plus the music is sublime.

There's something for everyone at their large events, as this event showed - there was live MCing at this event in the upper room, so alongside the traditional electronica and indie selection there was also a hiphop flavour, which is astoundingly unusual in my experience, as let's be honest, the crowds don't mix particularly often! Considering their nights are free, it's hard to disapprove, although I warn somewhat about the sporadic nature of the place - each night is different than the last!

Matt 'The Hat' Long

Competition



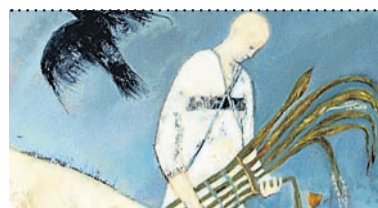
Those could be your hands

For our final competition of 2006, you could win a pair of tickets to one of the biggest new year's eve parties in London, HeatNYE. We are giving away a pair of tickets (worth £30 each) for the bash on Sunday the 31st of December hosted by HeatUK and The Gallery at Brixton Academy.

This is their 5th year running and with 4 arenas and up to 30 DJs, this promises to be an entertaining way to pass the time on new year's eve this year. The midnight countdown, featuring an impressive display of pyrotechnics, is reason enough to go, even without the line-up featuring such names as Above & Beyond, Tall Paul and Rob Tissera (Kissdafunk) along with many more big name acts.

If this sounds tempting, just send us an email as usual to the address at the top of the page. Good luck!

Solving cryptics



Scarecrow

Given the stunning lack of complaints and a fair few positive comments over the removal of the sudoku to make way for the first of these columns, it seems there is a good deal of interest in learning how to solve crosswords, which is very heartening.

One of the most troublesome varieties of clue is when there are simply two words or short phrases in the clue - this almost invariably means that the answer is a synonym for both parts of the clue. For example, "Maroon hair (6)" would be "strand", which is obvious in retrospect but none too easy at the time. These can become all but impossible if the setter has used spurious synonyms or simply if one of the words or phrases is too obscure - for instance, "Open, for the love of God! (5)" is agape, which fairly obviously means open, but more obliquely is also the word for man's love of God.

Particularly helpful in such situations is to be familiar with the setter - each will have their own particular foibles and quirks, and will approach an answer in very different ways, so it pays to know whether they take a tenuous approach in such situations or if they are more pedantic, literal or even smartarsed (all setters are smartarsed, by our very nature, though to different degrees and with varying levels of wit).

This becomes very useful when faced with a clue which looks to be outside your vocabulary - if the setter avoids words which are not generally in use you may be barking up the wrong tree, but if they throw in the occasional obscure or archaic solution. In these cases, it can be a hindrance to eschew a dictionary or thesaurus in the belief that you are in some way 'cheating'; reference works do not provide the answers to clues - except in concise crosswords, where it defeats the point of the puzzle to do so, although some might suggest there is no point to concise crosswords anyway - and there is no shame in not knowing the existence of a word when the setter will often not have known the word themselves until they found themselves faced with a particular gap in the grid. Regardless, it should be easy enough to verify the solution if the rest of the clue is set well. Occasionally, you may be faced with a clue that does not fit the two part construction of having both a synonym and a cryptic part of the clue. This can either mean that the setter has come up with a particularly interesting sort of clue - perhaps of the likes of "Geggs (9,4)" meaning "scrambled eggs" or "Nur (3,2)" as a Down clue giving "run up" - or that some or all of the clue has multiple meanings within the clue itself. A wonderful example of this sort of clue appeared in the Times a few weeks ago: "a runner on snow would (4)" giving "skid" since a ski is a runner on snow and the suffix "-d" is a contraction of would, and also someone running on snow would indeed skid. This highlights quite neatly that even a rigorous clue with two ways of solving need not have an actual synonym in the clue.

This Week's Artichokes

Scorpenis (23 Oct - 21 Nov)



This week's selection of the week's finest weekly events is sponsored by Jackanory. Why? BECAUSE NOBODY TELLS A STORY LIKE... JACKANORY. No siree, nobody tells a story like... wait for it... goddamn wait for it! JACKANORY. /shoots self.

Sagittarius (22 Nov - 21 Dec)



This week, I did stuff with girls. It was great. And I didn't pay them or anything. However, I've got a nasty tingly feeling in my downstairs mix-up. And my wallet is gone. Wait, where am I? Why am I hogtied to this 4x4? And who painted my genitalia green?

Goatfucker (22 Dec - 19 Jan)



The Bearded Intruder seems not to have done any horoscopes this week, but we're not sure. He lurks in the darkest corners of the West Basement, living off lost freshers and minipizzas (Chicago Town for preference). He is also a massive gimp.

Aqueerius (20 Jan - 18 Feb)



You're going to die. Probably not soon, but you'll eventually die. The likelihood is that your death will be painful and protracted, thanks to modern medicine and the illegality of euthanasia. So while you still can, whip out your dingle and wave it at some strangers.

Piss (19 Feb - 20 Mar)



It's the end of the world as we know it. It's the end of the world as we know it. It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine. Fine. If you're not humming the song, you're a giant loser, and I fucking hate you. Go read a book, fatty.

Arse (21 Mar - 20 Apr)



Last night, I drank a lot of vodka. Funny things happen when I drink vodka. Specifically, I gain the ability to seduce any lady in the known universe. The only flaw in this otherwise awesome talent is sometimes what I thought was a young lady is actually a lamp post.

Pile of Bull (21 Apr - 21 May)



Today you get arrested. Why are you laughing, fucko? You broke the law, and you've got to pay. Get in the back of this van. No, I don't care if you can't breathe properly. Shut up! You make me do this to you. Aw, don't urinate everywhere, this trim is new.

Gaymini (22 May - 21 Jun)



This week you'll be confronted by a fat man in spandex. He'll demand that you observe his pitifully small tackle (he, unlike you, gets a kick out of being humiliated in public). Just do it. You don't want to disappoint your therapist again.

Tumour (22 Jun - 22 Jul)



Hey buddy. What's up? Yeah, I'm cool too. So listen. You wanna go out tonight? No? Ah, why man? I've got my pulling thong all washed and ready to go, and I even shaved my shoulders, bro. You don't want to be seen with me? Fine, fuck you, you stupid fuck.

Big Fucking Lion (23 Jul - 22 Aug)



Incy wincy spider climbed up your leg. Down came your hand and squashed that spider's head. Out came the RSPCA and blew a massive hole through your fucking forehead with a 12 bore. You cruel bastard. You could have gently brushed it aside... but no. Prick.

Loser (23 Aug - 22 Sept)



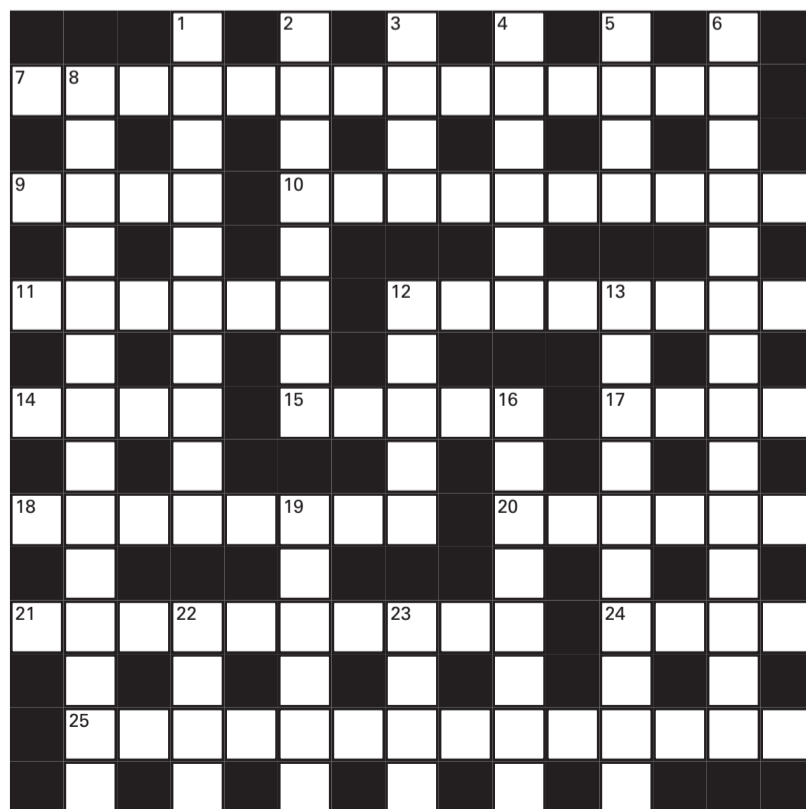
Jokes I've heard this week: 1) What's the difference between football and rape? Women don't like football. 2) 99% of women kiss with their eyes closed, don't you know. That's why it's so bloody hard to identify a rapist... I didn't make them up! Don't complain!

STOP PRESS (23 Sept - Oct 22)



We have received the following statement; "I, Sir Bearded J Intruder III, wish it to be known that I most certainly do *not* live off junk food, and most of the missing freshers were nothing to do with me. I'll see you in court. Don't forget your tennis racket."

Felix Crossword 1,367



ACROSS

- 7 Accepting criticism against the Greek character as it is written (6,3,5)
- 9 Keen female singer returns (4)
- 10 Imperative for robot gaily dancing (10)
- 11 First letter is silent, as are the rest, sir (6)
- 12 Without question, gypsy returns girl her telescope (8)
- 14 Accountants take a hundred then send it back (4)
- 15 Misanthrope within his icy niche (5)
- 17 I am beside myself at this charade (4)
- 18 Every point left acid test a word of praise (8)
- 20 Simon is terrified of harbouring believer in unified reality (6)
- 21 I quarters two boys who expel nitrogen when drunk (10)
- 24 Area of a hundred, about (4)
- 25 Shift lowercase about in a straight line (2,3,4,5)

DOWN

- 1 Two round the German mark decompose (10)
- 2 Doubtful broken coatings (8)
- 3 Pulse dish had left in disarray (4)
- 4 Conceitedly small and repulsive (6)
- 5 Not being saint without a struggle (4)
- 6 Pine after ring that sounds like The Red Flag (1,9,4)
- 8 Nativity countdown vandalised, vandal recanted (6,8)
- 12 Old Nick disguised and canonised (5)
- 13 Deplorable weak point of furniture (10)
- 19 Untied, disorganised, but brought together (6)
- 22 Take away apparent temptation (4)
- 23 In an intermediate period (4)

Scarecrow

For the last crossword of the year I've decided to throw in a few seasonal clues despite it still being a few weeks from Christmas. If that offends your sensibilities, I do apologise - put the paper down and don't look at it again until the 25th. Consider it my present to all of you. Since there will be no issue until mid-January, you'll have a whole month in which to puzzle over it, though I'm fairly confident it won't take quite that long. Incidentally, I would like to thank everyone who does the crossword on a regular basis, or even just attempts it. It makes our work worthwhile, and we hope you will continue to do so. **Scarecrow**

Solution to Crossword 1,366



Send your answers to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk (even though there's no sudoku, amusingly enough) or bring this page down to the Felix office in the West Wing of Beit Quad by the 7th of January. We'll then choose a winner from the small pile of submissions and present them with a tenner or, if they prefer, a handshake of congratulation.

IC 3rd Hunks beat IC Medic runts

Mens Football

IC 3rds	2
IC Medics 2nds	1

The IC 3rd XI season was defined last Saturday in the biggest fixture this term; a ULU meeting between the auld enemies, Imperial and Imperial Medics.

To set the scene: we've had a few big games this term and our form put us in the position of being the firm favourites for this game. Earlier in the term only a late Medic goal prevented us from beating the Imperial Medic 1st XI, the result being an unfortunate 2-2 draw, which quite rightly was celebrated emphatically by the Medic 1st XI as they had amazingly managed to grab a draw.

Now, to elaborate on the chosen headline. I must tell you that the title of 3rd Team Hunks was not chosen by our modest team of freshers and old-pros but was decided by the supporters of Bucks University the previous Wednesday. At the sight of our entrance onto the pitch, whispers were overheard from the Bucks substitutes suggesting that we were "a well good-looking team."

I won't deny that we count in our ranks a number of heart-breakers but who are we to suggest that we are the fittest team at Imperial? We are actually the fittest team at Imperial, though.

To the game! A late fitness test saw breaking news across the tabloid press. Tim Hoult, our rock in defence, was suffering from concussion after head-butting a Bucks player in our previous fixture. Unswerved, we decided our best tactic for such a game would be to keep the ball for the first 20 minutes, which as expected led to Medics putting

in some lame tackles to try to gain some possession. At this point Jai Dave taught them how to tackle properly in a classic man-and-ball tackle, which signalled our decision to start creating a few chances.

The first goal came mid-way through the half. A Deemo Georghiou through ball found AK who ran through on goal, only to have his effort blocked by the on-rushing keeper. The block left the ball high in the air for the incoming Jai Dave to head the ball over the two defenders blocking the goal and into an open net.

This meant we could relax for the rest of the half and laugh at the Medic cheerleader who found himself playing central-midfield. He sure could talk, but he did not touch the ball once in the first half, which is quite embarrassing seeing as he was playing in the centre of the pitch. Seriously, mate.

The first half finished with long-range efforts from Sam Rickards and Stewart Masters, who had done more than anyone to ensure we went into the interval ahead.

The second half saw an acceptance from the Medics that they couldn't play football as they switched style and sent a barrage of long-balls over the centre backs heads. They were dealt with easily by Jan Marchant in central defence and Milky Botchway in goal. However, the cheerleader was still maintaining they were still in the game and that the number of attacking chances we were creating would come to nothing.

The second goal came from a penalty. The first attempt was a shocker as Captain James Blyth forgot that his most potent weapon is his shin and not his right foot and sent a tame shot down the keeper's throat. However, cleverly Max Steel



The lads after getting their choppers seen to (the ones in their gums, you dirty old fool)

had encroached into the box dragging Medic defenders with him, which led to the referee asking for the penalty to be retaken. AK slotted the second attempt away nicely.

Some late pressure gave the Medics a scrabbled goal from a corner but the introduction of The

Camel, and some fine central mid-field work from playmaker Adam Masters, added the extra composure needed to see out the rest of the game. It was a deserved win, which saw some good football in the first half and a fine effort against the conditions in the second half.

Seriously though, Medics, you still have a chance at Varsity as we have beaten our 2nd XI as well as yours. No excuses from the Medic 3rd XI either as the Hunks fancy their chances. (Definition: Hunk - a well-built, sexually attractive man.)

Hockey 1sts get six over those damnéd Medics

Mens Hockey

IC 1sts	6
Imperial Medicals 1sts	4

Richard Bacon

It was the game the Medics had been dreading; the second coming of ICHC Mens 1sts, crusaders sent to test them to their limit, would they be able to muster a more substantial rebuttal this time around in their own battleground? The pre-match warm-up of smashing balls at our keeper was replaced, for one week only, by Batty pitching the ball into Star Wars' head. The resulting mess meant we had to call upon the help of the dark side to re-attach Star Wars' head with steri-strips! With the team patched up, warmed up and after half an hour of waiting for the umpires to arrive it was time for battle to commence.

IC took advantage of the Medics morphine-enriched state-of-being and shipped three clinical goals from Jumaji and Star Wars past them quicker than you can say 'cadaver' before conceding two highly dubious goals prior to half-time. Ratty showed his prowess in front of goal, leaving the Medic defence



IC 1sts, intent on beating the Medics with an ugly stick (Ed. - what the hell are you on about? You're fired)

in awe of his fine finish. The Medics' constant barrage of attacks towards the end of the first half were no doubt due to Apu's request for them to "thank you come again" every time they ventured towards his beloved Kwike-D.

Stunning work from the back four

prevented many Medic chances; the ever present Shipman (who has now retired from medicine) and the ever-injured Foetus working well together in the middle, with wing-backs Moutie and Skipper Harvester feeding the midfield well. Date Rape managed to step in

for Krusty, who had earlier fallen over his oversize shoes, with halves Batty and Toady creating many an opportunity for the finely-tuned attack. After Batty made his hat-trick of flying ball injuries in two weeks (one broken jaw, one cut-open head, one "broken rib"), the sweet short

corner routine saw the ball move between Date Rape, Star Wars and finally Batty, slotting one in between the Medics. To his credit, the Medic defender who intercepted that flight of the ball on his back did actually play on - no harm done!

Despite their best efforts, the scum never really got back into the game. Tempers frayed and emotions boiled over (mainly between the Medics themselves, as usual! It's not often you play against a team who apparently really do hate each other's guts) as the final whistle approached to sound the death knell on a now limp and beleaguered medical school.

The most memorable dispute (other than the comedy Medic bitching) being the eruption between the still wounded Star Wars and a shinpad-less Cretin. The whistle eventually arrived to put the scum out of their misery. Two lasting post-match memories being the scum referring to ICHC as the dirtiest team they had played ever ever in the history of everness (oh well, grapes of the unripened variety I guess), and a certain ICHC player being heard to say "Don't worry umps, it was my first game too" as he shook the umpire's outstretched hand of congratulation. Ouch.

Meet the IC clubs and mugs

As the latest addition to the reinvigorated Felix Sports, this section will include photos of social events – this week we explore the IC Rugby team in all their glory



Match results

Badminton:		
IC Mens 1st		0
Bath Mens1st		8
IC Mens 2nd		4
Royal Holloway Mens 1st		4
IC Womens 1st		4
Chichester Womens 1st		4
Fencing:		
IC Mens 1st		135
Surrey Mens 1st		110
Football (29/11/06):		
IC Mens 1st		0
Kings College Mens 1st		2
IC Mens 3rd		1
Bucks Chilterns Mens 4th		1
IC Mens 4th		4
UCL 6th Mens		1
IC Mens 5th		0
UCL 4th Mens		4
IC Mens 7th		0
Queen Mary Mens 4th		4
Hockey:		
IC Mens 1st		4
Canterbury Christ Church 1st		6
IC Mens 2nd		5
Grenwich Mens 1st		2
IC Mens 3rd		2
Hertfordshire Mens 2nd		6
IC Mens 4th		0
Middlesex Mens 1st		10
IC Womens 1st		4
UCL Mens 1st		2
IC Womens 2nd		4
UCL Mens 3rd		1
Rugby:		
IC Mens 1st		0
Middlesex Mens 1st		22
IC Mens 2nd		0
Portsmouth Mens 2nd		38
IC Womens 1st		25
LSE Womens1st		10
Squash:		
IC Mens 1st		1
Kent Mens 2nd		4
IC Mens 2nd		2
UCL Mens 2nd		1
IC Mens 3rd		1
Kent Mens 2nd		2
IC Womens 1st		4
Kings College Womens 1st		0
Tennis:		
IC Mens 2nd		7
London Met IC 3rd		3
IC Womens 1st		10
Portsmouth Womens 1st		0
Football (02/12/06):		
IC Mens 1st		0
Royal Holloway Mens 1st		2
IC Mens 3rd		1
IC Medics Mens 2nd		4
IC Mens 4th		3
Kings College Mens 2nd		3
IC Women's 1st		1
RUMS Womne's 1st		1

Won a fixture you'd like to brag to the rest of the College? Know a twat and want to get his/her photo published?

Send photos, match reports, results to:
sport.felix@ic.ac.uk

RSM show the umpires the rule book

RSM Ladies Hockey

GKT 4ths	1
RSM 1sts	0

Charlotte Atteck

With the team still being finalised at 2am on Sunday, it was a Christmas miracle that we managed to get 9 players out 10 hours later for our second match of the season against GKT 4th. With a few people a little the worse for wear (Clarkey) we found our way to Oval in time for Sammy to take everyone on a bird squawking warm-up (running around like birds, obviously) to try and intimidate the opposition, who outnumbered us, 13 (including the shockingly biased umpires) to 9.

The game started with RSM having the clear upper hand as far as skill went, with the forwards making some good runs to goal. The shite umpiring standard became clear as GKT struck a ball clearly outside the D and were awarded a goal which was later retracted as the umpires were swarmed by RSM complaints, including my personal favourite from Alice R: "Excuse me ref, not to be rude, but Sammy is a pretty good goalkeeper and she wouldn't have left it if it was inside the D." Hell yeah! You had to be there.

The game continued, with some excellent runs from everyone; special mentions to Dasha and Lucy who were later awarded joint man of the match for their skilful runs, taking out 3 or 4 players from the opposition each time; legends. We managed to get some more short corners and although we did use the infallible "426" game plan, the most we achieved was almost breaking a defender's ankle. Was that the same girl Ka'ie hit in the back of the knees with her stick in a way that would have made a Ben Gates tackle look almost legal? Hmm, maybe.



Can anyone recognise our erstwhile Sport Editor in this photo? Yet again, she's managed to sneak onto the back page. Beat her with sticks!

Despite our efforts, GKT managed to score in the second half after the referees decided that because GKT couldn't stop Welshy's 16s they were going to call her up for "dangerous play". Another fine example of the talented refs, who also allowed GKT shorts to be injected with a hit, despite Spammy charging out of the goal and informing the girl that this

was illegal about an inch away from her face. She looked like she was on the verge of tears.

After the RSM were told to "calm down" by the opposition on many occasions, it was only a matter of time before the game drew to a close, leaving us with our first defeat of the season, which is annoying because we would have destroyed

them if we had had a full team! Oh well, shit happens; at least we got a free lunch at the pub out of it, courtesy of GKT. A huge thank you to everyone who showed up for the match, both the usual players and those who help when they can. It is greatly appreciated. Oh, TFC was awarded to their umpires.

Sorry if you were expecting an-

other hidden bum in the photo – our team mascot was unavailable.

Interested in drinking, socialising, pies and maybe even a little sport? You should come and join the fun people who play RSM hockey. For more information contact charlotte.atteck@ic.ac.uk

AdLib

by Tevong You

