

felix

The student newspaper of
Imperial College London

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Union redevelopment

College agrees to fund phase two, see page 3



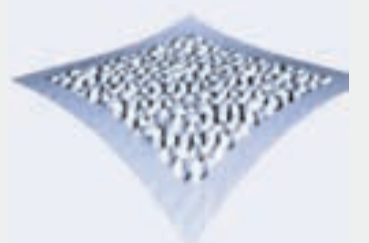
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News

News Editor – **Andrew Somerville**, News Goblin – **Matty Hoban**

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Election fever's in the air

As the race for the (Union) Presidents' offices begins, Felix gives readers the odds on who they can expect to see in the running

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

Across the pond there may be some fairly important election preparations going on, but closer to campus students will soon be out and campaigning for positions of power that really matter.

The Spring term is here bringing blossom back to trees and this year's Sabbatical elections. Election fever is rife in the Union at the moment, so Felix is here to give readers the odds on who they can expect to be standing for positions within the Union once next month's elections come round.

For clarification, the Union is run by four student Sabbatical Officers: the Union President and three Deputy Presidents, along with a team of permanent staff members. During February campus-wide elections will be run to select who will be their successors, along with an election for the next Felix editor which is also a Sabbatical position.

Any IC student can run and the rest of the student body will vote online. Felix will be covering the event in much more detail over the coming weeks, but for now here are the predictions for who you can expect to see running for nomination. Note: they are not predictions on who will win!

President

Jon Matthews – Former DPFS, former GSA Chair – 3-1

Tristan Sherliker – CGCU President – 7-1

Jennifer Morgan – RCSU President – 10-1

Luke Taylor – ACC Chair, Felix centrefold regular – 15-1

Andrew Mason – SAC staffer, NCC member – 20-1

Ashley Brown – Live! Editor – 40-1

Stephen Brown – Current Union President – 50-1



The current favourites to run for Union President. Clockwise from top left: Jennifer Morgan, Jon Matthews, Luke Taylor and Tristan Sherliker

DP Finance & Services (DPFS)

Andrew Mason – 5-1

Lily Topham – SCC Chair, SAC staffer – 10-1

Victoria Gibbs – Current DPFS' First Lady – 25-1

DP Clubs & Societies (DPCS)

Eugene Chang – RCC Chair, NCC member, SAC staffer – 3-1

Luke Taylor – 8-1

Lily Topham – 10-1

DP Education & Welfare (DPEW)

Ryan Dee – SAC staffer – 5-1

Lily Topham – 15-1

Felix Editor

Obligatory Joke Candidate – Taking no more bets

Greg Mead – Nightlife Editor – 2-1

Jovan Nedić – Sport Editor – 6-1

Andrew Somerville – News Editor – 12-1

Mike Cook – 20-1

Matty Hoban – Music Editor – 25-1

Ed Henley – Science Editor – 33-1

In case you were wondering:
CGCU – City & Guilds College Union
RCSU – Royal College of Science Union
ACC – Athletics Clubs Committee
SAC – Student Activities Centre
NCC – New Clubs Committee
RCC – Recreational Clubs Committee

Fresh delivery of chocolate logs turf to Queen's Lawn



Re-turfing of Queen's Lawn began on Wednesday. The £250k marquee which had been up for over half a year was eventually taken down one week after the College's planning permission expired on 16th December, leaving a vast muddy bog. Some students have reported pain in their eyes, diagnosed by doctors as Greentitis – a sudden acute pain of the sarcastic gland in the eye.

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Friday 11/01/08



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Thanks to Matty Hoban

LOLcats



OF THE WEEK

Operation go for Beit phase two

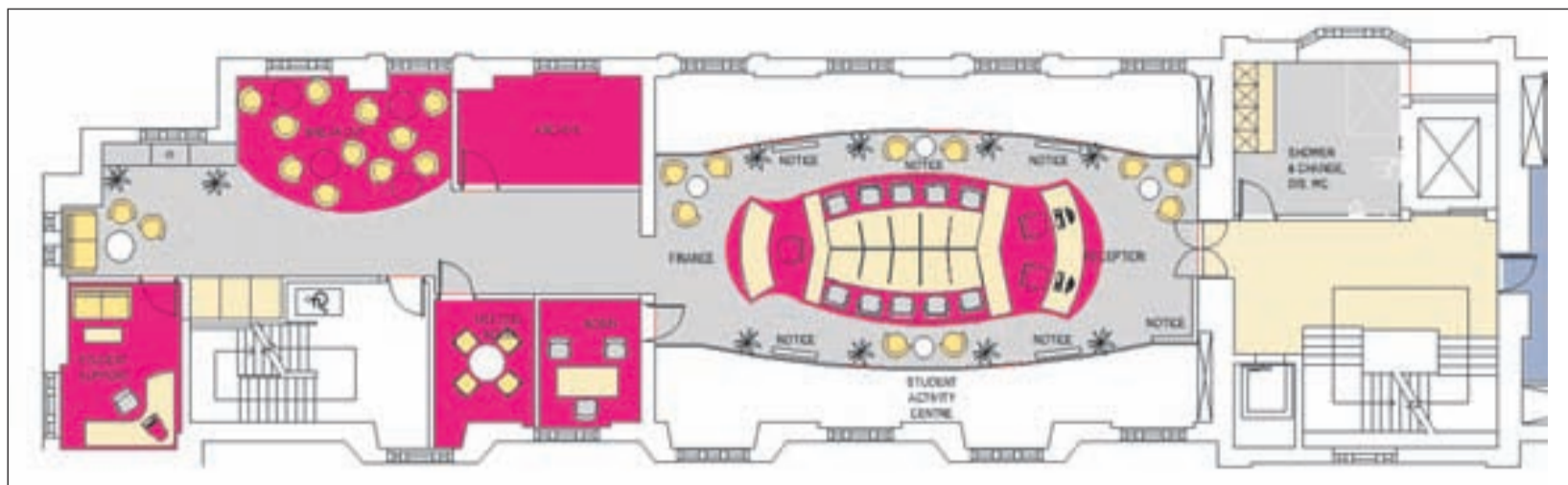
The Union secures funding for the second part of its Masterplan. Improvements to the Union building will include a brand new Student Activities Centre and a new gymnasium due to be completed in January 2009

Tom Roberts
& Andrew Somerville

During the final days of last term, the Union announced that it had finally secured funding to proceed with phase two of the Beit Masterplan redevelopment scheme, following the approval of a grant from College of £1.93m, bringing the total funds raised to £3.322m.

The Beit Masterplan is the Union's much needed strategy for rejuvenating and updating its current aging facilities. The 2nd phase of the Masterplan aims to update parts of the West side of the Union building, upgrade the ancient electrical and mechanical infrastructure, and prepare the building for the final phase. Work is planned to begin in March once the current tendering process has been completed and it is due to be completed in January 2009.

The Student Activities Centre (SAC), currently located in the East Basement, is due to move to the second floor mezzanine of the main Union building. The



Floor plans for the new Student Activities Centre on the second mezzanine floor. There will be a new gym on the floor above too

SAC will be completely redesigned to become a more centralised element of the Union, a hub for all student clubs and societies.

The third floor will be converted

into a brand new gym with a sprung, mirrored dance floor replacing the one currently on the second floor, in order to give clubs and societies a flexible space that is free for them to use (Ethos charges societies approximately £45 per hour to use its facilities). The meeting rooms that are currently on the 3rd floor are planned to move down into the East Basement, occupying the space where the SAC used to be.

The gym will be accompanied by new female and male changing rooms in the central core of the 3rd and 2nd floor mezzanine, respectively. The renovation of the central core (the stairwell and lift) will be completed and energy efficiency measures will be implemented throughout the building.

The financial support will be coming from a number of sources. College has given the Union a £1.93m grant. Grants of £500k and £300k have also come from the Harlington and IC Trusts, with the remainder to come from the Union itself. Reclaimed VAT from phase one makes up £396k whilst £196k must be taken from the Union's General Reserve.

As readers may remember the General Reserve (a large pot of money intended for use in the event of an emer-

gency) was discovered to be in great difficulties in the early part of last term, but following a full audit it has been restored to healthy levels. It currently stands at £1.2m and the planned expenditure of £196k is considerably less than the £750k+ that the Union feared it may have to spend.

Speculation over the progress of phase two has been rife for roughly nine months after the poor reception of phase one which as Felix readers may recall overran and prevented use of the central core for approximately four months. Phase one has been dogged by controversy over its dubious success even after doubling its completion time

with complaints about the lack of significant change in the central core, and a lift that often breaks down apparently costing the best part of £1.8m.

Some of the improvements in phase two are in preparation for the third and final phase, in which it is planned to totally renovate daVinci's and dB's, replace the old gym with a games room and move the Union offices to the third floor and settle on a use for the space left behind. After the long and protracted financial negotiations during the preparation for phase two, it remains to be seen when, or if it will begin, who will fund it and how much it will actually cost.



Artistic impression of the Student Activities Centre

Phase two at a glance

Cost: £3.322m

Project start/finish: March 2008/January 2009

2nd floor mezzanine changes: New Student Activities Centre, male changing rooms

3rd floor changes: New gymnasium with sprung, mirrored dance floor

Further improvements: New energy efficiency measures, upgraded electrical and mechanical infrastructure

Railcard Oyster discounts

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

As 2007 bowed out, Transport for London's (TfL) fare packages for the New Year came into effect. Single fares were frozen on all tube journeys, including when paying by cash, whilst Oyster card bus journeys fell in price by 10% to 90p.

It also transpires that students have been given a further bonus: railcard users can now "combine" their Young Person's Railcard with their Oyster pre-pay card, giving them a discounted daily price cap.

The most an Underground Oyster card user can spend within a single day is £4.80 when travelling throughout zones 1 and 2. Students with a Young Person's Railcard can now get a third off, reducing their daily cap to £3.10. The discount also applies to Disabled Persons Railcards as well as HM Forces and Senior ones.

Finding more information on TfL's



Oyster + Railcard = £3.10 daily price cap

website has proven to be a very painful process, however some information can be gleaned at www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/faresandtickets/singlefares/6769.aspx along with a table of the new daily caps for all the zones.

The offer is in effect now. Students

can head to their nearest tube station with their Oyster card and Railcard where the staff will apply the update. Reports have come through that Underground staff are unaware of the entitlement but this reporter encountered no such difficulties.

Science Challenge is coming

Daniel Burrows
& Alex Guite

The Science Challenge, which last year gave away £4,500 of prize money for short essays guessing the scientific breakthroughs that will shape the future, is back again in 2008. The organisers are promising bigger prizes this year and have already raised a pot of £25,000 sponsorship, mostly from Shell and the College.

Any student, including postgraduates, at Imperial College can enter an 800 word essay. This year's challenge will be revealed by the Rector at the launch event on Tuesday January 22 in MechEng 220 at 6.30pm. More details about the challenge, the prizes, along with a few surprises, will also be announced in Felix next week.

In 2007 Naaman Tammuz from physics scooped a top prize of £2,500 at an awards ceremony held in The Ritz hotel for his prediction that bionic implants will be the most significant



Win yourself a Wii just by registering for the mailing list

scientific development of the next 100 years.

A parallel competition is also open to all high schools in the UK and students can invite their old school by downloading the information pack from the Science Challenge website at www.rcsu.org.uk/sciencechallenge. A Nintendo Wii is also up for grabs, chosen randomly from anyone who registers for the mailing list.



$$\frac{-\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \psi}{\partial x^2} + \mathcal{V}(x)\psi(x) = E \psi(x)$$

Science

Science Editor – Ed Henley

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Monopolar disorder for Maxwell II

Classically forbidden, magnetic monopoles may in fact be allowed in certain types of "spin ice". Pretty cool...

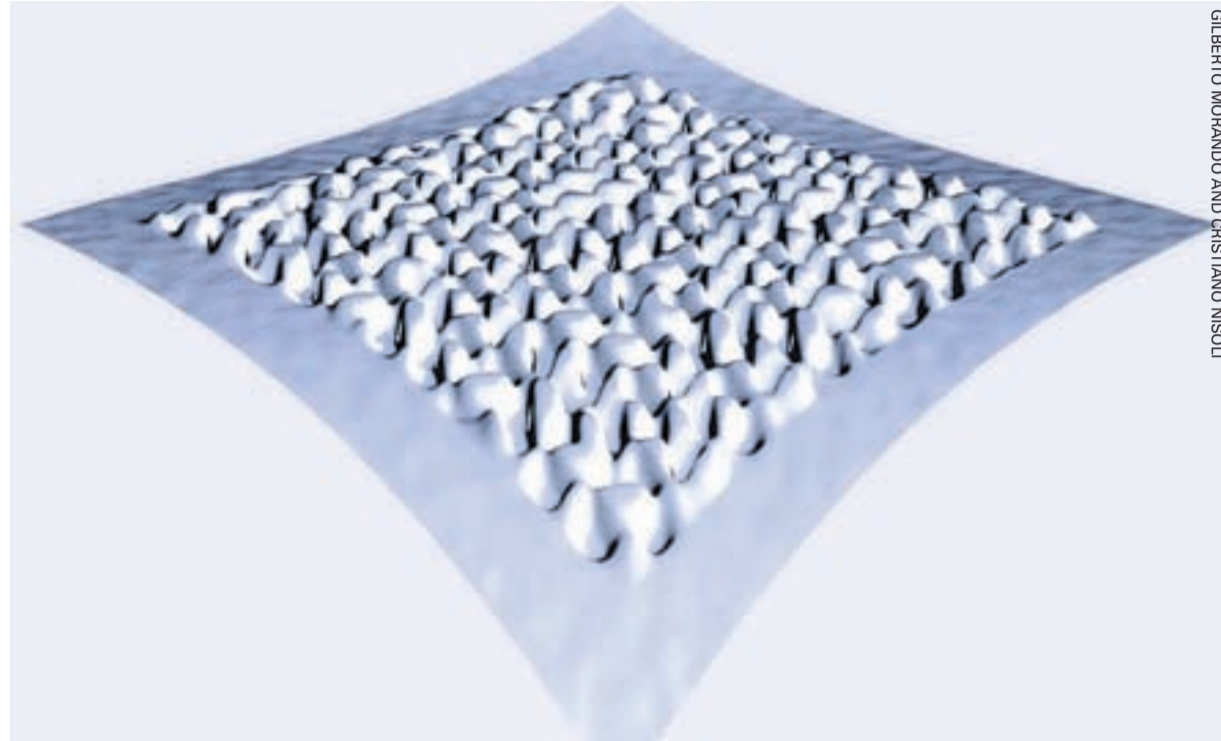
Edmund Henley
Science Editor



$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$. This equation, one of Maxwell's Famous Four, is written in stone for many physicists, who often remember it as being equivalent to the statement "there are no magnetic monopoles". However, a recent letter to Nature verges on the iconoclastic, as it suggests that monopoles may in fact be found in a type of magnetic material known as spin ice.

To understand what a monopole means, and tackling what Castelnovo et al. have found, it's worth having a closer look at the equation above. This states that the divergence of the magnetic field is zero, meaning that isolated sources (or sinks) of magnetic field do not exist – they must always come in pairs, a source and a sink. In day-to-day language, this tells you that a magnet always has a north and a south pole – it isn't possible to find a magnet with only a north (or south) pole.

If one imagines a box around an ordinary magnet, the number of magnetic field lines coming out of the box from the north pole of the magnet will be exactly balanced by the number of field lines entering the box and going to the south pole. Attempts to break this magnet and separate the two poles will be thwarted. Where the break occurs, a new pair of poles will be created, leading to two smaller magnets, each with a north and a south pole. The total number of field lines emerging from the original box (or indeed from smaller boxes around each of the smaller magnets) will still be zero. This inability to separate the sources and sinks of magnetic field – effectively positive and negative magnetic charge – is in contrast to the sources and sinks of electric field, electrons and protons, which can be isolated. Indeed, the first of Maxwell's equations tells you this – the divergence of the electric field is non-zero; the total number of electric



GILBERTO MORANDO AND CRISTIANO INSOLI

Artificial spin ice, apparently. Looks a bit like that Easter Egg in the old version of Excel. Happy days...

field lines coming out of a box enclosing electric charge is proportional to the amount of charge in the box.

However, although monopoles appear to be absent at all scales from the macroscopic to the subatomic, the statement that they do not exist is experimental – they have never been observed. Yet some theories, such as the Grand Unified Theories (GUT) which try to link all the forces in nature, predict that they should exist. Accordingly, various experiments have been run to try to look for them, but thus far have borne little in the way of fruit, certainly nothing universally believed. Magnetic monopoles, if they exist, appear to be exceedingly rare.

Yet, the observant reader may ask, if one puts two smaller magnets end-to-end, the adjacent north and south pole

cancel, leaving the north and south poles at the further ends. If one continues to add magnets to each end, creating a string of dipoles (north and south pole pairs), does one not get a magnet long enough that locally (imagine a small box almost encompassing each end) one effectively has a monopole at each end of the string? It turns out that separating the monopoles by adding dipoles in this fashion requires energy. Castelnovo et al. point out that in a vacuum, one has to expend a lot to conjure up the required dipoles in between, and even in an ordinary magnet (effectively made up of many dipoles, predominantly aligned in one direction), one has to expend energy forming domain walls (boundaries separating regions of perfectly aligned dipoles) along the length of the string.

In summary, in order to separate a pair of monopoles to infinity (a scenario in which each end of the string could certainly be considered locally as a monopole), one would require an infinite amount of energy. Since this energy is not available, the energy cost of creating a string means it can only reach a finite length (about a thousandth of a millimetre in an ordinary magnet) – the monopoles at each end are "confined".

However, the authors, led by Claudio Castelnovo from Oxford's Rudolf Peierls Centre for Theoretical Physics, have shown that in certain types of spin-ice, it is theoretically possible to create dipole strings of any length – the energy cost does not diverge to infinity as the string is lengthened, so deconfined monopoles are possible.

These spin-ice compounds, which contain the rare-earth elements Dysprosium and Holmium (10 points to the reader who's ever heard of these before) have a unique structure, which lead to a residual disorder in the dipoles at very low temperatures, where normal ferromagnetic materials are ordered. This structure imposes an "ice rule", governing the orientation of the dipoles at each vertex of the structure – 2 pairs of dipoles must point into the dipole, and 2 out. Local violations can occur (3 in at one vertex) provided they are balanced (by 3 out at a neighbouring vertex). These imbalances are not monopoles in the classical sense of fundamental particles with a net magnetic charge, being instead examples of what is known as an emergent quasiparticle – effective particles which arise due to the bulk interactions within elements of a system, and which act as if they were real particles. Notably, Castelnovo et al. have shown that they exhibit a phase-change, going from a monopole gas to a liquid, behaviour which may explain the residual disorder in spin ices at low temperatures.

These spin ices exhibit many other interesting properties: amongst others, the monopoles have a tuneable magnetic charge, and are a rare example of what is known as "fractionalisation" in 3 dimensions. Oleg Tchernyshyov, reviewing the letter in the same Nature issue, notes that the only other example which comes close is the fractional quantum Hall effect, which is has only been confirmed in 2 dimensional systems. And these monopoles may turn out to be of practical interest too: Tchernyshyov notes that though spin ice will not be able to sustain a direct current of magnetic monopoles, it may be possible to generate an alternating magnetic current, and that if work progresses on directly detecting and manipulating monopoles, as Castelnovo et al. hope, technologies such as atomic-scale magnetic memories may be in the offing.

A shot in the dark? New light-activated anti-cancer compound offers more

Sally Leon

A team of researchers from the Universities of Warwick, Edinburgh, Dundee and the Czech Republic's Institute of Biophysics have discovered a new light-activated platinum-based compound that is 80 times more powerful than similar cancer treatments.

While commonly used platinum-based anticancer compounds such as cisplatin are successful cytotoxic agents – they are poisonous to cells – their use is limited due to the frequent development of resistance to treatment and side-effects. Such side-effects arise when healthy tissues are killed alongside the cancer cells. Light-activated cancer therapy offers the potential for doctors to target treatments at tumours with great precision and is already used with some success for the treatment of non-melanoma skin cancers and other cancers such as tumors of the brain, lung and bladder.

The team, headed by Professor Peter Sadler at Warwick, has shown that the compound, also known by the

catchy name of "trans, trans, trans-[Pt(N3)2(OH)2(NH3)(py)]", is highly stable and non-toxic if left in the dark. But if light falls on it, it becomes much less stable and highly toxic to cancer cells. In fact, in tests conducted on various human cancer cell lines, once activated by exposure to UV light the compound was 13-80 times more cytotoxic than cisplatin and was also able to kill cisplatin-resistant cancer cells.

What makes this compound remarkable is its high stability in the dark (important for a photochemotherapeutic agent as this allows it to reach target sites before photoactivation) and unique mechanism of action, which enables it to kill cancer cells resistant to other drugs. Professor Peter Sadler said of their discovery: "Light activation provides its massive toxic power and also allows treatment to be targeted much more accurately against cancer cells."

The compound has the potential for use in the treatment of surface cancers. Patients would be treated in a darkened environment with light directed at the

cancer cells containing the compound, thus activating the compound and selectively killing those cells. Normal cells exposed to the compound would be protected by keeping the patient in darkness until the compound has passed out of the patient.

Speaking to the Guardian, Josephine Querido, of Cancer Research UK, said: "Developing treatments that attack cancer cells but leave healthy tissue unharmed is the holy grail of cancer research."

Professor Martin Glennie, of Southampton University, said the approach was promising, but was more cautious about its life-saving potential. "It is very rarely the primary cancer that kills you. Usually it's the cancers that form after it spreads, because they get to the lungs, or the brain and everywhere else. It's impossible to target those because often you don't know where they are."

Nevertheless, although in the earliest stages of development, the researchers are hopeful that in a few years their compound will offer a glimmer of hope to some cancer patients.



Light: the last thing a cancer cell containing the new compound sees

Competition Winners

Congratulations to the winners of last term's competition! Benjamin Lux, from Electrical Engineering, walked off with the 6-month New Scientist subscription, while Heather Jackson (Materials) and Jessica Lo (Maths) got some New Scientist books & USB sticks. Thanks to all others who took part. In case you were wondering, correct answers were: 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-C, 5-A, 6-B, 7-A.

When we
can't tell you
what you'll be
doing **tomorrow**
because you've
not come up
with it yet.

We believe that what we are doing today will help us become the BP we want to be tomorrow. Our business is the exploration, production, refining, marketing, trading and distribution of energy; and we have nearly 100,000 people in 100 countries across six continents. In this age of growing consumer demand and environmental urgency, we are always looking to find new and better ways of delivering energy to the world – without compromising the planet.

Take up any one of our engineering, science and business opportunities and you could be helping to find new reserves, create cleaner fuels, expand our capacity and market our brands to over 15 million customers every day. Look beyond the limits.

**Deadline for applications has been extended
to 28th January 2008.**

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Comment, Opinion & Letters

Let us know your views: comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Letters may be edited for length and grammar purposes
Views on these pages are not representative of Felix

Darwinism lecture controversy

Readers take umbrage at Pietro Aronica's article on Ahlul Bayt Society's Darwinism lecture in issue 1390



Obadah Ghannam

Another theory

Your last edition of the Felix featured a 3-page dedication to the opinions of Pietro Aronica regarding the AB-Soc event with Harun Yahya. Putting to one side Babuna's ability to give a decent speech, I felt disappointed that Felix failed to publish the brighter elements of the talk itself. This would have made Aronica's opinions easier to understand; and, surely, this neutral standpoint would have been the best one for Felix to take?

However, this is not the reason why I write today. After I read Aronica's viewpoint, I wanted to highlight a few points regarding the understanding he puts forward. 'Creationism' has become a stigmatised word, enshrouded in thoughts of superstition and unscientific conclusions. Let me put for-

ward, plainly and simply, the thoughts that have led me to accept the idea of creationism. I believe in the existence of a 'designer', someone above and beyond the realms of matter, whose existence is bound not by the laws of time or physics, nor even by the laws of the universe. The 'designer' cannot be given the image of man, nor any other conceptualised image that may come to mind – giving him an eye like ours for example, must mean that he needs to blink, and is therefore dependant on blinking to be able to see properly. I therefore don't know what form this 'designer' takes, but I know that he must be out there. Why do I know he exists? Firstly, we must question the origins of this universe. Originally, scientists believed in the Steady State Theory, suggesting the

universe has always existed. This was all right, until Edward Hubble came up with his Big Bang theory. He observed things like red shift, and cosmic radiation that suggested an explosion as the possible start of our universe. Current science still stands by this. This is important. Why? Well, logically speaking, an expansion must mean that the universe was smaller yesterday, and even smaller the day before. Take this back many years, just before the 'Big Bang', and you would find a point of zero volume, when there was simply a state of nothingness. What does this mean? Well, simply, it raises the question of how something, comes from nothing. Many theories have emerged. I looked into these – the Oscillating Universe Model being one – and found some scientific and logical inconsistencies

with the ideas. I then came across this idea of a designer, defined in the way I described above, and I found that on many spheres it made sense. He wasn't created, because he does not have a beginning (a law of this universe), and could, therefore, easily have been behind the transition from nothingness to something. There may not be a scientific means to find out how. But there may never be a scientific way to measure what happened during this state of nothingness. And my belief in this 'designer' is congruent with my observations of 'design' in this universe.

So – after all this – all I want to say is: explore before you deplore. Don't brush these ideas away before fully understanding them. Things are deeper than a speech and a supposedly poor presentation may indicate.



Salman Butt

Science and theology

I have not been a reader of the Felix since my early undergrad days, but a copy of the Felix I picked up last term shocked and saddened me. Now, don't get me wrong, I have heard that the Felix of today is one of the best student papers around, which is why I was quite disappointed to read Pietro Aronica's treatise on the Ahlul-Bayt Society's controversial event on 'evolutionism'. I am in a position that perhaps many others share, which is one of shame.

Although the event was born of good intentions to promote dialogue, I found myself quite embarrassed on one hand by the way in which some of the contentious arguments were put across, but, on the other, I was equally ashamed of the way it was responded to by the emotionally-charged A-level biology graduates, which led to the likes of last edition's article (you know, the one with Darwin's picture next to Hitler's. Tsk tsk).

I have come to realise that this stems from a deeper problem which has appeared amongst the general public, which I think, threatens to pull us back to the wrong side of the Renaissance. The western world was lured out of its dark ages by a movement in which learning and thought were injected into society, but there now exist people who abuse this beautiful ancient logic to push their beliefs on to others, under the banner of 'science'. This is a plea to all those who hold science dear to not jump on the bandwagon of mixing science with their theological beliefs. Whether you believe the universe was created from nothingness/timelessness, whether you believe aliens came down from planet X to give

us their DNA, or whether you believe there is no 'God' at all, please do not allow these beliefs to restrict your mind. Of course I respect people's beliefs, whatever they are, but I hope we can all agree that science has nothing to do with theology. Science is about this universe we live in, it is about what we can measure, observe or at least infer; most of all, it is about results. Science does not claim to deal with the existence or non-existence of a creator; science pertains to this four dimensional box we are all in. Please do not be fooled into following popularisers (read hijackers) of science, no matter how eloquent their words. After all, we are at Imperial; so we should promote responsible science, and not some sort of religious-'scientism' alternative.

Coming back to the point, there was an understandable backlash at the evolutionism event, because many atheists' beliefs were challenged, and different people respond to this in different ways. As I mentioned earlier, I do not agree with some of the material used to attack atheism, because atheism, like theism, cannot be challenged using science. However, I must voice my protest at Mr Aronica doing the exact

same thing, only in a ruder way. An hour or so after I read the offensive article, I was invited to a Christmas carol concert by a cheerful, smiling Mormon in the street. Now although I do not agree with the Mormons' theology, the good manners with which he conducted himself made me think well of Mormonism (if that's what you call it); now imagine what someone would think of science after reading an article in which someone uses it to defend their beliefs by speaking vulgarly of others'. As much as it pains me to admit it, there are self-righteous 'scientists' among us who are more indoctrinated than those whom they seek to humiliate. Of course, I do not mean to put down the discussion of theology, but rather I want to stimulate responsible discussions in the correct arenas, and I look forward to ICU Islamic Society's annual Islam Awareness Week in week 6 of this term, to clear up some misconceptions. It is only if we prevent our personal beliefs (atheistic or theistic) from affecting our science, that we can remove these mental handbrakes that restrict our learning, and bring back the pace of human thought to match that of eras past.

interfaith@imperial



open meeting

5pm

thurs

17th Jan

in the Chaplaincy Centre
for anyone interested in
promoting dialogue
between faiths.

more details on website



Deputy Editor, Andrew Somerville, who attended the Creationism lecture responds:

Felix apologises that the article cited above was not clearly marked as being part of the comment section, as it was intended. In publishing said article, however, we did so in a fairly well balanced fashion, with not one, but three separate articles covering the lecture. The first was a purely factual summary appearing in the News section, with two contrasting views in the Comment section, the second of which the Messrs Ghannam and Butt appear to have missed, giving two different views of the same lecture. Mr. Aronica's piece was

the larger, but the quantity of the submission is left up to the contributor, and in no way reflects the views of Felix, nor the weight that we give to the opinions of others.

However, I feel I must address some of the points raised by the above writers with my own opinion-riddled response. I believe that the above articles misrepresent members of the audience, labelling those who were less than enthused by the speaker as "Atheists." In an event such as this, provocation is rife, and it was certainly not the audience that cast the first theo-scient-ism stone. Many people in the audience that evening, of all types of spirituality, were offended by the speaker's attitude towards sci-

ence, and towards the subject in general. The placement of Hitler's image next to Dawkins' was not our own: the presentation itself accused Darwin of being responsible for Hitler, Stalin, Fascism, Anarchism and Terrorism. To be angry with such emotive links being drawn into a "scientific" debate in such dubious fashion is understandable.

Felix represents many views, and on such controversial subjects we can never please all people, but we strive to bring balance to all subjects, as Azfarul Islam's wonderfully eloquent piece in the issue concerned shows.

We've had enough of the religious controversy now, though. Please stop sending us angry theological letters.



Noel Forrest

New year's resolution: a haircut

I was miffed by the news from December's climate change conference in Bali that carbon credits from 'avoided deforestation' will become eligible under the Kyoto protocol. No longer was this chance to save wildlife, carbon and money all together just my little project, because the grown-ups understood too. I automatically began to convince myself that Bali was clearly too little too late, and was seriously upgrading the demands I wanted to lay before humanity when it struck me: I am a ninny. And you are too.

We are like Kevin and Perry (who went large), you and I, when we insist that the world is a terrible and doomed place. It's always adolescents locked in their own rooms that think that only

they can see the big picture. The Kevins inside us are saying that progress in Bali is not enough, but Kevin cannot see past his own fringe. This is because his beliefs are actually just expressions of psychological, hormone-dependent need. Reason following passion. The deconstruction is slightly disconcerting, but worthwhile, because what is the opposing view to teenage discontent? It is the view presumably held by the heroes of that fantastic film, Mr and Mrs Patterson, Kevin's parents (who are seen gloriously copulating on a big screen in Manumission).

This view is optimism about the future of humanity, and of course there's little point caring about the environment if you aren't fundamentally optimistic. This implies a belief that as

science divests the world of its magic, and as we come to a better understanding of our mind, we don't expect to diminish the quality of life. I agree, very little can diminish the wonder of Jessica Alba's posterior; certainly not the scientific fact that it is perfect, with a waist to hip ratio of 0.69. If you are striving for future people to be okay, then why not be okay today yourself?

Because it's not so bad. I awoke to Gordon Brown's appearance on the Today programme this morning, and he was so very irritating it helped me get out of bed! I turned off the radio immediately, by which stage he had stressed seventy times that he had to make "tough choices". But I'm not worried, because he will choose badly, and will be replaced by a man with very

clear skin, who realises that I don't understand why everything in this country except the fox is allowed to go to the dogs, but is decent enough to arrange a photo opportunity demonstrating that he does understand, and doesn't like it either. And I saw another photograph, of Nicolas Sarkozy wearing silver aviators. Brilliant!

All I'm saying is, try being content for a change. Don't make a solo charge on a machine-gun post when your comrades in arms are back in Blighty, lying in the long grass by the river sipping ginger beer and rolling around in haystacks with Mary-Lou from the farm. Get back on the landing craft and go for a potter around the harbour, because the sun's out. And get a hair cut.



Samuel Black

Person of the year 2007

The most important person of the 2007, as voted by TIME magazine, was Vladimir Putin. And while I commend his conservation work with bunnies and his regular visits to see deprived orphans, it seems that someone truly deserving has been overlooked in the selection process. I feel it's my duty to give him his due, ladies and gentlemen Chef... urh... President Pervez Musharraf.

In 1999 he became leader of Pakistan through a supposed coup d'etat, but in reality Musharraf, rather like President Bush, found himself in a job that he wasn't qualified for. He was a military chef, assigned to work for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and at the time of the coup d'etat was on an unofficial holiday in Java. Desperate not to be discovered off duty he rushed back to Pakistan and through an unfortunate set of circumstances involving a bowl of hot soup and Kylie Minogue, found himself at the head of the military coup. By no means a power-hungry

maniac, Musharraf spends most of his time annoyed that running the country constantly eats into his kitchen time. He remembers better times when all he had to do was cook and try to ignore the monotonous good governance by playing practical jokes on the other generals, like putting too much sugar in their tea. The President sometimes wonders if they don't grow suspicious at the growing incidence of diabetes amongst high-ranking generals.

It is no secret that Musharraf has been an enemy of Islamic extremists and that in this respect he has been a valuable ally of the West. This can be traced back to 1990 when his former boss Nawaz Sharif met with Osama bin Laden. Musharraf was given the honour of cooking for the gathering. Apparently bin Laden described the goat served at the meeting as "salty". Musharraf has not forgotten this stinging barb and has tried to protect Pakistan from these culinary philistines.

While he may appear a calculating individual, manipulating events to his



Person of the year: Guess who

own ends, he is in fact much more down to earth. When asked to allow free and fair elections he usually replies by asking for the salt.

His suspension of the Pakistani constitution last year had little to do with

Machiavellian manoeuvres; rather he had mistakenly swapped it for the recipe to his apple stew. He feared that if he allowed normal public life to continue someone might notice that the right to public assembly had suddenly become the right to simmer for 20 minutes. It was only when the Supreme Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, insulted his soufflé that Musharraf got mad and undermined the judicial system, but give the man a break. He spent hours on that soufflé.

President Musharraf has not been afraid to fight extremists in Pakistan and for this, as well as his delicious chicken jalfrezi, he should be commended. Admittedly he has tried only half-heartedly to bring democracy to Pakistan, but for a man whose primary skill is chopping carrots, he hasn't done all that badly. If this doesn't convince you then just remember that without Musharraf, my Person of the Year for 2007, you wouldn't be able to get decent naan bread this side of the Radcliffe line.



James Wang

Fatness

So I've been told my last article was 'controversial'. Because everyone knows whenever someone says one of those evil four letter words a fairy dies. Well fuck. I was never a big fan of fairies anyway, so I don't really care much if Peter Pan loses his Tinkerbell. I'm pretty sure those kids would've started experimenting with that faerie dust after they got into high school. For the PC police: I'm not going to shove garden rakes up your ass. Not even if you say please. This is a university where the union toilets have vending machines that sell sex toys; use one of those. Also, I only have one rake and I need it to scoop up leaves.

Onto the article: Fat people (morbidly obese in PC, though I don't know why you're still reading since I won't be translating everything). They're easy to make fun of, and you know you're relatively safe because unless you get cornered you can always outwalk them if they try to sit on you. Britain is supposedly so full of lard by now that the tube should be full of it; filling up two seats with the armrest comfortably wedged somewhere far up between the two halves of their asscheeks. Yet



Do fat people really exist or did Jamie Oliver just make them up?

when I finish the sudoku in my free paper and look around, I don't find myself swimming in fat folds. My powers of deduction thus tell me that either the ones skewing the data are all too huge to get out of their homes or we're being lied to.

Of course there are still some reading Heat magazine and wearing loose black clothes to try and hide their love handles, but it's hardly a crisis (btw - black really stops being slimming when

waist circumference > chest circumference). There are two opposing views regarding the issue. On one hand, it's the latest fashionable epidemic for politicians (and Jamie Oliver) to worry about, how in evolutionary terms our blood is slowly turning into gravy and our shadows start gaining mass. On the other side of the equation there are doctors and feminists slating size zero models on the catwalk. These mixed messages of which way your curves

should go is probably the cause of bad things in the world such as bird flu and the credit crunch.

Stick-thin models really do take the piss, though, living off a diet of 3 lettuce leaves and half a carrot a day. That's less than what a starving African orphan gets. And even then their meal is supplemented by a glass of milk from an Oxfam goat. The fashion industry is all fucked up. We should boycott them by burning all our clothes to speed up global warming to make it hot enough for everyone to walk around naked.

I understand your fear that humans will go the way of the Morlocks and the Eloi, turning into a population of fatties and thinnies. But worry not, for at some point fat men will neither be able to fish their genitals from between their fatfolds nor be able to tell whether it's thick thighs or vagina they're humping. And the stick women won't want to get preggers because it'd ruin their perfect body. Eventually both extremes would hit an evolutionary dead end and die out, leaving only Chinese and Indians to overpopulate the world.

Now go vote me as year rep; I'm friendly and approachable.



Gilead Amit

It feels good to be back

Ah, it's so good to be back; and how nice to see you all again. Please, please, have a seat, take a load off, make yourselves more comfortable. Now can I get you anything, anything at all? May I suggest the 2008? It looks set to be a good year, a little bit delicate around the edges, perhaps, but with a strong body and a smooth yet delightfully fleshy texture. It's very popular at the moment, and looks set to rival some of the great vintages of recent years.

I'd heartily recommend it with an Ol-

ympiad à la Pekinois with its Do-Ping sauce, the highlight of our summer menu. You could, of course, always try the prime cut 12-ounce American Election; which I think deserves to be well-done, for a change. Perhaps you would prefer something a little less common? Something more suited to the refined palate? A highlight of our winter menu is the spicy South Asian or Pakistani chicken, so tender and so well-cooked that it literally falls to pieces.

Perhaps I could tempt you with a Creationist hotpot? A delightful mish-mash of lightly battered arguments,

cooked evidence and half-baked conjectures covered with a savoury puff pastry filled with hot air. Delicious with a pinch of salt. No? Quite frankly I don't blame you – rather too difficult to swallow.

Maybe I could interest you with a starter, then? One of the old favourites is the Middle Eastern soup; especially popular at this time of year, it's a dense, murky and nutritious mix exploding with flavour. It's been a classic for so long that I really can't see it ever falling from the public eye. If you're looking for something a little lighter, perhaps I could suggest our signature salad: the 'Putin'; a Caesar with Russian dressing?

A new addition to our menu is the LHC alphabet soup, with a rich helping of elementary particles cooked at high temperatures on the side. For an additional 1.7 billion Euros, the chef will garnish it with a delicate Higgs Boson gratin. I would advise that particular item for the more educated palate, though I'm sure anyone could feel its benefits.

How about a dessert? I'm afraid that the choice of sweets we offer is a little bit uncertain, due to creative differences in the kitchen. At the moment there is a small misunderstanding between our pastry chef and our sommelier as to whether or not a Bombe Surprise would set the tone for the new 2008.

We might, however, have a baked Alaska ready for you sometime this year, though the chefs seem to be in disagreement as to how realistic a prediction that is. So I would advise against making preparations for such an eventuality, although anything could happen – I'm not a cuisine sceptic, you know, far from it.

Would you care for a hot drink? No? Maybe a soft drink, then – a glass of Afghani Coke? How about some fresh, clear sub-Saharan water? No? Nothing at all? Are you quite sure? Absolutely positive? All right then, I'll leave you to keep reading your paper in peace. Just allow me to wish you a Happy New Year, compliments of the chef – the very least we could do for our regular customers.



Something to look forward to in '08: The US circus, I mean, elections



A. Geek

LOL Bush. Am I right folks?

America is going to change hands this year, and after eight fucking years the only thing people can muster is more Bush jokes. More of them. Hundreds of the fuckers, like it's an End Of Line sale at Harrods' Old Internet Jokes department. George Bush became President of the United States before I could factorise quadratics – he represents my entire memory of American governmental policy. He has defined a huge chapter in our teenage and not-so-teenage years, and the best most of you can manage is to jeer and spit at both him and those contending to replace him. It really is a case of same shit, different year, isn't it?

This year, America will choose someone else. That's big, to me. That's probably the biggest event of 2008 right there, no matter what else might happen in the next twelve months. What I'm sure is going to happen is that the papers are going to demand something of the American people, they're going to use History as a personified noun and make allusions to it being the 'last chance' and maybe include a photo of a sad child in front of an American flag for good measure.

And that's fine, because everyone knows that people who write comment columns are idiots who get enjoyment out of displaying their genitalia via the medium of the English language. Perhaps, in fact, you're with them in standing behind the rippling stars-and-stripes, a single tear rolling down your cheek as you look up and slightly to the left as Frank Sinatra crackles in the background – Oh beautiful, for spacious skies...

Give me a break. America doesn't need your condescending banter and it sure as shit doesn't need you spitting on the mistakes of their leaders. If there's one thing it could do with – it and the rest of this planet's population – is for this green and pleasant land to get on with life. Because while everyone the world over gawks at a black man and a bigot banging their heads together on soapboxes, and news agencies from here to Shanghai drone on for hours about the fecklessness of the American people and the hypocrisy of their for-



It's official. Bush jokes are no longer funny. So behave

eign policy, no-one at all mentions us. Not a single, solitary peep.

In 1957 a whole bunch of countries thought it would be a fine idea to band together and be a bit jollier with each other than they had been previously. Although since meetings before then had largely involved chlorine gas and genocide, the bar was set fairly low, and the fact that it had taken them nearly two centuries to realise that America had the right idea all along wasn't a great indicator of intelligence either. Nevertheless, the foundations for the European Union were laid, with a mere six countries on the member list. Fifty years on, and like a primary school craze it's gone from an elite clique of the cool and revolutionary to being a really rubbish distraction that everyone's gotten a bit bored of and is only exciting to the social outcasts that just figured out how it works.

I confess I'm not a huge fan of Europe – I'm English, and so at some level I hate any country whose language has male and female nouns. But since, apparently, the world is on the verge of collapse, I thought the idea was to do

the honourable, Hollywood-disaster-movie thing and band together to fight the forthcoming Armageddon. Possibly with Bruce Willis playing the part of Gordon Brown.

In its place we have two groups of idiots – the 'Euro Sceptics' that make the BNP look well thought-out and organised by comparison, and the 'Euro Maniacs' who spend their days calming down the French and practicing being anal.

I mean, sure – America invaded Iraq, refused to sign the Kyoto agreement and threatened to abduct British citizens without due process. But at least they did something. Can you imagine the EU invading somewhere? Although, to their credit, the EU are fairly useless when it comes to getting treaties signed, too. We wouldn't know organisation if it led us into the House of Commons and gave us an enema with a short length of hosepipe and some sulphuric acid.

Ignoring Goldman Sachs' list of rising countries, there are three major superpowers ready to rise and the United States doesn't show any sign of slowing

down either. Yet in Europe, we seem to be quietly bemused, like the one guy in your Year 11 class who didn't have the internet and didn't really get what the fuss was about. Maybe if we ignore world events they'll sort of go away and we can return to the age of colonies and orgies.

Well, we can't. It's 2008 and it's time to bloody get on with it. Who cares if you want the single currency? Does it really matter if Turkey isn't part of Europe? Are hard-working and enthusiastic migrants really that much of a burden? It's time to ignore the minor issues, because quite frankly we don't have the luxury of being picky any more. In the disaster movie, we're approaching that fateful scene where the boring and expendable characters are violently killed off and if we don't do something about it it's going to be us.

So whether you're a supporter or not, at least voice your opinion this year. At least try to push the debate, to force some progress. 2008 could be your last chance. It could be the year History judges us by. All together now, God save our gracious Queen...

// I confess I'm not a huge fan of Europe – I'm English, and so I hate any country whose language has male and female nouns //



David Steward

Much-needed tips on how to swear

Take a given person, X. It is likely that if this given person swears, they will qualify their shit in the wrong way. Let me demonstrate this with a conversation taken from real life:

X: Russell Brand is a pile of shit.

Y: You have every right so to opine. His on-screen antics are unsavoury and bewildering.

X: No. You don't understand. He's a huge pile of shit.

Y: I have internalised what you said and am reflecting on its import.

X: Listen to me. I'm not just mouthing off here. You must understand that he's a mountain of shit so big that he obscures the sun.

Y: I find the train of this conversation repetitive and fruitless.

Person X in this situation is trying to amplify the vehemence of his conviction but Person Y quite rightly recognises that Russell Brand, however shit, is of fixed dimensions and so ludicrous assertions regarding his size do not have any reflection on his artistic merit. A teaspoonful of shit, reasons Person Y, is just as unappealing as a pile. Instead, Person X might have tried something more like: 'Russell Brand is a fucking pile of fucking shit.' Exactly what this is supposed to mean is still unclear, however. One can envisage a substance called 'fucking shit' which is shit whose main raison d'être is to fuck (or be fucked); then one could custom-build a pile of it to use for fucking things (or to be fucked by things). Clearly, this



He could teach you a thing or two



She could too

// One might attempt something like 'Russell Brand is a bum-titting freak pile of fking c**k-arse rabbit sh*t' //**

would be worse than an ordinary pile of shit, but exactly how much worse is left to the sensibilities of the other party, who may, for instance, find 'pissing shit' much more unsettling. Matters become more unsatisfactory when one notices the distinct lack of opportunities to insert the word 'fucking' into the sentence 'Russell Brand is a pile of shit'; one has thus a very limited ability to adjust ones vehemence according to how deeply one feels the sentiment. One can't, for instance, say 'Russell Brand is a fucking pile of fucking, fucking shit' since the last 'fucking' is tautologous – we have already established

the nature of the shit with which we are dealing. One might attempt something like 'Russell Brand is a bum-titting freak pile of fucking cock-arse rabbit shit' and so forth, but one needs to treat accuracy of expression as one's guiding principle. The following is far more satisfying:

X: Russell Brand is a pile of shit.

Y: You have every right so to opine. His on-screen antics are unsavoury and bewildering.

X: I don't think you understand the vigour of the belief I invest in my statement.

Y: Then you must explain it to me in

depth.

X: Let us take an absolute scale which runs from 0 to 100 whose units shall be known as Pricks. Let us further agree on something which is not at all shit to register a reading of zero.

Y: I propose bread.

X: Certainly there cannot be anything shit about the staff of life. And let us set the falling of the Earth into the Sun at one hundred.

Y: It is duly noted.

X: Then Russell Brand is 99 pricks.

Y: Ahh. I believe I comprehend. You mean that Russell Brand is a cunt.

X: Precisely.

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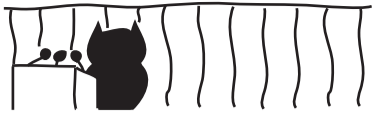
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Bhutto dead – a conspiracy is born

The ex-Prime Minister's precise cause of death becomes the centre of controversy after an autopsy is denied

Kadhim Shubber

Benazir Bhutto, ex Prime Minister of Pakistan, has been killed. Her death, perhaps the most significant death of the 21st century so far, has thrown the country into turmoil and made the path to democracy extremely uncertain.

Given the tremendous significance of her death, one might suppose that all the parties involved in Pakistan's political process would go to every length to avoid any uncertainty or ambiguity around her death. Unfortunately this has not been the case.

There were conflicting accounts of her death from the start. A government spokesman said her head was slammed against her vehicle by the blast from a bomb – but her colleagues said she died from bullet wounds. However President Musharraf said, "One should not give a statement that's 100% final. That's the flaw that we suffer from" adding that fresh evidence had come to light and also admitting that she might have been shot. Despite this, the lack of a proper autopsy means that all the government has is its word, and unfortunately for Musharraf's government, this counts for little. The government's original line was seen as an attempt to rid itself of responsibility for her security. Bruce Riedel, an expert on Pakistan at the Brookings Institution in Washington said "If there is a gunshot wound, the security was abysmal". The government did not want to be exposed on its careless approach to security, he added. President Musharraf has responded to these concerns stating that there had been no lapse in security and that Ms Bhutto was responsible for her death by standing up through the car's sun roof. This line has provoked anger amongst Bhutto's supporters. PPP (Bhutto's Party) Senator Babar Awan said, "Benazir Bhutto was martyred in a political conspiracy. The entire government is now involved in a save-the-culprit campaign. As the Independent put it "They [Pakistanis] don't blame Al-Qaeda, they blame the government".

Athar Minallah, a board member of the hospital where Ms. Bhutto was treated, said the doctors felt an autopsy was needed to discover how she actually died. The official medical report does not specifically mention a bullet, the actual cause of the head wound was to be left to an autopsy which did not materialise. Ms. Bhutto's husband Mr. Zardari refused to allow an autopsy to take place. "It was an insult to my wife, an insult to the sister of the nation, an insult to the mother of the nation," he said. "I know their forensic reports are useless. I refuse to give them her last remains." Doctors treating her had stressed that "without an autopsy it is not at all possible to determine as to what had caused the injury".

An inquiry has been launched into the circumstances surrounding her death as well as the cause of her death. UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown is sending a team of detectives from London to aid in the inquiry. Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has said he is "not fully satisfied" with the current investigation. Referring to the team of detectives being sent by the UK, he said: "We needed more experience, maybe more forensic and technical experience that our people don't have". For Musharraf's government, ending



The late former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto returned to the country only late last year

the ambiguity about Bhutto's death is more of a priority than for the PPP (her former party) who are benefiting from the anti-government sympathy resulting from the assassination. The FBI was not asked to aid the investigations due to the negative repercussions of direct U.S. involvement in Pakistan.

It does not seem likely that she was assassinated by Musharraf's government, the consequences of such an attack were easy to predict and the government certainly has not benefited from the turmoil and anger that has followed her death. Despite this, low-level collaboration by the intelligence services is a possibility because of Islamist infiltration. Musharraf has publicly denied involvement, when asked if he had played any part in the assassination, the president said: "My family by any imagination is not a family which believes in killing people, assassinating, intriguing." However he did admit

that mistakes were made following her death and that evidence had been lost at the crime scene. "I am sure that they did not do it with an intention of hiding some secrets or that the intelligence agencies instructed them to hide secrets," Mr Musharraf told reporters. "If you are meaning that it was by design to hide evidence, no, it was inefficiency."

Islamic militants who have taken increasing control of Pakistan's tribal areas along the Afghan border are the likely perpetrators. Ms. Bhutto spoke out many times against Islamic militants and they have made no secret of their determination to kill Ms Bhutto since her return to the country. She had already survived an attack by militants; a double suicide attack on her motor cavalcade left 130 dead in October. The style of her killing, a suicide attack, points to Islamic militants while the result of her death coincide

with their interests, damaging stability in Pakistan.

Islamists in Pakistan have proved how dangerous they are and how clearly their beliefs run counter to those of the Pakistani people. In assassinating Bhutto, the Islamists have dashed the hopes of the Pakistani people by endangering Pakistan's progress towards a stable democratic government. While the Pakistani people have rioted in anger since Bhutto's death (resulting in over 50 deaths), I sometimes wonder if this anger is disproportionately directed towards Musharraf. These so called Islamists need to be removed as a threat before Pakistan can move towards a democratic future. They label all those that try and bring development to Pakistan as enemies and are indiscriminate in their attacks. During the Muslim holiday Eid, these 'Islamists' carried out a suicide bombing inside a mosque, during prayers, killing 50. The real threat for Pakistani democracy comes not from Musharraf, but these irrational killers who imagine themselves as defenders of Islam.

Elections that were planned for the 8th of January have been delayed until February 18th. The reason cited by the electoral commission was civil unrest in Pakistan. A more plausible reason is that the ruling party fears that an election soon after Bhutto's assassination would prove to be a foregone conclusion. PPP senator Babar Awan warned of dire consequences, "If elections are delayed, the constitution is violated, then this would amount (to an) opening of a floodgate of violence throughout the country," he said. Despite these apocalyptic predictions, the country has been relatively stable after the initial rioting. This is down in part to a massive effort from the army and the government to restore law and order in the country. Also the major political parties decided not to protest the delay. "Incidents of violence have gone down, in that sense one can say the situation is better," said former government minister and political analyst Shafqat Mah-

mood. In some areas of Pakistan a delay was inevitable, There had been real damage to Pakistan's electoral process during the rioting. 10 election offices were burned down. Due to the delay former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's party PML-N has decided to stand for election, making it a three-horse race. By delaying the elections and allowing sentiments to settle, Pakistan has a much greater chance of holding meaningful elections that will help move the country forward.

The PPP is hoping for a large sympathy vote and are attempting to exploit this by choosing her son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the new leader of the party. Critics have denounced this as dynastic and undemocratic, but the Bhutto brand remains strong and represents the PPP's best hopes for the upcoming elections. However at only 19, Bilawal Bhutto is too young to stand for election and until he finishes his studies at Oxford, his father Asif Ali Zardari will become the de facto leader of the PPP. However many within the party are unhappy with his ascendancy due to his 11 years in prison on corruption charges.

The death of Benazir Bhutto has raised the stakes and the tension in Pakistan. Political stability must be achieved before a meaningful democracy can be established. An overwhelming victory for either the secular parties (the PPP and PML-N) or for Musharraf's party (PML-Q) in the February elections will fuel violence. A more sober result favouring the democratic forces will be more conducive to progress by allaying fears of electoral rigging and reducing the likelihood of a military backlash. However I believe that 2008 is unlikely to be a year of change for Pakistan; few will concentrate their anger towards Islamists who will continue to attack indiscriminately and despite an inquiry into Bhutto's death, the people of Pakistan will blame Musharraf's government, letting the true enemies of the Pakistani people off the hook.



Ms Bhutto's son Bilawal Zardari is being called upon to lead the PPP

Kenyan elections stir violence

The closely fought election which returned President Kibaki to power has sparked allegations of rigging

Anthony Maina

It was always going to be a historic election. Following the 2nd liberation of 2002 which saw the fall of the oppressive 24 year regime established by President Daniel Moi, the country had come away with a renewed belief in itself, in democracy. Would 2007 be the year Kenya proved beyond any shadow of doubt that true democracy stands a chance in Africa? Sitting President Mwai Kibaki's re-election bid faced a credible threat in the person of the charismatic Mr Raila Odinga, an ex-member of President Kibaki's cabinet who had led a veritable rebellion against the government mid-term for its alleged failure to deliver the radical change it had promised Kenyans in 2002. Opinion polls predicted a close victory for Mr Odinga, making Kibaki the first sitting president in Kenyan history to be voted out of office. Both sides, however, remained confident of victory.

Mr Kibaki had an impressive track record to call upon. Coming into power in 2002, his had been the challenge of reviving an economy ravaged by decades of chronic mismanagement. The LSE alumnus and former academic proved himself equal to the task. By privatizing industry, providing free primary education, cutting overall spending, creating business incentives and investing in IT, he helped build a knowledge-based economy that is fast becoming a regional hub for outsourcing, call centers and banking. In 2007 alone General Electric, Young & Rubicam, Google, Coca Cola and telecommunications giant Celtel relocated their African headquarters to the country's capital. Exports reached record highs for coffee, tea and flowers, a \$600 million industry. And since 2002, 1.8 million new jobs have been created and per capita income has increased from



Allegations of vote rigging in the ethnically divided country have left hundreds dead

\$400 to \$630, according to government figures. Kenya's economy, the biggest in the East Africa region, has shown a booming average growth of 5% per annum since 2002. The democratic space also improved dramatically. In November 2005, the Kenyan electorate resoundingly defeated a new draft constitution proposed by parliament and endorsed by the President himself.

Given his achievements, one could be forgiven for assuming Mr Kibaki's re-election was a given. Not so. Enter

Raila Odinga, the self-styled 'People's President'. A key factor in Mr Odinga's favour was the failure of Kenya's economic renaissance to reach the common *mwananchi* (Swahili for citizen). Odinga argues that Kenya's economic gains of the past few years are only being felt by a select group of Kenyans, with heads of business and the already-rich the main beneficiaries. In a country where the poverty rate stands at 46 per cent, it is easy to see where Odinga found an audience. Describing him-

self as a social democrat, he promised to spend considerably to improve the situation in Nairobi's notorious slums (Kibera, in the outskirts of the city, is Africa's largest), provide low-cost housing and give cash transfers to the very poor. Key also to Mr Odinga's campaign was Mr Kibaki's failure to comprehensively deal with corruption in his own cabinet, which saw the country lose millions of dollars in the form of shady government contracts.

Sadly though, politics in Kenya is

decidedly tribal. Consider for instance the fact that in Central Province, ancestral home of members of the President's Kikuyu tribe, Kibaki won 98% of all votes cast. Or the fact that in parts of western Kenya, where Mr Odinga's Luo tribe are the majority, Kikuyus and known supporters of Kibaki were denied access to polling stations, with threats made upon their lives should they show up. The fact is that, especially in rural Kenya, the tribal identity precedes the national. And while the country's 43 tribes have learned to co-exist as Kenyans, a healthy amount of mistrust still exists between different tribes, which politicians freely exploit to achieve their own ends. A characteristic of the Kibaki administration was the prominence of members of central Kenya tribes in the cabinet and in the President's inner circle. Although it can be argued that they were all appointed on merit and demonstrated performance, this threw the field open to accusations of tribalism. Members of smaller tribes felt threatened, and when Odinga's voice promised them protection and a voice in a new government they were only too glad to jump aboard.

Given this kind of political climate, a close election was always going to spell trouble. Few however, could have predicted the scale of what happened when Mr Odinga controversially lost the poll. Fear of the majority Kikuyu tribe turned to hatred and outright violence on a scale never before witnessed. Over 300 have now been killed, with as many as 250,000 displaced from their homes by tribal tensions. Talks between both sides towards peace are due to begin but whatever the outcome, an ugly scar has been left in the pages of Kenyan history and has seriously set back the development of a national identity in this young and fragile democracy.

World news summary in under 1/3 page

Li-Teck Lau
Politics Editor

Assassination and election rigging stops for no one, not even santa. The Politics page brings you a summary of the highlights from the last month or so.

Nick Clegg is new LibDem leader



The Liberal Democrats, the third largest political party in the UK, elected a new leader in December in the form of Nick Clegg, winning by the smallest of margins in a tight race against Chris Huhne. Many dismiss the LibDems'

chances of electoral success with the 'First Past the Post' voting system for the British Parliament, but they may well hold the key to power should no overall majority be achieved by Labour or the Tories at the next General Election, a distinct possibility.

South Korea's elections



Alongside the controversial and troubled elections in Kenya and Pakistan, South Korea also ran elections for president. The landslide victor, Lee Myung Bak, a conservative and businessman who once ran one of the country's largest construction firms and who has

pledged to focus on economic growth, will be sworn in on February 25th. Mr Lee also wants to take a tougher stance on its northern neighbour, reducing aid and punishing it for its weapons programs.

More trouble in Sudan



Sudanese forces opened fire on a clearly marked UN / African Union convoy late on Monday night. "The secretary-general condemns this attack in the strongest possible terms," a spokesperson said on behalf of Ban Ki Moon. The UN initiated a new peace keeping mission at the beginning of 2008,

replacing an overburdened AU force with 20,000 troops. The government in Khartoum insists that claims by the UN and 'Western media' that 200,000 people have died and several million have been displaced in Darfur are an exaggeration aimed at undermining it for other political goals.

Clinton survives New Hampshire vote



Democrats have begun the process of choosing their candidate to stand in

this year's upcoming Presidential elections in the US. Kenyans set aside their own civil strife to celebrate their 'son' Barack Obama's victory in the first caucus held in Iowa. The front-runner, New York Senator Hillary Clinton, looked shaken on Monday after coming third and then slipping 10 points in the opinion polls for New Hampshire. However, her teary eyed interview appeared to help her campaign, coming first on Tuesday's poll. John McCain was the surprise winner on the Republican front after a summer of poor fundraising and little media attention. Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee are the other main contenders.

Detainees released

And finally, 3 British residents were freed in December after several years in custody at the notorious Guantanamo Bay detention camp on Cuba. Jamil el-Banna, Omar Deghayes and Abdennour Sameur have been labelled extremely dangerous by US security services, but they were not charged for any specific crimes. Bana faces extradition to Spain after authorities there want him in connection with the Madrid bombings of 2004.



Caz Knight
Arts Editor

Scientists don't swear? Well we all know that ain't true...

Carl Djerassi is a scientist like no other, bringing us the contraceptive pill and a whole host of plays to boot. Emily Steel had the privilege to meet him. Here's how she got on

Happy New Year...although January is probably the least joyous of all the months, especially if one lives in the British Isles and is an Imperial student with a shit load of coursework or exams. To all those burdened with academic worries, good luck to you all and fret not; if you managed to get into this fine institution in the first place, you shall do fine. Now, enough talk about the more depressing things in life and onto ART! I am feeling particularly optimistic for 2008, having had my dose of potentially harmful UV rays and awe-inducing beautiful scenery when I went back to the city of my birth, Cape Town. Merely being in such an aesthetically pleasing environment is enough to while away the most azure of blues and if you can't afford a ticket or the time, then try Google images followed by a trip to the sunbed for that year-round tan.

I had any erudite urges satisfied with the myriad of offerings, even from a minuscule part of such a diverse continent. And a continent it is. NOT a country, as one of my friends thought it to be. I cringe upon hearing the ignorant refer to Africa as if it were one huge country rife with children with swollen bellies and flies in their eyes, lions and zebra prowling the streets and a permanent soundtrack of bongo drums resonating through the jungle as said lions sleep. No, "Africa" is far too diverse a place for one not to be specific, when referring to it.

Despite a horribly cliché and stupidly misspelt name (evoking unwanted thoughts of the Afrikaans language), a show that must be seen is *Afrika, Afrika*, the magical circus adventure from the amazing continent, which is coming to the O2 arena in a few weeks. With a bit of luck I shall wrangle some press tickets and have it all nicely reviewed for you, complete with pictures, in a later issue.

However, until then distract yourselves with these pages; procrastinate with the excuse that you are furthering your artistic education as we bring you plays, poets and one hell of an innovator: Carl Djerassi, who destroys the stereotype of the culturally unaware scientist confined to a lab. Here is a man who embraces science and art and intertwines them. Besides, girls, if it were not for him, we would be without *The Pill* and Lord knows where we'd be by now!

I delve into the weird and wonderful world of William Blake, another man of many talents, who celebrated his 250th birthday in November. The poem of the week is officially a Christmas-themed one but has an optimistic feel, which would help as we slog through this dreary month. And you can't go wrong with Lord Alfred Tennyson. If you do find yourself reading this column, which I have taken great mirth in creating, please do let me/us know what you think. Until we meet again, chins up for the week head! Mwah.



Emergency contraceptive pill advertisement....Thank you Carl Djerassi

There is a wall in Carl Djerassi's flat that is entirely covered with framed posters from productions of his plays. The posters are in Portuguese, German, Japanese and Bulgarian. Djerassi likes them very much. They represent, for him, the collaborative nature of the theatre, the excitement of re-interpretation. He points out some posters for the first play he wrote, *An Immaculate Misconception*, about a form of in-vitro fertilisation and the questions it raises for reproduction and sexuality. The title, with its play on words, is difficult to translate into languages other than English. In one, it has become 'This sperm is mine', in another, simply 'Immaculate'. Djerassi is pleased by this, and pleased by the range of images. "Look at this," he says, of a poster of showing a woman in a pencil skirt, "Singapore, which is a pretty conservative place, [but] when you look at it, you think, in some respects, it's the sexiest one, you know, sexy legs and stuff like this. What's she doing? Well, she's standing in front of a dispenser. Do you see what the dispenser is? You think, oh, that it's cigarettes or some-

thing – it's babies."

Carl Djerassi is best known for the invention of the Pill. He began his working life as a research chemist, and in 1951 his team synthesised the first oral contraceptive. He received the National Medal of Science for that work, and the National Medal of Technology for his later work on insect control. He is currently an emeritus Professor of Chemistry at Stanford University. In the last twenty years, however, he has become a writer, first of fiction and more recently of plays. Interviewers regularly ask Djerassi about his scientific work. They rarely ask him about the theatre. And that, he says, is what he's interested in now.

My first sight of Djerassi is at the Royal Society on 14th November, where he is giving a talk about the treatment of science in fiction and on stage. When he gets up to the podium, there is something of the actor about him. He has a headfull of white hair. His white beard comes to a neat point. He is wearing a long, brown jacket that looks, from a distance, almost like Elizabethan costume. He would pass for a Shakespearean lord, a duke, a king – Prospero perhaps, even Lear. He talks

about his desire to portray the tribal behaviour of scientists in his novels and plays, to represent it accurately, as only an insider can. He insists that we should not put scientists on pedestals, that "if you work in a white lab coat, you're bound to get dirty". He wants to teach this to his readers and audiences, to hide proper scientific details in an entertaining work, to be, in his words, "an intellectual smuggler". He is not ashamed of being didactic, and when his writing style is criticised he declares that he is willing to pay the price of 'bad' writing in order to address people who might otherwise know nothing. When the talk is over and he steps down from the podium, like an actor he looks smaller in the flesh.

Some days later, I go round to see him at his home in Maida Vale. We talk about a distinction he has made between science and the theatre. Scientific writing, he has said, is a monologue. Playwriting allows him to work in dialogue. It also means a loss of control. As Djerassi tells me, the scientist who publishes a paper has absolute authorial power. A play is another matter. "I'll write a play," Djerassi says, "and I'm happy with it and I'll send it to theatres, and they will take it or not take it, the way a publisher does and that's that. And of course, completely wrong, that's where the process starts." Initially he was nervous and resentful, but he came to enjoy it enormously. He likes working with directors. He likes working with actors. And when your first play gets translated into thirteen languages and is performed all over the world, you can't cling too tightly to what you think it ought to be. "You have given birth to a baby," he says, "and instead of being extraordinarily possessive about that baby, you are pleased that you have given it your genes, and you don't mind if people dress your baby up differently, and have it, I don't know, sometimes stand on its head, because it shows what you are able to do for them that the same thing meant very different things to different people."

He tells me, however, that he also wants his plays to exist as books so that they can be read, as a play can only be produced every so often. He thinks the ephemeral nature of the theatre can be marvellous, but he is too ambitious as an author to accept that for his work.

His newest work, *Four Jews on Parnassus*, is not intended as a play infact, but as a book written in dialogue. It's a form, he says, that was more or less dropped in the seventeenth century but he wants to revive it. He shows me the manuscript, and tells me how it was rejected by a series of academic publishers because they said they didn't publish plays. "And I said, it isn't a play!" It will be published by Columbia University Press next year.

We talk about his belief that only a scientist can portray the behaviour of scientists accurately. He is quite insistent that this is the case, because one must fully experience a culture before one can write well about it. He tells me that in one of his first short stories the central character was a Carmelite nun. He managed to interview one, but he is sure that the story was full of simplifications and misrepresentations. He talks about the time his first novel, *Cantor's Dilemma*, was optioned by a Hollywood studio. They wanted to liven up the script by having scientists swearing in the lab. Djerassi was horrified, not because he's a prude, but because scientists don't do that. "The critic, or the audience, is not prepared to accept that there is another world, that behaviour is quite different there." Fortunately, the film was never produced.

Djerassi's concern is to tell the truth about science, to reveal the true nature of scientists. He is particularly proud of his third play, *Calculus*, which deals with the controversy surrounding Newton's claim to have discovered it (the other contender was Leibniz). Newton, says Djerassi, "was a very great scientist, but he was a terrible human being." He thinks it's important to discuss that, because horrible behaviour and good science are, unfortunately, not incompatible. His aim is to humanise great scientists and great thinkers. The theatre is, of course, the perfect place to do so.

By the time I leave, Djerassi has talked to me for a full hour. He has been in and out of his chair, showing me posters, manuscripts, websites. He is eighty-four years old, and he has more energy than I do. I rethink my idea of him as a Prospero or a Lear. They both give up their power. Carl Djerassi – scientist, novelist, playwright – is in full possession of his.



Think of all the trouble these tiny pills have saved us from

Thought provoking office banter

Meera Ladwa experiences *A Statement of Regret* at the National Theatre and predicts a star in the making

After the success of his previous works, *Elmina's Kitchen* and *Fix Up*, up-and-coming playwright Kwame Kwei-Armah turns his sharp eye on the bitterness and resentment that divides communities from each other in modern Britain. *Statement of Regret* is set in the shiny

offices of the Institute for Black Policy Research, led by the blundering, larger-than-life figure of Kwaku Mackenzie (a convincing Don Warrington). Working to improve the situation and representation of black people in the UK, the team's fragile harmony is shattered by the arrival of a new intern.

Managing to avoid being either self-

righteous or polemical, this play is an interesting exploration of how a community deals with perceived victimisation. Whatever your own personal views, the tightly written script is sure to provoke debate. Yet in seeking to pack in so many big ideas, the characters inevitably become ciphers for various political and social viewpoints and

the audience's involvement suffers as a result.

Kwaku's King Lear-like mental disintegration does not quite achieve the emotional resonance it aims for, and we never feel enough sympathy towards him for this to be a truly great drama. Nevertheless, the acting from Colin McFarlane (Michael) and Chu Omam-

bala (Idrissa) in particular is excellent, and the dialogue has plenty of wit and humour. Kwame Kwei-Armah clearly has lots to say - this lively and sparky production means that his future work will be awaited with interest.

Statement of Regret runs until February 6th 2008, Cotteslowe Theatre at the National Theatre, Southbank.



Don Warrington plays a convincing Kwaku Mackenzie



Life's a hoot in the office of the Institute for Black Policy

Audience taken on a trip to Troy

Emily Steel perseveres despite the flu but is disappointed with what the Greeks have captured

The National's production of *Women of Troy* got five stars in *The Independent*. *Time Out* made it 'Critic's Choice'. I tell you this because the night I went to see it, I had flu and was dosed up to the eyeballs on Lemsip Max, which means it's possible (although unlikely) that my judgement was impaired. I tell you this because I am about to call it pretentious rubbish.

The original play by Euripides is the shocking and powerful story of the women who are enslaved when the Greeks conquer Troy. It sees Hecuba, the queen of Troy, taken with her daughters and her gentlewomen as spoils of war, to be shared out among the Greek victors. Most horrifically, it features Andromache, Hecuba's daughter-in-law and the wife of Hector, handing over her baby son so that the Greeks can throw him from the battlements. If she resists, the child will not be allowed to bury him. She gives him up, and at the end of the play the baby's body is brought to Hecuba so she may dress it for the grave.

It's fairly difficult to make a story like that unmoving, but this production manages it. Directed by Katie Mitchell, from a version of the play by Don Taylor, this *Women of Troy* is all gimmicks and no heart.

The play is set in a dockside warehouse. You hear the noise of seagulls,



Didn't they teach you anything at Drama school: gorgeous dresses don't make good theatre!

and a big metal door leads out to the ships. The warehouse is stark, dismal and cold. The women imprisoned there wear elegant evening dresses. They swish, they sparkle. They are very clearly out of place, snatched from the world they know and thrown into this one. It's a point that's made as soon as the curtain is raised, and the remaining eighty minutes add very little to it.

The characterisations of the women are jarring. They twitch and galumph about the stage. They give no sense that they are noblewomen, in their deportment or in their speech. Even Hecuba, played by Kate Duchene, only conveys her authority by booming and raving, and as such is unconvincing as

a queen whose throne has lately been stolen from her. A queen doesn't need to boom and rave.

These women fail to go on any kind of emotional journey. They start out at a high pitch of hysteria and they stay there. At one point, Hecuba declares "There is no agony we don't already feel, no abyss of pain to discover." And this is the problem. Lack of discovery makes for dull storytelling. We ought to see them plumbing new depths, particularly Hecuba, finally presented with her dead grandson. But we do not. Which isn't just inhuman; it's boring.

I don't blame the actors. I blame the director. I blame the director for having them speak the text without feel-

ing. I blame the director for choosing style over substance, for repeatedly inserting useless and annoying interludes in which the women dance. I blame the director for the bad details - the ladder at the side of the stage that goes precisely nowhere when one of the women scampers up it, the sounding of the ships' horns as they leave port all of three seconds after a woman has been led out to be taken on board. When Andromache tells Hecuba her daughter Polyxena has been killed, she brings Polyxena's shoes in plastic bag from Costcutter. It's meant, I imagine, to be tragic. It just looks stupid. And worse, it's funny.

A few simple moments of human-

ity seem to have slipped through the net. Michael Gould, who plays Talthybius, the Greek guard who tells Andromache that if she gives up her child willingly she might be allowed to bury him, manages against the odds to speak awful words with kindness. For an instant the play is moving, and that instant only serves to throw the rest of it into relief.

When the curtain came down, I was surprised to hear some of the audience around me whoop. Perhaps they were cheering because it was over. Otherwise, I will have to assume they were on better drugs than I was.

Women of Troy runs until 27th February 2008.

Happy 250th Birthday Bill Blakey

Caz Knight is treated to a soiree of stand-up poetry, famous authors and the oeuvres of her favourite poet, William Blake, in an enchanting talk celebrating his life, works and all in the Mech Eng Building

Lecture theatre 220 in the Mechanical Engineering Building – not the first place one would think of to hold an event of poetry and art in commemoration of William Blake's 250th birthday, given Blake's prolific contribution to Britain's artistic reservoir. Blake was a true Londoner, born on 28th November 1757; he lived only four years away from the confines of the city and in his lifetime gave us a host of vivid poems and magnificent paintings, as well as his engravings. We were treated to a sample of Blake's powerful paintings in the form of a slide show throughout the talks. It is clear from the solid and muscular characters in

"See Mr and Mrs Blake re-enacting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden"

the paintings that Blake was influenced by his time spent drawing the statues in Westminster Abbey. "Dark, satanic" springs to mind upon looking at some of the paintings and it is hard not to think of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. However, his work has an escapist, fantastical feel to it and many of his works incorporate scenes of a more uplifting nature. Artist, poet, engraver and prophet, he is highly lauded today, achieving the fame and following he deserves only after his death.

Hosted by Poet in the City and The Blake Society, the evening was a delightful event where one was given an insight into the character, life, poetry and paintings of William Blake as well as being treated to enlightening talks



Mr William Blake himself

and performances from notable authors, poets and actors. Poet in the City is a charity striving to bring poetry to new audiences as well as raising money to support poetry education. The charity's chairman introduced the talk with some of Blake's own thoughts on the matter of science versus art. At first glance it seemed that Blake regarded scientists with a slight disdain, "They

mock inspiration and vision" – two things which Blake thought of as his elements: "his eternal dwelling place". He was also opposed to the "single vision" of scientific materialism. The poet certainly was a character. Suffering from numerous nervous disorders, he was ever the contrarian in many things he did and would have shocked many with his radical views. Had it not



The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun (1805)

been for these attributes, his originality and his vibrant imagination, perhaps we would not have been blessed with such an array of talent and beauty. Rather like Poet in the City, Blake was extremely keen to bring poetry to the forefront of the arts.

Tim Heath, chairman of the Blake Society, echoed the thoughts which would have been in the minds of many

–Is Imperial College, scientific leader, an appropriate place to hold such an event? Blake, it seemed, was not entirely adverse to our discipline. Newton's 'particles of light' are referred to as 'sands upon Israel's shore' in *Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau*, read with great energy by Peter Forbes who initiated the evening with a reading of *And Did Those Feet* which did the



The Ancient of Days (God as an Architect) by William Blake (1794)



Death on a Pale Horse (1800)



Left, *The Ghost of a Flea* (1819). Right, *Jacob's Ladder* (1800)

poem every justice. Forbes is currently on tour with the play *Blackwatch* which has received much acclaim after appearing at the Edinburgh Festival in Summer 2006.

Tracy Chevalier is most famous for her novel *Girl With A Pearl Earring*, but her latest book (*Burning Bright*) is set in Blake's London and is the story told through the eyes of Blake's neighbour, who would have been very shocked indeed if he had looked over the garden fence to see Mr. and Mrs. Blake re-enacting Adam and Eve in their own "Garden of Eden"! Chevalier spent a year researching the eccentric Blake before writing a word and so was very well informed in giving us nine other interesting and important facts about the poet's life which would have had a marked effect on his work. Her fascinating and well presented speech was followed by a reading of Blake's *London*; judging by his depiction of the 19th century capital some things have not changed! ("...in every face I meet /

Marks of weakness, marks of woe").

The next speaker, epic poet Aidan Andrew Dun, I had never heard of but I bought a book of his poetry, attracted largely by its enticing name – *Salvia Divinorum*. What I found in it was beautiful poetry, powerful and vivid and not completely different to Blake's in some ways. Creating his own perception of Blake's *London*, he did not so much as speak but bring his poem to life, echoing many themes and images from across Blake's poetic repertoire, beginning with the opening lines of Blake's *London*. His performance was captivating and meaningful; to best describe him I shall appropriate a phrase used by another: "dub troubadour".

David J, a "poetic pugilist", who is one of country's most talented and notorious performance poets, treated us to more performance poetry. At first it is unclear which character David J had taken on – Blake's neighbour? Blake's brain? Half-way through his performance I thought that David might have

taken on the role of himself as if he were Blake's friend. That is the beauty of Art – completely open to interpretation, one can let the mind run free, there are no right or wrong answers, it can be what you want it to be. It is hard to put into words the nature of his stunning performance, it is in a genre all of its own ("stand up poetry" perhaps) and goes beyond the realms of traditional acting.

As well as his skill in realising his dialogue, he exhibits an insight into Blake and his poetry which makes it all the more special. Similar to Dun, he echoes images and themes from Blake's poems as well as interjecting a bit of randomness (sound effects and Spanish).

The talk, sadly, had to come to an end and what better way to finish than with *The Tiger*. It is a shame that there seems to be a slight divide between the arts and the sciences; they are linked in so many instances. As Blake said, "Art and science cannot exist but with naked beauty displayed."



William Blake's depiction of Newton

Optimistic poetry to start '08

Lord Alfred Tennyson, born 1809 in Lincolnshire, is one of Britain best loved poets and is the most quoted one, after Shakespeare. Not only was he a Poet Laureate, but he was a descendant of King Edward the Third. Although that may not be looked on as a good thing given the rising amount of anti-monarchal feeling in this country. One of his more famous quotations is one which anyone who has suffered heartbreak will have heard- "Tis better to have loved and lost, than to never have loved at all." Whether this is true or not, I shall leave you to discuss amongst yourselves.

Tennyson wrote this poem in 1850 and although it may be a Christmas-themed poem, it certainly has a cathartic, 'New year'-sy feel to it as well. The prospect of New Year's resolutions is always a daunting one, especially when our heads are also swamped with coursework and exams. Or maybe you have no clue as to what you will re-

solve to do for 2008. Look no further than the poem and heed Lord Alfred's advice. 'Ring out with the old and in with the new; ring in the true.' Indeed, truth and honesty are important and two faced-ness should be avoided at all costs.

'Ring out the grief!' I know its cold and miserable, but come on Britain has always been like this- so stop complaining and imagine yourself somewhere else!

Lord Alfred also offers some politically and socially applicable advice; 'ring out the feud of rich and poor.' Class difference is a terrible thing, although I think at Imperial we are a good example of integrated diversity. Gordon Brown take note!

'Ring out war, ring in peace...' world peace, a great notion but will it ever happen? Let us hope so.

If this poem has done little to lift your spirits, then console yourself with the knowledge that you have indulged in some great English Literature. Hmmm

Ring out, Wild Bells

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more,
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

by Alfred Tennyson



The undefeated Imperial College Mixed Lacrosse Team

A message from our participants:
"Remember: cradle your balls and wear protection!"

felix@imperial.ac.uk

Thought provoking office banter

Meera Ladwa experiences *A Statement of Regret* at the National Theatre and predicts a star in the making

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Didn't they teach you anything at Drama school: gorgeous dresses don't make good theatre!

and a big metal door leads out to the ships. The warehouse is stark, dismal and cold. The women imprisoned there wear elegant evening dresses. They swish, they sparkle. They are very clearly out of place, snatched from the world they know and thrown into this one. It's a point that's made as soon as the curtain is raised, and the remaining eighty minutes add very little to it.

The characterisations of the women are jarring. They twitch and galumph about the stage. They give no sense that they are noblewomen, in their deportment or in their speech. Even Hecuba, played by Kate Duchene, only conveys her authority by booming and raving, and as such is unconvincing as

a queen whose throne has lately been stolen from her. A queen doesn't need to boom and rave.

These women fail to go on any kind of emotional journey. They start out at a high pitch of hysteria and they stay there. At one point, Hecuba declares "There is no agony we don't already feel, no abyss of pain to discover." And this is the problem. Lack of discovery makes for dull storytelling. We ought to see them plumbing new depths, particularly Hecuba, finally presented with her dead grandson. But we do not. Which isn't just inhuman; it's boring.

I don't blame the actors. I blame the director. I blame the director for having them speak the text without feel-

ing. I blame the director for choosing style over substance, for repeatedly inserting useless and annoying interludes in which the women dance. I blame the director for the bad details - the ladder at the side of the stage that goes precisely nowhere when one of the women scampers up it, the sounding of the ships' horns as they leave port all of three seconds after a woman has been led out to be taken on board. When Andromache tells Hecuba her daughter Polyxena has been killed, she brings Polyxena's shoes in plastic bag from Costcutter. It's meant, I imagine, to be tragic. It just looks stupid. And worse, it's funny.

A few simple moments of human-

ity seem to have slipped through the net. Michael Gould, who plays Talthybius, the Greek guard who tells Andromache that if she gives up her child willingly she might be allowed to bury him, manages against the odds to speak awful words with kindness. For an instant the play is moving, and that instant only serves to throw the rest of it into relief.

When the curtain came down, I was surprised to hear some of the audience around me whoop. Perhaps they were cheering because it was over. Otherwise, I will have to assume they were on better drugs than I was.

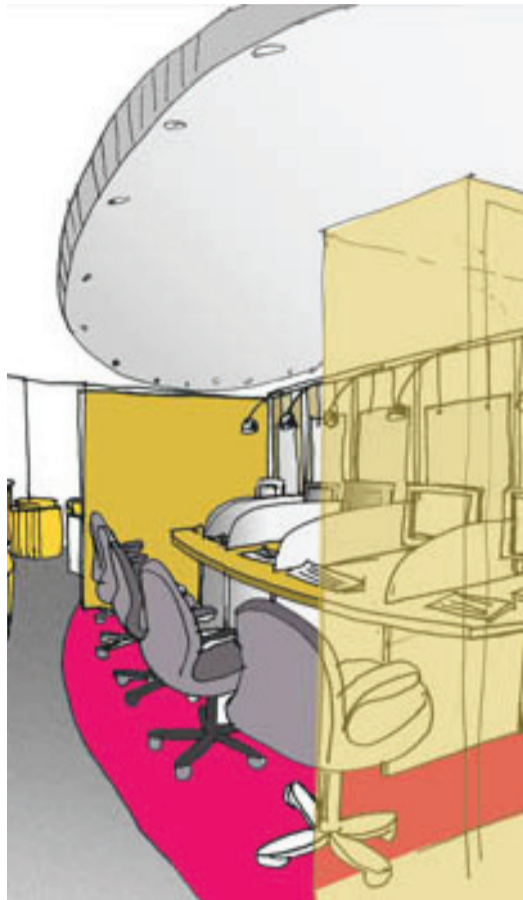
Women of Troy runs until 27th February 2008.

Welcome Back!

Funding Secured for refurbishing the Union!

Last term finished with some very good news for our Union. Last term I submitted a revised bid for funds to the College so that we could proceed with the second stage of the Beit Redevelopment project and this bid was approved to the tune of £1.93m. The focal point of this project will be the installation of a mezzanine in what is currently the Union gym which will be the home of a brand new Student Activities Centre. The statistics show you to be the most active student body in the country when it comes to participating in Clubs and Societies, which is why we are delighted that we now have the funds in place to give your facilities a much needed upgrade.

The work is initially scheduled to be completed by January 2009 so this will be of benefit to all non-finalists, whilst continuing to show Imperial College Union's commitment to its UK leading student activities programme.



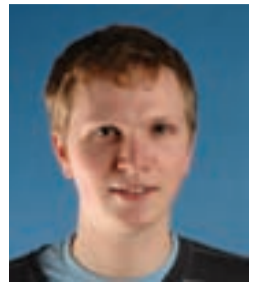
Student Juries

Student Juries are part of a new government initiative to listen to students and make sure that their voice is heard at the heart of government. It is a chance for ordinary students to feed in their personal experiences of University life to policy makers. If you are interested in applying send me an email and I will pass on a copy of the application form; or look out for further details in the next Union email. It will only involve one afternoon of your time and if selected you have the opportunity of winning £75 in addition to the benefit of having Imperial College London represented at this event.

RAG

RAG is the Union's charitable outlet and next week they are hosting two introductory events for those of you who are interested in doing some fund raising. The first one, *RAG Jump* will be held at 12.30pm in Huxley 340 on Monday 14th January where you can find out about raising money for an ICT project in Kenya by going skydiving!

If jumping out of planes isn't really your thing but you would still like to get involved then you might be interested in the *Take Action* cycling events which aim to raise money for medical care and research facilities for sick and vulnerable babies. This talk will be given at 12.30pm next Friday, again in Huxley 340.



Stephen Brown
President
president@imperial.ac.uk

Imperial as One

Following a successful launch last year, Imperial As One is pleased to announce the second running of a Student Forum. Targeted audiences are particularly Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students, including Chinese and Southern Asians, who form the largest groups of international students. The forum takes place Wednesday 20 January, 14:00 - 16:45; UG Lecture Theatre, Tanaka. Visit www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/equality/race/imperialasone for more information.

A Busy Term in Campaigns

Fairtrade Fortnight 25 February - 9 March

To celebrate our recent achievement of Fairtrade University Status we will be organising a fortnight of events to promote ethical consumerism. You will have the chance to try something new from our wide range of Fairtrade Products available on Imperial's Campus from Coffee and Chocolate to T-shirts and Hoodies. Prepare to be amazed at the endless possibilities as we road test exciting products such as footballs, bananas or steaming mugs of hot chocolate.

Turning toward the bigger picture Imperial College Union has teamed up with fellow Fairtrade Unions, Kings College London Students' Union and London School of Economics Students' Union, to lobby Westminster Council to support Fairtrade in our local Borough. As part of the London Fairtrade City Campaign, only three more Boroughs are required to meet the criteria of the Fairtrade Foundation to become a Fairtrade City!

Find out how you can help during Fairtrade Fortnight or by contacting Kirsty Patterson, Deputy President (Education and Welfare).

Go Green Week 19 - 22 February

Green Week has just got bigger and better than ever! As part of a national campaign by People and Planet, Unions across the country will be taking action to encourage recycling, energy saving and sustainability on campus and in the wider community.

At Imperial we will be launching a new recycling strategy throughout the South Kensington Campus. This will make it easier to guarantee that our efforts to recycle paper, card, plastic, glass and metal are not going to waste.

The Green Fayre on Tuesday 19th will be our biggest event with a plethora of environmentally friendly products on sale. Imperial College Union will also be looking for support in improving our 'Green League' Ranking which is published by People and Planet in the Times Higher Education Supplement. We are currently ranked 60th out of 100 institutions that took part in the League Table.

To find out more about making our Campus Greener contact Hannah Theodorou or Laurence Fahrni, Green Week Co-ordinators.



Healthy Living Week 10 - 14 March

Healthy Living Week is an exciting new collaboration between Imperial College Union, Sports Imperial, Catering and the Health Centre. The aim is to bring you a fun and educational week of Lifestyle Advice, Healthy Living initiatives and ultimately make it easier for you to get the most out of life at Imperial.

Watch out for activities around campus to encourage you to get active as well as some simple steps to incorporate into your daily routine. There will be healthy eating promotions and dietary information available as well as general wellbeing advice and tips for a healthier lifestyle.

For more information and to get involved contact Kirsty Patterson, Deputy President (Education and Welfare).

RAG Week 1 - 9 March

RAG (Raising and Giving) Week is Imperial's longest running campaign week. RAG Week raises money for a range of charities through fun and original fund-raising ideas.

For more information contact Karandeep Dhanoa, RAG Chair for more information.

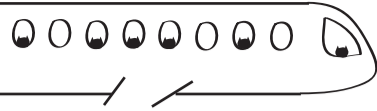
Artsfest 11- 15 February

Artsfest is an annual celebration of the audio and visual arts at Imperial. Societies forming the Arts and Ents Board (and a few of their more 'active' counterparts in the RCC) take part in a number of exhibitions, demonstrations, gigs and concerts to entertain fellow students and staff at the South Kensington Campus. Expect to hear sweet music on and around campus during lunch, see dancing in the streets and watch out for some great examples of fine art and photography all produced by Imperial College Students. Don't forget to attend the great charity concert on Wednesday to raise money for this years chosen charity, let down your hair with some classic jazz on Valentine's Day at the Union or be dazzled by the variety of entertainment and skills on display at the un-missable Finale Concert on Friday 15th February in the Great Hall!

For more information about Artsfest contact Andrew Tan, Artsfest 2008 Coordinator.



Kirsty Patterson
Deputy President
(Clubs & Societies)
dpew@imperial.ac.uk



Strange and Svarmod: it's Sweden

Nadine Richards
Travel Editor

The *Xenophobe's Guide to the Swedes* states that 'a common trait among Swedish people is a deeply felt svårmod, a dark melancholy born out of long winters, high taxes, and a sense of being stuck out on a geo-political and socio-economic limb. They brood a lot over the meaning of life in a self-absorbed sort of way without ever arriving at satisfactory answers.'

I have been to Sweden twice, and I could tell you all about what there is to see in Malmo and Lund, and how they have a nice town hall and so forth but I think a far more interesting article would be to justify the statement from the *Xenophobe's Guide*, and to spread the word about the oddities of the Swedes and Sweden. But, as this is the travel section, allow me to write a few words about Malmo so that you cannot complain that I have not done my duty.

Malmo is the third largest city in Sweden. Let me just warn you that the way Sweden is squished at the top of the World Map makes it seem deceptively small, when it is actually the third largest country in Europe – if you were to travel the same distance Sweden stretches from its most northern tip to the most southern, you would end up in Rome! (I would therefore recommend travelling southwards). Considering that Sweden has such a large area, I would have expected Malmo to be a busy, bustling, metropolitan city.

The problem with Sweden is that it has the population almost the equivalent to that of London, about 9 million people, but this is spread throughout an area infinitely larger. Therefore, Malmo is more reminiscent in stature of Sidcup in Kent than Liverpool, which is England's equivalent as the third largest city. Which may be good thing to be honest, depending on your affinity for chavs. Sightseeing in Malmo will bring you the exciting pleasures of The City Hall, Lilla Torg (the main square), Folkets Park, Western Harbor, the City Library, and its most famous attraction – the Turning Torso. No, this is not a display of a Viking being turned constantly at a stake – the Turning Torso is a twisted skyscraper where the uppermost floor is at 90 degrees to the ground. Engineers of Imperial- go crazy!

So, yes, we have established that Sweden is indeed isolated and I would like to suggest the hypothesis that oddities seem to develop in people who do not have enough human contact. Just take a look at the Welsh.

Politically, the country just gets weirder. They say that Sweden is a socialistic utopia. They also say that all Swedish people are born free but get taxed to death. In Sweden, taxes are generally 50-70% of your income (of course, your employer already pays the full amount of your salary to the government in taxes before you even get anything), so we really should stop complaining about the 17.5% VAT here in the UK. At least they have made the



The hills are aliiive, with the Sound of Muuusiiic... No wait, that was Austria

process of filling out tax forms easy; as of 2004 you can pay your Swedish taxes by sending an SMS message from your mobile phone. If this is too much hassle, then try an alternative system- the government sends out a completely filled-in tax form and if it looks good, you can just go online and click 'okay' to pay your taxes.

This begs the question, to what good cause do these earnestly paid taxes go towards? Well, Sweden boasts many bonuses that you could not receive here. For example, you can take sick leave during your vacation if you are ill. In addition, all employees get 5 weeks of paid vacation a year (which explains why for such a small population, there are always Swedes to be met abroad), and most appealing of all is that, as of 2004, all employers are required to provide a free massage.

The Swedes are also the most environmentally-friendly people in the world. And with all that gloriously green land spare to look after, why shouldn't they be? Taxes are therefore put to use to help maintain the Swedish obsession with recycling. Obses-

sion is no exaggeration. In fact, recycling is taken so seriously that one company (FTI) has been trying to put up video cameras to make sure people sort their recyclables correctly. Now recycling is all very well, but it is also quite a time-consuming process when there are 39 different types of bins in which to sort out every type of material you own. Thankfully, the 'pant' system is employed in Sweden, where one is compensated for your time by receiving money as a reward for recycling cans and bottles. I have, however, heard that recycled toilet paper can be an unpleasant experience: not quite Charmin, but more reminiscent of using cardboard.

Perhaps all this might explain why I have never encountered a normal Swedish person. This might be an unfair judgement considering that I have not met loads of Swedes, but with the population of Sweden being equivalent to that of London, I'd like to think that this judgement is well founded on the grounds that thinking in terms of proportion, I have met an (almost) equivalent number of Swedes representing

Sweden to the English representing England. Certainly, the Swedes I have met have been rather odd - or a self-confessed "very unique" as one friend put it. On that note, I leave you with the tale of Pippi Longstocking, which is not all that relevant; except that this is the only Swedish cultural reference I can point you in the direction of with the exception of Abba. Longstocking is a freckled brat with intractable braids and is also Sweden's biggest literary hit. With nobody to supervise her, she leads a life of carefree, barefoot abandon, breaking every rule possible. She is therefore the opposite representation to a society governed by very particular conventions. I like to think that every Swedish person has a Pippi within them longing to break free, but the pressures of social convention force them to restrain themselves. Repression is not always healthy, and so results in their strange behaviour, along with the accompanying gloomy sense of svarmod that they are not allowed to release their inner Pippi's (except to PeePee). Well, that's just my theory anyway.



Pippi Longstocking's influences have spread far and wide

Travels without my Aunt – part six: A journey to Epping

Theo Georgeiou Delisle

"Ring ring, ring ring,"

"Hello?"

"Hello, Sir,"

"Ah, hello,"

"I have your package outside for you, Sir, just pop downstairs and open the door and I can give it to you."

"Oh, that is good, the package I have been waiting for, for all this time, and now it's here!"

"You understand the situation perfectly, Sir."

"Ok, I'm coming down to answer the door then."

"Very good, Sir,"

"..."

"Where did you go?"

"You took too long, Sir, I'm afraid, the package will be returned to your local Post Office delivery depot."

"What?"

"You can collect it in 5-7 days, depending."

"Depending on what?"

"Just depending, goodbye Sir."

Now I have got that off my chest it is time to go down to the woods, Epping Forest to be precise, where there may or may not be a surprise waiting for you.

The forest once sprawled across much of the South-east of England but now has been tamed and beaten back into submission. That is not to say

that you cannot get lost in the forest, as I have, twice. Some might say that I couldn't see the wood for the trees but it was more of a case of not being able to see the trees for the driving hail and lack of available light source at the time.

Perhaps the best way to enjoy the full grandeur of Epping Forest is to pack a light lunch, grab your best walking boots and head off into the unknown. Unless of course if you know where you are going, in which case just follow the path that you usually use and you have nothing to fear. It would be true to say that the forest is abundant in trees, specifically oak trees, from which the popular saying "You know you are in

Epping Forest when you see an oak tree, and you are also standing in Epping Forest" arises. It is not the trees however that contrive to spoil the wild, rugged, wilderness of Epping Forest, it is the people who visit it. Specifically, I wish to highlight the younger tree dwelling communities who believe that Friday night was solely designed for accompanying a large bottle of extra strong cider on a date into the bowels of the undergrowth. The aftermath of these drink-fuelled excursions leaves whole patches of the forest bare, where a combination of lighter fuel, fire and regret consumes all plant forms in a ten-metre radius.

It is said, however, that there are dark

powerful forces at work within the depths of Epping Forest – a man made of mud, some murmur under hushed, breathless gasps. The Mudman of the Bush is said to act in order to preserve the forest for future generations and awakens only when hoodies enter the hallowed moonlit clearings and mess it up. Local villagers now look to the fabled mud-man, who calls out "I am Mudman not Beowulf!" at midnight every other Thursday, in hope that he might rid them of the plague of youths who blight their lives. The police, however, consider Mudman to be more of a rapist hiding in the woods. Only Epping Forrest knows the truth, and that is that Mudman is indeed a rapist.



Another year, another look

Daniel Wan envisages what trends are going to be big, and which bad, this new year

Everyone at the Felix has just about recovered from New Year, dragged themselves down into the office, and are now groggily typing out the first issue of 2008. Exam period is upon all at Imperial, and our beloved Sarah has sacrificed Felix Fashion for the sake of her degree. The cheek! Being a first year (and a Biologist), I'll be stepping in for the next few weeks. However, Sarah will be back once she's finished scrawling maths equations onto bits of paper in silence.

When a new year comes round, every publication across the globe puts out the obligatory "What's In and What's Out" feature for the upcoming year. You'll be glad to know I'm going to do something different this time; "What's Out and What's In" for 2008.

The Spring 2008 collections bring up nothing that you'd run to the shops for the moment you read this, but the "Outs" of this year are ones I personally wholly agree with. Astrobright Footwear have had far too long in the spotlight during 2007. If you're not familiar with the brand, they are responsible for the ground-laden eyesores that are "Crocs". This year, no more should we see B-list celebrities prancing around in these fluorescent slipper-welly things, trying to gain some quirky recognition that they couldn't get without wearing ridiculous footwear. To be honest, I'm not sure Crocs were even 'in'. They have nothing going for them. "They're comfortable" I hear you scream. When has being fashionable ever mean being comfortable? "But they're so versatile!" you sob in desperation. Do they look good with formal wear? No. Do they look good with casual wear? No. Do they look good when you're naked? No, unless you're Heidi Klum. Point



New for 2008: Vivid print dresses are the new must-have, whilst shawl collars on men's formalwear makes a suitable change. Geddit?

proven.

With what you've got on your feet on your mind, you might want to avoid the other 'no-no' of 2008; logos and labels. Showing off what you're wearing is not acceptable this year, which is great news for Primark fanatics and bad for high-end clothes labels.

2008 may bring subtlety in branding, but not in colour. It's all about dashes of vibrancy in your wear; whether it be a bright but solid jumper and tie underneath your otherwise dull grey work-suit, or pair of vivid jazz shoes with your usual casual wear. Vibrancy

means print dresses are definitely in, especially featuring flowers or abstract prints. A hint of holiday-in-the-Caribbean might well brighten up London's cold winter evenings. Nevertheless, this isn't an excuse to go out dressed as a nu-rave Hadouken! fan anymore.

Men, prepare to getting used to looking a little bit silly this year. Cropped trousers are set to be completely raped and ruined by Topman, so get in early and let those ankles freeze in British mid-winter. They are slightly longer than three-quarter lengths, and when worn with a pair of smart leather shoes

have a slight schoolboy charm about them. Sadly, you're probably going to have to wait till May at the very earliest not to look like a complete lunatic in near sub-zero temperatures.

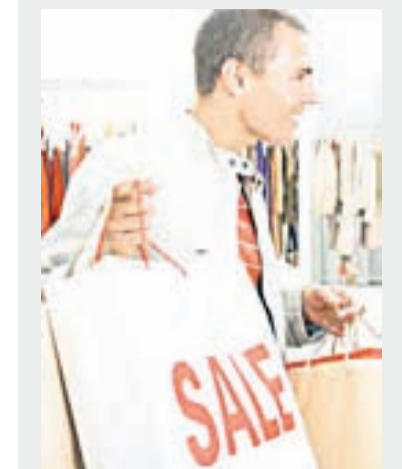
My pick of the new concepts for 2008 though, is the shawl collar on men's blazers. The casual blazer will be transformed with new lapels usually found on a classic tuxedo jacket. A fitted grey suit with a glossy black shawl collar, black fitted shirt and skinny tie is the look to go for this year. Nowhere to put your Poppy come Remembrance Day though.

Finally, we get to the shiny stuff. Brass buttons are making their way back. I have a feeling a degree of naval fashion will appear this year. Don't worry though, we won't all be walking around looking like sailors, stripes and all, but solid brass buttons, possibly on a double breasted navy blue jacket, could be the new look for pseudo-formal men's wear.

Women's accessory-wise, chunky jewellery takes the lead over subtle and dainty jewellery. Larger bracelet bands and earrings, with care, can finish your outfit and leave everyone breathless.

Word on the street, if you count finding stray pages from Vogue littered across Exhibition Road, is that stars are going to be very much part of the aesthetic of 2008. Star-shaped accessories will make an appearance on the high street. A mix of 2008 vibrancy and this new motif should cut a sharp image.

Prada's range of suede watches add another aspect of colour to the new season. With a range of assorted child-like colours, and at £125 each, these could make a perfect New Year's treat. You definitely deserve one after all that revising (procrasinating, giving up and going out) you did over Christmas.



January Sales

You've hit the post-Christmas sales hard, and your bank balance is now comfortably in the red. Your new top and skirt were both 50% off, and you look stunning in them; your overdraft is there for a reason. I love the sales!



Urban Outfitters UK

After a visit to the US, the UK's plain and preppy men's section stands limp beside its American counterpart. There's a serious lack of real standout style for the price you're paying at Urban Outfitters UK. Screw Oxford Street, head over to 42nd Street, Manhattan.



Amy Winehouse

We get it, you're off your face, and your husband's in jail, you're rock-and-roll; Go you! Her ever-enlarging beehive monstrosity is so 2007. If she spent the time grooming herself in rehab, she might actually be famous for more than being a complete wreck. Make use of 2008, love.



OUT



IN



In the sales bin: (Clockwise from top left) Astrobright's Crocs, pseudo-formal waistcoat and ties, and blatant Abercrombie & Fitch style branding.

Great for two thousand and eight: (Clockwise from left) Cropped trousers come coupled with slender bare ankles, wonderfully bright shoes, plus stars, stars and more stars...



Film

Film Editor – Alex Casey

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Alex Casey
Film Editor

You can see them on the starting line now: The Coen brothers jostling each other in the middle; Julie Christie on the inside track; Keira Knightley pouting while perched side-saddle; and Daniel Day Lewis over the final fence before the starting whistle's even been blown. Alas, if only the awards season was over as quickly as the Grand National.

This year it seems that, once again, a race that was initially as wide open as Britney Spears' legs on exiting a taxi has started to narrow, reducing the fun for all concerned. Julie Christie will no doubt fill the shoes of Helen Mirren's sweep last year for little seen Alzheimer's flick *Away From Her* (although Christie is less likely to do so in what Mirren referred to as her 'stripper shoes' to appear taller) while Daniel Day-Lewis has earned rave reviews and good odds for *There Will Be Blood*.

Sure, this isn't exactly going to be a *Titanic*-esque open book as far as Best Picture or Director go, but gone are the days when Halle Berry had to fight real competition from Sissy Spacek, Judi Dench and Nicole Kidman to clutch the coveted Oscar statuette. Now it only works if you have every other major award behind it in the cabinet.

The supporting categories seem to be where the real competition lies these days (unless you were Rachel Weisz or Jennifer Hudson). The rumour of Eddie Murphy storming out of the Kodak Theatre last year after Alan Arkin was named Best Supporting Actor by the Academy for *Little Miss Sunshine* brought a particularly large smile to my face at a time when Leicester Square was being overshadowed by gigantic Norbit posters with Murphy in his fat suit. This year we'd set our money on Casey Affleck (*Jesse James*) and Cate Blanchett (*I'm Not There*, see right) to do well here, although both are liable for upset.

The award for Best Foreign Film is more difficult as each ceremony has different rules for entry. For the Globes, it just has to be non-English language; for the Oscars, it has stupid restrictions about international collaborations that often squeeze out worthy entrants. Cannes supremo *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* is an early frontrunner although the Palme D'Or isn't always a selling point for the Academy who feel Cannes has a habit of mocking the studios. You think? *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* could overtake on the final stretch here.

As for the Best Picture race, it's pretty open. The Globes have increased Drama nominations from five to seven strangely, but *No Country For Old Men* would be my (unseen) bet. Squeeze out second rate rubbish like *Atonement*, *Michael Clayton* and *American Gangster* and the Coens could even get Best Director. It could however, just be another decline in form for the brothers, leaving it open to wide speculation. Whatever happens, it seems that the biggest question is whether there will even be any ceremonies with the WGA strikes. The Golden Globes are gone. Are the Oscars next?

Lust goes limp towards end

Ang Lee's tale of Chinese resistance fighters peaks long before its climax

Lust, Caution ★★★★★

Director: Ang Lee
Writer: James Schamus
Cast: Tony Leung Chiu Wai
Wei Tang
Joan Chen

Alex Casey

Ang Lee is as capable of whipping up media attention as he is at defying typecasting himself as a genre director. From period dramas to oriental martial arts, from gay cowboys to, erm, the Incredible Hulk, Lee has constantly defied expectations with his film choices. But in terms of sheer publicity, there is always something that brings his films to the fore. Whether it be the purely enchanting cinematography of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger sharing more than just a tent in *Brokeback Mountain*, there's always a good press hook he can tap into. Here, it's just some graphic sex.

Perhaps the anticipation of *Lust, Caution* was just too great. It won the Golden Lion at Venice last year ahead of *Atonement*, *The Assassination of Jesse James* and *I'm Not There*, but has failed to maintain the momentum that *Brokeback* did after winning the same prize two years previously. The festival took place in late August and early September, meaning that four months down the line, the sparks had started to die.

Lust is not a bad film; it simply fails to maximise on its potential. Its common description as a Hitchcockian thriller, the death knell of many films, is ironic



Ang on a sec

in that it is low on the one thing that made Hitchcock so popular - suspense. The story of a group of young Chinese resistance fighters targeting a traitor during the early years of the Japanese occupation certainly gets off to a promising start. An interesting bunch of characters, they seem to each have a story to follow, yet this is ejected in exchange for the main story, the wooing of said target by Wong Chia Chi (Wei Tang).

For all the controversy it has caused (Lee has refused to cut it to gain a lower certificate in the US), the sex in *Lust, Caution* is used to far greater effect than most films where disrobing is said to be purely for "artistic purposes" but is really just a way to get in some teenage boys. The contrasting sex scenes throughout (of which there aren't THAT many) lend real emotional power to the relationships in the film and possibly the most original piece of

filmmaking, at least for a mainstream film, that Lee has brought to the fore here.

The rest, however, doesn't quite have the same intensity. For a filmmaker renowned for his ability portray raw emotion, the black and white characters here only rarely give in to grey. This is more of a visual feast than a philosophical or intellectual one, but a treat that grows old long before it ends. Sounds a lot like lust.

He may not be there, but he oozes through every frame

I'm Not There ★★★★★

Director: Todd Haynes
Writer: Todd Haynes,
Oren Moverman
Cast: Cate Blanchett,
Christian Bale,
Heath Ledger

Alex Casey

Could this be the most heavily publicised arthouse film ever? Sweeping statements aside, Todd Haynes' Bob Dylan-inspired movie *I'm Not There* has gathered astonishing publicity given its limited release. Why? Because Cate Blanchett plays the man himself. And so does Christian Bale. And Heath Ledger. And a few others.

The casting puts six actors into the shoes of Dylan at different stages of his life, each with a different name, and intercuts them throughout the film in a multilayered tapestry of 60s rebellion, disillusionment and artistic expression. With each sector having a completely distinct feel, Haynes is emphatic in his appraisal of all the different sides of the legend, but one of them can't help but seize the centre stage.

Cate Blanchett is the reason for the excessive hype about the film. As one of the best actresses working today, Blanchett wins plaudits wherever she

goes and I can imagine it was a great coup for her to be offered the role of "Jude Quinn" (i.e. Dylan in a drug-infused swinging London). It certainly seems to be a great achievement for Haynes who expands her part greatly while a few of the others are reduced - significantly and regrettably. Blanchett is convincing and nuanced but the stunt casting detracts from the material at hand.

The awards buzz for *I'm Not There* seems to focus entirely on her performance, an unfortunate occurrence as the film itself is far more interesting than the derivative trite that has perpetuated most shortlists so far. It is undoubtedly arthouse, with cinematography deeply influenced by the likes of Italian master Federico Fellini, but the sheer beauty of the picture doesn't detract from the artistic debate that infused both the picture and Dylan's life.

To make a film in the most simplistic sense of this most complex man would have been a disservice to his genius. Haynes has created an ode in *I'm Not There*, not always complementary (as would be expected from his glam rock tale *Velvet Goldmine*), but with great reverence for an artist who was always faithful to himself. Whether you are a fan of Dylan or not, the vivacity of the sixties' society portrayed here is a sad reminder of the apathy that has infused the new millennium. Long live Bob.



You heard the man/lady, do it...



Picture of the Week

Trainshed, by Jonathan Silver
Second Year Bioengineering

We want to exhibit your art. Send in your photographs.
felix@imperial.ac.uk



Games

Games Editors – Azfarul Islam and Sebastian Nordgren

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Azfarul "Az" Islam
Games Editor

Well, hello everyone! I suppose coming back after two weeks of luxurious indulgence only to be thrust into a horrid whirlpool of exams and deadlines can't be the nicest thing. It sucks, no?

Worry not stalwart readers for we are here to ease your suffering. So pick up this issue of Felix and indulge in our Games section. Starting from a retrospective of 2007 in terms of gaming to the Holiday releases to the upcoming titles of 2008, Felix Games takes a comprehensive look at the stuff you love. And the best part is that it's written for you, by you!

I do remember mentioning a new concept for Felix Games and suffice it to say it's still work-in-progress but we hope you'll like it when it actually sees the light of day.

This is poised to be quite an interesting year for games particularly since it has to live up to the astonishing brilliance of 2007 - an epochal 365 days that gave us more fun than we'd dare hope for.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to give a heads up to an all-new tech section headed by my good friend James Finnerty. Tech and games go hand-in-hand so we hope to satiate your cravings with at least a few collaborations this year. Interestingly, they look at the innards of the magical, wondrous Wii-Mote. It's really quite clever how the little thing works.

Anyway, allow me to explain how this issue works. It's been done in the form of spreads for each console (the PS3, Xbox 360 and PC - unfortunately, Wii submissions were nil, but we'll work on that soon enough!). On the left-hand side you'll get to read reviews of the games that wowed us during the cold winter months and kept us engrossed when we were supposed to be revising. Similarly, the right-hand side showcases previews of upcoming games that we think sound brilliant and will try our very best to report on and cover once they get released.

It may be slightly confusing graphically, but it's been done deliberately to create themes that are endemic and indicative of the relevant gaming console. We'd definitely love your comments since a lot of hours were put into this issue.

Speaking of comments, the Reader Riposte section should be back in full swing once we resume normal service. So we definitely want to hear your comments (in 50 words or less) on the games that we're reviewing in this issue. Similarly, I'd like to call out to those interested in writing for Felix Games but were somewhat hesitant about starting. My advice: don't be. Submit your work and start getting involved at the fantastic world of Felix! Go on, warm up MS Word - you know you want to!

Please do send in your comments, opinions, criticism and all other game-related pieces to games.felix@imperial.ac.uk.



Game on, 2008! Game on!

Azfarul Islam would like to welcome you all to another year of gala gaming

Greetings all! 2007 had been quite a year for those who call gaming not just a hobby but a passion.

It was a melange of both good, bad and downright outrageous news and events. Let's take the quickest of recaps before reviewing the best of the 2007 Winter holiday season and then looking towards the games that will carry us through the year 2008.

The earlier quarter was defined by the release of Sony's PlayStation 3 - an obsidian behemoth of a console that was really too expensive for its worth. Despite that, it was a portentous event meaning that all three new consoles had finally graced British soil and the competition here had truly begun.

Around May, the newly revamped E3 was observed. Moving away from the smoke-and-mirrors glitz of the E3s past, it had become a subdued seminar of sorts being held at posh hotels.

In other, more terrestrial news, uber retailer Game announced that they would be absorbing GameStation into their bloated bulk. What this means for gamers is that a retail monopoly is on the verge of being created and this can hurt us financially. Nasty.

Rockstar's tango with controversy continued with its utterly immoral *Manhunt 2* being subject to the ultimate ban-hammer. However, Rockstar decided to fight it out, culminating in a cat-and-mouse game where victory was short-lived as the case was finally referred to the High Court with a decision still pending.

Gaming was brought up by politicians as well with David Cameron citing videogames as one of the reasons for a degenerating youth culture. Gordon Brown mentioned interactive media but in a far more diplomatic light explaining that regulations over adult material needed to be refined.

It's no surprise that gaming is finally emerging into the limelight as a premier and mainstream form of media. 2007 witnessed a cavalcade of watershed releases ranging from the surprisingly fantastic to the fervently anticipated.

The year was marked by the release of hyped megahits such as *God of War II*, *Halo 3*, *Super Mario Galaxy*, *Call of Duty 4*, *Unreal Tournament III*, *Command and Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars* and *Guitar Hero 3*. And this was pretty much the tip of the veritable iceberg.

There was a broad spectrum of quality and variety all across the console smorgasbord. Names like *Portal*, *BioShock*, *Supreme Commander*, *Rock Band*, *Mass Effect* and *Super Paper Mario* have now been juxtaposed with ingenuity and innovation.

To be fair, it's almost nigh on impossible to namecheck the sheer quantity of quality last year but rest assured, it was a Very Good Year for Gaming™.

2008 promises to be a quieter year, characterised by the presence of a more genuine gaming fanbase over a mainstream one. The emphasis now falls on the PlayStation 3 to truly rise up to the challenge of making good on

the promise of such powerful hardware capabilities. Titles like *Metal Gear Solid 4*, *LittleBigPlanet*, *Final Fantasy XIII*, *Gran Turismo 5* and *Devil May Cry 4* offer what the PlayStation does best: a fantastic concoction of variety and quality.

On top of all this, the release of the gargantuan *Grand Theft Auto IV* looms with expectation and unfettered hype.

Despite what seems to have been the release of all their key franchise titles, the Xbox 360 and Wii also have much



life left in them and it'll be interesting to watch

developers attempt to innovate as opposed to rehash.

That's it really, in a tiny nutshell. We at Felix hope to be there with you as 2008 continues forth and we hope you enjoy the journey as much as we expect to. A belated Happy New Year to all!

Here are the names of all who made this issue possible!

A *gigantic* thanks go out to everyone who pulled together and contributed all those awesome pieces.

A few of you did so at very short notice and for that, I'm eternally grateful!

Az

In alphabetical order:

Andrew Lim
Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

Alex Stublely
Ninja Gaiden II

Azfarul Islam
Layout and Design
Ratchet & Clank: Tools of Destruction
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

Devil May Cry 4
KillZone II
Assassin's Creed
Splinter Cell: Conviction

Too Human
Fable 2

Chris Hutchison
Guitar Hero III

David Lawrence
Unreal Tournament III

James Finnerty
LittleBigPlanet
Crysis

Samir Talwar
Spore

Sebastian Nordgren
The Witcher

Viral Shah
Mass Effect

Wing Hym Liu
StarCraft II



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE



As some of you will know the first three *Call of Duty* games have been set in WWII and have really been about fighting in those historical battles but Infinity Ward has decided to take it out of WWII and put it into the present. The story is completely fictional but still fairly plausible. It also makes a very nice change from almost every military shooter out there by having a much darker plot in that even though you go fight and do what you can to save it, the world still kind of sucks at the end of it all. This message is pretty much summed up in one of the levels in which you can't really do anything other

than look around at absolute destruction around you. It's really bit jarring.

You play the single player game mostly as two people: a US marine and an SAS operative and you visit a variety of locations from a cargo ship at sea to the abandoned city of Chernobyl. The campaign is very sort of straight-forward in that you're always going to know what you're doing and where you're supposed to be heading - helped on your way by your compass which always points you the right way.

It usually isn't quite as simple as running from point A to point B though and there's quite a lot of variety from house to house - for example, in the Middle East you are killing hordes of enemy troops, sneaking by enemy patrols in Russia and in the last level which is completely unrelated to the story in every way possible, you are slaughtering an entire airplane full of terrorists (I actually got asked why I don't throw a grenade by someone; last time I checked, throwing a frag grenade when you're 10 km in the air isn't the smartest of ideas but neither is gunfire so whatever). All of this makes for some really intense gameplay which brings me to pretty much the only complaint about it and that the single player is just incredibly short and you'll probably finish the game in about 5 to 6 hours. You can up the difficulty if you really feel like a challenge but at the highest difficulty setting your enemies are insanely deadly which can get incredibly annoying and somewhat less fun.

However, the game more than makes up for it by having some excellent multiplayer. Most of the maps are taken from the single player campaign and just kind of changed



PLAYSTATION 3

up a bit to actually turn into multiplayer maps, I know that actually sounds horrible but out of all of the 16 maps only one or two of them are actually bad maps (I dislike a couple more than that but only that many are actually just bad). And the maps pretty much run the gauntlet of having wide open spaces where a good sniper just laughs at the unsuspecting victims down to really tight maps where grenades, shotguns and people just randomly firing hoping they'll hit something all over the place. There are six modes of play free-for-all and team deathmatch both of which are your standard kill or be killed game type while the others are more objective based either around capturing and holding control points around the map or planting a bomb to destroy an objective that your opponent have to defend.

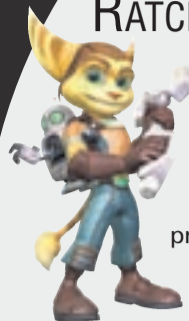
The multiplayer also rewards you for playing smartly, if you can get a three kill streak you get to call down a UAV which makes your opponents show up on your radar. If you can get up to five you can call in an airstrike which you can drop anywhere on the map and watch jets fly in and just kill anything in the area and if you manage to get up to seven you can call in a helicopter which on some maps can be devastating (on some it might as well do nothing). Also everything useful that you do in the multiplayer you get experience and all those go towards your rank and when you gain ranks you get access to more equipment and classes. The class system is fairly interesting in that they all have strengths and weaknesses with their different load outs and eventually you'll unlock the ability to create your own class which allows you to pick your own weapons, attachments, grenades and perks. Perks are split into three groups the first of which is mostly explosives and the other two are slightly more random, you have perks that gives you more health or damage and then you have cool things like martyrdom which every time you're killed you drop a live grenade at your feet for all those annoying people that find teabagging fun.

The presentation of the game is really good, the textures are detailed, there's great use of lighting and bloom effects and if there's really any complaint it's that you'll find some of the models aren't all that good but only if you're really looking for it. The game also has some great music in it and has some really excellent sound effects for the weapons which when you fire them they sound like stuff that really is going to kill people which is awesome.

Even though single player is incredibly short it's still loads of fun to play and the game more than makes up for it by having some great multiplayer action, making this a game definitely worth picking up.



RATCHET & CLANK: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION



Oh, is that the new Ratchet? You just can't help but feel this tiny yet cruel twinge of disappointment as you look at Insomniac's latest for the first time. It still looks like the same, old Ratchet. However, worry ye not Ratchet aficionados because this game *is* the same, old Ratchet.

Except if *Ratchet and Clank: ToD* were the title of the newest Pixar film. It's probably going to cut into hyperbole territory but this must be said: Ratchet's PS3 outing is simply gorgeous and up there with the best of 3D animated films.

It's sumptuously detailed, velvet smooth and the art style still has that warm cartoony appeal that'll melt your heart. It's also a special effects *tour de force* with all manner of sparkling lights, shiny surfaces, glorious explosions and an overabundance of destruction courtesy of Ratchet's arsenal. The new enemies, headed by the Napoleon-esque Emperor Tachyon end up being a bunch of hapless little aliens (much like their glorious leader) strapped up into fish-bowls atop giant metallic armoured suits. Upon bashing their exoskeletons can you choose to laugh/pity at their insignificant countenance. Voiced to perfection yet again, this is a story that will amuse you to no end.

The classic Ratchet humour is back and permeates into all levels of this rollicking adventure full of melee bashing and truly marvellous weapons. The best of the lot are the Groovitron (below) and the Transmopher. The former makes enemies stop in their tracks and bust out a variety of moves to groovy disco beats whereas the latter just zaps them into cute penguins replete with winter clothing. Best part? Get them dancin' and then turn them into penguins. Dancing penguins: Priceless.

Innovation be damned, relentless fun is what it's all about!



Trying to stay alive despite coming down with a fever on a Saturday night

UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

A downed airplane. A mysterious island abound with lush greenery, treacherous ruins and sinister denizens. And a cocky treasure hunter who's never far away from any sort of trouble.

These ingredients make for some great pulp action material and that's exactly what developers Naughty Dog have concocted. *Uncharted* follows the tale of Nathan Drake who believes himself to be the heir of the purportedly childless Sir Francis Drake. He sets out seeking his ancient treasure and lands face-first into a rollicking adventure full of mystery, intrigue and danger.

Sequing together the best of exploration, platforming and shooting mechanics from established titles, *Uncharted* creates a truly addicting amalgam of intense action and daring escapades. It feels familiar in a sort of warm, fuzzy way all the while possessing a strong sense of identity. While the somewhat generic enemies are more defined by the weapons they carry, they're still formidable opponents in numbers and you'll have to duck, weave and roll your way through their hails of bullets to survive. The cover-based shooting mechanism, culled and streamlined from *Gears of War*, creates a palpating sense of contention. Squeezing in headshots with a pistol has rarely felt this rewarding. The only strange aspect is that enemies require a fixed amount of body shots to down them regardless of where you're shooting them.

The adventuring aspects are equally engaging with the quiet sounds of nature immersing you as you concentrate in making death-defying leaps of faith.

All this is presented with radiant visuals and stellar animation. The soundscape is equally mercurial, offering a range of melodies that serve to further engross. Besides the eye candy, there are startingly human characters that draw you into the narrative and offer a tangible conviction to embark on this epic adventure.



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

DEVELOPER KONAMI PUBLISHER KONAMI



Waiting isn't usually the most fun of activities, but sometimes that little bit of patience can lead to something special. *Metal Gear Solid 4* is poised to be such an event.

Purportedly the last of the great *MGS* series and personally, the game I've been waiting for (since the last one, of course), *MGS4* embodies expectations that are interstellar in proportion and not just from an avid fanbase as well. Sony have yet to release their own *magnum opus* and there are doubts that they are capable of such. Thus, it falls on Snake's aging shoulders to bear the burden of not only a world ravaged by war but yet another one full of hope.

Years after the chilling events onboard Arsenal Gear, everything has changed. War has been transformed into a profitable business, one where soldiers find a constant home. However, this vision of a warriors' sanctuary has been hollowed and debauched by Snake's twin brother, Liquid Snake. If he isn't stopped, the entire planet will slowly be reduced to naught but blood, rubble and distant memories.

The premise is definitely far more grim than in any *Metal Gear* in that the scale of the status quo is significantly larger. Similarly, the gameplay must progress to compensate.

The traditional stealth gameplay that *MGS* pioneered has now been augmented and prepared to enter a modern era of combat where there is no place to hide. Demos reveal the core gameplay to be unchanged but with myriad additions in order to streamline it. The introduction of the OctoCam means that Snake can blend into any environment (like a chameleon); context-sensitive actions offer the ability to interact more with a malleable, spontaneous environment. The promise of a more organic CQC (Close Quarters Combat) techniques and an enhanced roster of weaponry is fervently anticipated in equal measure.

Metal Gear has always been about an astounding, immersive and yes, rather abstruse, narrative and this game will probably be no different. With multiple threads coalescing to an ultimate purpose and old faces returning for the last great adventure, *MGS4* promises to be an emotional journey for the ages.

LITTLEBIGPLANET DEVELOPER MEDIA MOLECULE PUBLISHER SONY

The previous year's Games Developers Convention in San Francisco witnessed the birth of something special by newly founded British games studio, Media Molecule. This something is *LittleBigPlanet*, the first truly co-operative multi-player platform game that could be the first jewel set into Sony's PS3 crown.

The characters of the game are a set of player-controlled plush toys traversing a human-sized environment pushing the PlayStation into an area of the market ruthlessly defended by Nintendo, that is aptly dubbed "non-gamers" and young ones. This could be seen as a risk but it could bring variety to a much neglected area of this platform's library sparsely populated by games like *Ratatouille*, another great game overlooked by the majority.

Although the content of the game would insinuate its target audience to be the young, the challenges still provide a high level of entertainment to force the traditional gamer into finding solutions to non-traditional problems ala *Portal*.

Players are encouraged to create their own levels and craft their own puzzles from the game's expansive library of obstacles. This game isn't oriented for the lone gamer either: it's objective is to bring together a group of challengers and get them to collaborate to complete greater achievements than a mere individual could accomplish. Some sections of the game actually require multiple players as a single player often cannot do what's required.

From a technical aspect the beauty of the game is an astounding step towards Sony's vision. It utilises the PlayStation's huge potential for physics to make the challenges that face the players far more dynamic and formidable.

The first public demo is planned to appear on the PlayStation Network sometime during the year and the full game should be released towards the holiday season, but the question stands: will this be the PlayStation 3's killer app?



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DEVIL MAY CRY 4 DEVELOPER CAPCOM PUBLISHER CAPCOM

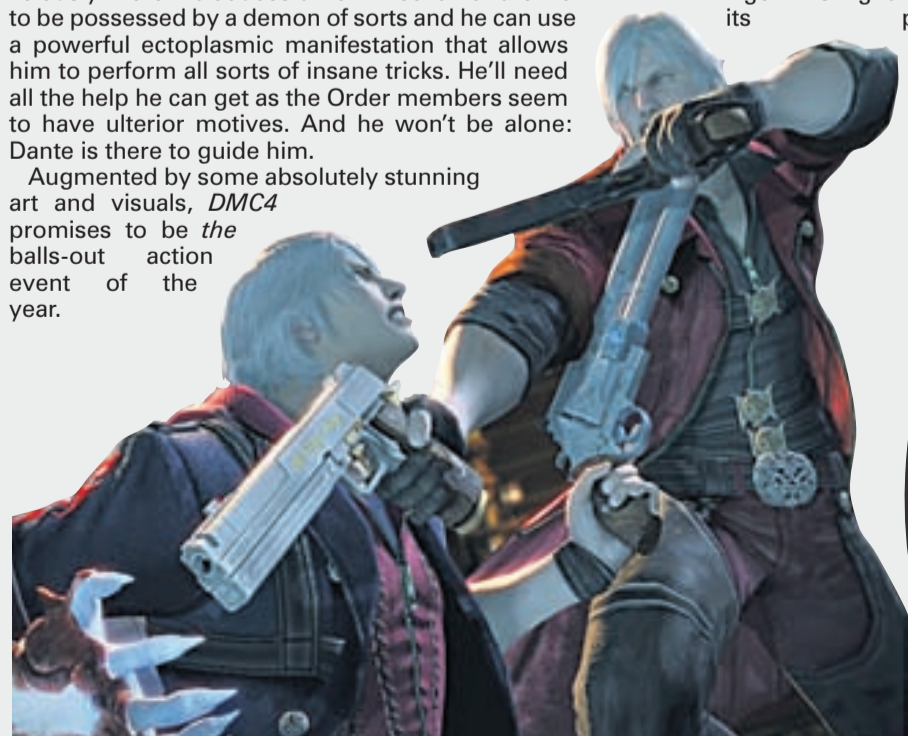
Guns. Swords. Two guys bedecked in tight leather. Need any more innuendo?

Capcom's intensely stylish *Devil May Cry* makes a triumphant return. *DMC4* is set some years after the events of the original *DMC*, which saw the spunky rockstar of gaming, Dante, send the Devil bawling back to Hell yet again. However, he concedes his status this time to one Nero.

Dante's father, the Legendary Dark Knight Sparda, originally fought against the Devil. It turns out that this little action earned him quite a few fanboys. The game will start off presenting this group as the Order of the Sword, with Nero as one of its members. Although, his presence as part of the cult seems more driven by his affection for a girl named Kyrie. During a sermon by the Order, the peace is suddenly disrupted by the appearance of a stranger coiffed with silver locks and enshrouded in a blood-red trench coat. He wastes no time in slaughtering the priests. Thus begins *DMC4*.

Besides the romantic connotations of the plot and Dante's shocking actions, what really matters is the gameplay. And this game seems to deliver. Combining fast-paced, frenetic swordplay with a staccato of gun attacks, *DMC* meshes together proximal and distance combat rather deliciously. Nero introduces a new mechanic: the Devil to be possessed by a demon of sorts and he can use a powerful ectoplasmic manifestation that allows him to perform all sorts of insane tricks. He'll need all the help he can get as the Order members seem to have ulterior motives. And he won't be alone: Dante is there to guide him.

Augmented by some absolutely stunning art and visuals, *DMC4* promises to be the balls-out action event of the year.



Insert a random Queer Eye for the Straight Guy reference... it's begging for one!

KILLZONE II DEVELOPER GUERRILLA STUDIOS PUBLISHER SONY

I know what you're thinking right now. Why, oh God, why waste space on a piece of detritus like *KillZone*. Fair point. *KillZone* was poopacular. It was shit.

However, *KillZone II* (or *KillZone PS3*, whatever makes you happy) wants to be the shit. Shyeah, right. What with Guerilla's first attempt at a "Halo-slayer" and the CGI debacle of E3 2005, there's no way they're capable of making a decent game.

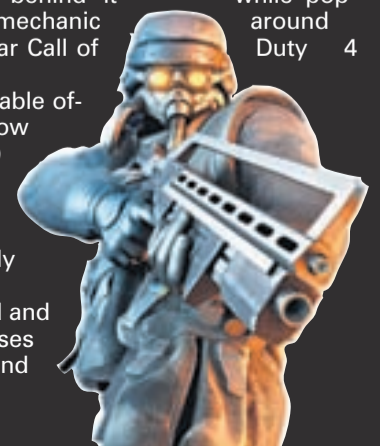
Or are they. Guerilla came out of the closet and did the unthinkable and showed off real gameplay footage and video that cheekily included the aforementioned CGI trailer, except, it was actually rendered in real-time. And you know what, it honestly looks good. The gritty, charcoal vibes - one of the few highlights of the original - has been retained. Otherwise, the game is almost unrecognisable. Boasting an all-out assault on all the senses, this revitalised title seems to pull off every graphical trick in the trade. The character models in particular impressed with life-like animations, gestures and facial expressions.

What remains to be seen, though, is the real substance: the gameplay elements. The FPS genre is one that doesn't lend itself to much innovation, rather relying on finding the 'right' formula and building upon it. *KillZone*, to be brutally honest, had no such formula so it's interesting to see how the developers will approach their first serious attempt at quality.

What's included into the mix is a cover system that allows one to latch onto any part of solid scenery and then hide behind it while popping out to risk shots at the enemy. It's certainly not the newest mechanic but it does promise to be an entertaining addition that the stellar *Call of Duty 4* did not possess. There's a thought.

Plotwise, there doesn't seem to be anything particularly remarkable offered. The ISA (Interplanetary Strategic Alliance) forces have now been directly landed on Planet Helghan (home of the Helghast) in order to take the fight to them. On the way they not only encounter eery-eyed transgressors but also a hostile planet that the Helghast seem to be harnessing directly against you. It's somewhat interesting but I wouldn't really expect anything particularly epic or immersive.

KillZone II finds itself in an intriguing position. If it can succeed and bring forth the solid gameplay and fantastic visuals it promises then it will be a true hit. Otherwise, it stands to flounder and simply die like its predecessor.



MASS EFFECT



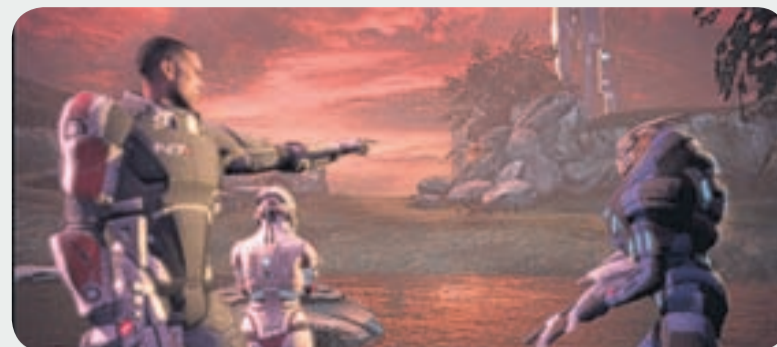
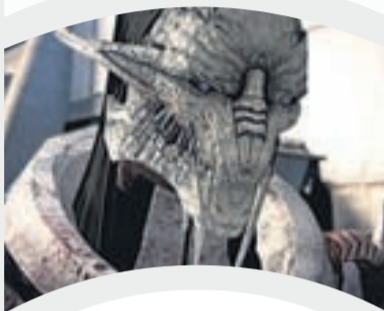
Before its release, *Mass Effect* was anointed as a can't-miss prospect by practically anyone who saw or read about it. BioWare's gargantuan action-RPG had been at the top of my 2007 wish-list for some time and I was eager to see whether it lived up to the mammoth hype it carried. After playing through about 25 hours of the game I can safely say, *Mass Effect* lives up to the BioWare name. This is nothing short of a revolutionary title, one that brings together the disparate elements of role-playing game and shooter for a compelling, story-driven experience.

Overall, the storyline is a great one, bordering on brilliant. *Mass Effect* is set roughly 200 years into the future, when alien technology has advanced humans to faster-than-light travelling speeds, and has put us into contact with a host of aliens in a struggle to fit in with this intergalactic community. A rogue agent named Saren who's working for The Council (the "always needed" trio that runs the show) threatens the safety of the universe, and it's your job to stop him.

Enter the protagonist, Commander Shepard. This being an RPG, character creation is rather important. *Mass Effect* allows you to choose

your avatar's sex, appearance, class and back-story. Once that's over with you're ready to jump into the action.

The combat system is nothing amazing. In fact, if you were to base your opinion of the game on it, it would be no where near as good of a game as it is. AI is weak on both the enemy and ally sides. Your guys will shoot at walls or into your back 70% of the time, and you can back up and bottle neck 30 enemies into a hallway to be slaughtered like cattle. The shotgun is also possibly the most unbalanced, unstoppable weapon in gaming history. I was able to snipe 100 yards with the shotgun, and when they got close the blast



strength knocked them on their backs leaving them helpless for a good five seconds.

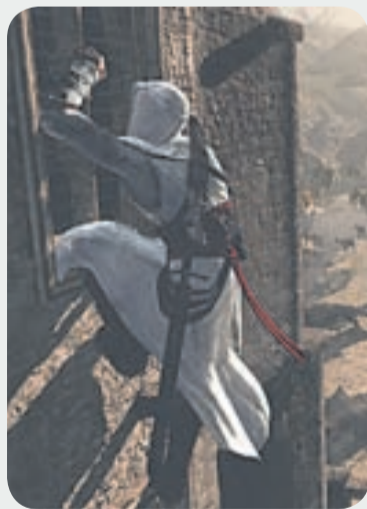
But that doesn't mean it wasn't fun being a one man wrecking crew. And by no means was it always a breeze. There was one point that I can't go into details about without spoiling anything that took me 45 minutes of dying to beat.

Mass Effect sports an awesome lineup of characters you will fall in love with immediately, ranging from the sassy and spunky Ashley Williams to the badass, "I don't give a crap" Urdnot Wrex. With that in mind though, the way your squad-mates are developed in this game can often make them seem underwhelming compared with their previous sci-fi epic and spiritual predecessor, *Knights of the Old Republic*. Gone are the moments of Carth Onassi stopping you for a chat in the streets, re-

placed by the new method of Shepard running over to his/her squad in between missions for a chat. This can sometimes feel like more of an effort than it should, and having such a small amount of interaction with your squad outside of the ship can often make them seem a bit lifeless.

Bottom-line? As an RPG, *Mass Effect* will blow you away. You'll find yourself so engrossed in the massive (pardon the pun) universe that even if you don't usually role play, you'll be doing it anyway. Whatever you do, don't judge it as a shooter. *Mass Effect* isn't just a game, it's an experience and is a prime example of why games are being recognised as literary art forms. It's a must-play game if you own an Xbox 360. Don't be that guy who misses out, because it'll be your loss. Game of the Year, hands down.

ASSASSIN'S CREED (ALSO ON Ps3, Pc)



Assassin's Creed attempts to segue manifold features from canonical titles past. The Middle-Eastern atmosphere and lithe acrobatics of *Prince of Persia*, the swirling conspiracies about the correlation of genetics and information ala *Metal Gear Solid* and the proximal stealth tactics of *Hitman* all come to mind whilst traversing the distinctly khaki-saturated environments.

The melange of such established mechanics and atmospheric, indigenous art style do well to captivate the gamer for the overture. Al-ta'ir is capable of some deft parkour and these portions often feel exhilarating. Similarly, the sense of tension as you track your quarry amongst a bustling, cognizant crowd is quite palpable. The sword combat, despite being quite linear, offers visceral thrills in the form of brutality by the blade. There's a strongly

evocative sense of actual detective work even if the situations tend to be mimetic after the initial few. The visuals are astounding at their best with delicate nuances, solid animation and an admirable sense of architecture. Overall, it starts off rather brilliantly.

Despite a riveting introduction, there are myriad cracks that show with time. Worryingly, an increasing bit of ennui sets in early on. While it borrows some fantastic elements, *Creed* plays safe with them and refuses to go the extra distance. The story will seem clever and thought-provoking, but a few brushes with literature and the aforementioned *Metal Gear Solid* reveal it to be a bit plain and rather unexciting. There are certain graphical errors and despite excellent vocal localisation, Al-ta'ir's strong American accent is grating and breaks an otherwise spellbinding illusion.

While flawed, the game manages to be highly entertaining. Plus, Assassins pwn.



GUITAR HERO III (ALSO ON Ps3, Wii, Ps2)

Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock is the latest in the Guitar Hero series.

The game's had a graphics makeover, the gameplay's been tightened (a bit) as well some new features being added in the form of a good co-op carrier mode and not so good guitarist (NPC or player) in a rock off.

It's a good idea but in practise it does not work well. But don't let this put you off; *Guitar Hero 3* it is probably the strongest *Guitar Hero* so far mostly due to the tracklist which features over 70 master tracks from across the rock spectrum from the Kaiser Chiefs' "Ruby" to "Through the Fire and Flames" by Dragonforce (and yes, it is very, very difficult).

The game is the most difficult in the series so far, so it's probably not best start for you newbies out there, but it is well worth a play and still remains one of the best party games out there. (I can only vouch for the Xbox 360 version) but with online play and new downloadable songs becoming available stands to keep the game fresh for a good few months yet.

There is even a rock version of "We Three Kings" performed by Steve Ouimette for free download. If you are still feeling Christmassy, that is.



NINJA GAIDEN II

Carving out its name in the hall of fame of the original Xbox and PS3, *Ninja Gaiden* and its later re-released *Sigma* edition redefined platform gaming with its fast-paced combat system and extensive combo list.

With such a history *Ninja Gaiden II* brings with it a certain Pedigree amongst its fellow platforming peers. For those that haven't been graced with playing the original, *Ninja Gaiden II* is an Xbox 360 exclusive platform game with a heavy emphasis on combat in a near-future setting with fantasy elements, and so the game revolves around running between fights against a combination of fiends, samurai and sci-fi troopers.

The defining characteristics that made the original what it was look set to remain intact in the sequel, including the challenging level of play and the almost poetic nature of combat.

Currently released trailers show locales based upon recognisable real-world locations including the likes of Venice, New York and Japan. Current info regarding weapon selection shows the usual single sword, twin swords as well as more exotic weapons such as a set of claws (think Wolverine) and a scythe.

The developers have chosen to increase the age rating from a 15 to 18, allowing them increase the depth in combat by dismembering opponents limbs while giving the fights a far more visceral feel.

The game is currently set to be released this spring, so humanity will have to look for its scythe-wielding Ninja fix elsewhere for the time being.



SPLINTER CELL: CONVICTION



Splinter Cell has always been the *other* stealth series, offering a slower, more deliberate type of gameplay over *Metal Gear*'s more spontaneous, stylised sneaking.

After toying around with a rather rigid formula for three titles, UbiSoft has finally decided to try something a little different - but not too much. Inspired by the intelligent crowd mentality established in *Assassin's Creed*, they have looked

towards the likes of the Bourne trilogy and *The Fugitive* to offer a more evanescent, capricious version of stealth. This time, series stalwart Sam Fisher is in contention with the very organisation that had raised him. With the Third Echelon a shadow of its former self, Fisher only has his wits and his ingenuity to survive. In essence, *Conviction* is playing catch-up with *MGS4*'s 'nowhere to hide' mantra.

The game is set in urban areas that are populated by a bevy of civilians, police officers and Government agents. It's upto Sam to complete his recon activities all the while remaining hidden within the crowd, flowing with them without disruption. When the situation calls for action, however, he is able to utilise the environment around him to his advantage. This ties in with a natural animation system designed for Sam to interact organically with his surroundings.

These are certainly moves in a rather interesting new direction that is quite far from the light-and-shadows stealth mechanic of *Splinter Cells* yore. Gameplay videos, despite being work in progress, reveal a title that is much akin to an *Assassin's Creed* set in the present day sans the parkour acrobatics.

The graphics look rather impressive and Sam Fisher is sporting a rather George Clooney-esque beard that makes him look a bit more human.

Rumours have it that development of the game has been troubled and restarted two times already. One hopes that these issues are sorted out for this rather promising title.



TOO HUMAN

Coming from the creators of the original *Legacy of Kain* mythos and the eerie *Eternal Darkness*, *Too Human* promises a melange of epic, high-fantasy storytelling and intense GunXS-word combat popularised by the one and only *Devil May Cry*.

In a futuristic rendition of Norse Mythology, you find yourself in the heavy metallic boots of Baldur - the god of all things green, figuratively not literally. The interesting aspect here is that Norse gods are not immortals. Rather, they are warriors and personifications of utmost respect and prodigious ability; in this game, these beings further distance themselves from weaker humans through the augmentation of cybernetic implants. So far the plot whispers of vestiges of great depth and moral pondering as it presents these evermore mechanistic gods and their enemies: a machine army that slaughters humans in order to incorporate flesh and blood into their being. The irony here being that the reason is for the machines to become more akin with that they perceive as 'human', while the gods move further towards embracing a metallic future.

Baldur is an exception. Among all the gods, he alone possesses the least upgrades and this action is viewed with suspicion. Like the other legendary game about powerful deities, *God of War*, there seem to be a lot of internal politics and struggle within the hierarchy. It's always an interesting concept and moreso in the light of humanising these characters despite their attempts to convince otherwise.

While the plot has me significantly intrigued, the gameplay revealed thus far doesn't inspire much confidence. It looks airy and rigid; easily outclassed by the impending release of its combat forbear: *Devil May Cry 4*.

Still there is much to hope from this title on an aesthetic level since the art is highly stylised and the sense of a futuristic atmosphere is impressively palpable.



FABLE 2

Fable was an extraordinarily ambitious game and coming from the creator of the hallowed *Black & White* (and not-so-good sequel), such was to be expected. While the original wasn't able to meet Peter Molyneux's divinely lofty goals, *Fable 2* takes its chance at reaching for the stars

Set in the world of Albion yet again, *Fable 2* allows you to truly embody your chosen character and live out a span of fifty years of his or her life. This time, the emphasis on a truly pervasive, consequential experience seems to be the ultimate goal. Once you've begun your journey, the choices laid in front of you range from the mundane to the great.

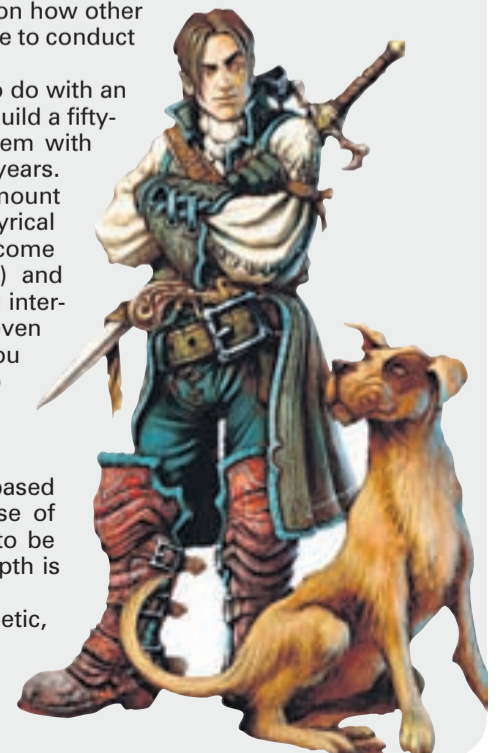
Morality in terms of good and evil was the lynchpin of character development in the previous game. This time, such a balance is important but no longer the focus. Rather, money happens to be the representation of morality; rather perspicacious, no? The combination of your alignment with the forces of light and/or dark and your financial status will now have bearing on how other characters treat you and how you will be able to conduct yourself in the game world.

The overarching plotline has something to do with an individual called Lucien whose goal it is to build a fifty-storey tower - interestingly, this is in tandem with your gameplay time of a similar number of years.

Beyond this lies the seemingly infinite amount of choice offered, as Mr Molyneux waxes lyrical about his game. One can get married, become pregnant (or get someone else pregnant) and have children. These characters remain and interact with you realistically. Similarly, you can even have a pet who'll come running back to you even if you spurn it away. Aww. You can also undertake any profession ranging from a mere barmen to a more risqué activity such as prostitution. Err...

The underlying combat principle is being based on timing and context-sensitivity via the use of a single button. How this will work is yet to be seen, but there are worries that combat depth is being sacrificed for accessibility.

Regardless, *Fable 2* stands as an energetic, zealous project that has the potential of offering an multifarious experience of epic proportions. Or at the least, a highly entertaining, fun one.



CRYSIS

Everyone should have heard of Crysis by now due to the sheer volume of hype this game was given by previewers. In many ways it lives up to, and even surpasses, the expectations, but in others it fell far short of the mark.

Before I move on to the way this game plays out let's talk about why this game was been so awaited. It's pretty. Very pretty. Bring a £2,000 top-of-the-line computer to its knees begging for mercy pretty. Now on one hand, this seems great but on the other there's no point in a game being released if no one can actually play the thing. To handle this, Crytek did a fantastic job making this title very scalable; running this game on my own mediocre machine still brought forth a spectacle of foliage and coast lines that I was more than satisfied with.

Now let's step back from the superficial and take a look at whether you will actually want to play Crysis rather than stare at it. The game is split into two major sections. Firstly, there's the half before you fight a swarm of more or less identical aliens that leads to a series of repetitive gameplay and then the second half, where you're fighting a swarm of aforementioned generic aliens. Okay okay, I'm hinting just a bit at what bugs me about this shooter.

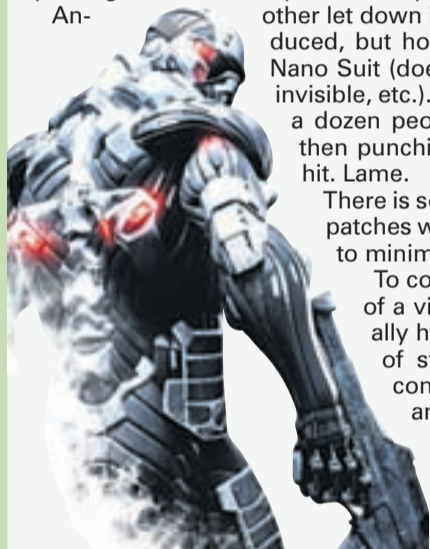
For breakfast and lunch you tackle a dynamic and tactically intelligent guerrilla army that utilizes cover and will even out-flank you. You can tackle every encounter using your vast set of tools to suit your favourite style of combat. Lurk around as a sniper with high powered rifles, James Bond it with silenced pistols or go all Governor of California with an Uzi: its up to you. This truly adds a huge element of re-playability to the single player.

Brace yourself for the let down: aliens are overrated. After battling the very well-designed guerrilla AI for the first half, the second species of opponents is a dismal way to end your experience. They float around slowly and you plug away with the Gauss Rifle (basically a rail gun). Taking them out becomes a very repetitive three-shot game, although there is a bit of a perk where you get to fly in a helicopter and take on the extraterrestrials at their own game.

Another let down is the multiplayer, not because of what the developers produced, but how the users have exploited a few features of the games Nano Suit (does the same things the predator can do: run fast, become invisible, etc.). Join an online game and you will be swarmed with half a dozen people running up behind you, while invisible, and then punching you in the back knocking you out in one hit. *Lame.*

There is some solace to be found in the hope that patches will balance aspects of the multiplayer to minimize some of possible exploits.

To conclude, I feel this game was a bit of a victim of its own hype and it really had to reach an impossible set of standards. Brush these pre-conceptions aside, however, and you still have what is by anyone's standard, a fantastic shooter.



UNREAL TOURNAMENT III

The *Unreal Tournament* series has been around for a long time and has been made into a formula that rarely fails to entertain with frantic, fast paced combat.

When I started to play, I was very surprised to see long cut scenes and even an attempt to give what was previously mindless, gladiatorial style combat, some semblance of a plot. I can only imagine that the development team has caved under the pressure on the nanny state to make the violence soundly motivated. On the other hand, who really cares? I don't think anyone ever bought a UT game because it had a good storyline.

Regardless, the game play is still classic UT. Running around maps that vary in size from quite small industrial areas to enormous expanses of forest or sprawling space stations. The graphics are absolutely stunning and, to their credit, the UT team refrained from using DX10 which allows mid-level systems to still play the game comfortably (however you only really notice how much the graphics have been improved on a relatively new system). This also means the environments have the expected UT trait of being... solid. There's simply no other word to describe it. Even small trees and bins are impervious to a hail of rockets.

The only objects that are destructible are the vehicles and your enemies!

A new addition is the hover board which replaces the Translocator in any maps that contain vehicles.

This is a fantastic addition to the game that really changes the strategies and encourages teamwork, especially in CTF games as you can latch onto the back of vehicles while on your board and be dragged along at high speed, getting you and the flag back safe.

UT3 says goodbye to the Ion Painter and the Lightning Gun but we see a welcome return of the sniper rifle.

All the weapons, as with everything else in the game have had a nice upgrade and I finally feel that the weapons actually look like they were made in the future rather than knocked up in some live action gamer's garage.

The multiplayer element of this game, which is really the main selling point, is a little disappointing. The use of aimbots etc. can become ridiculous (some players literally cannot be killed unless you're 2 feet away and behind them) and I'm certain it will continue as there do not appear to be any plans for an anti-cheat system. One area of multiplayer that I really missed was the Bombing Run game which has been replaced with a tug-of-war style match named Onslaught, where you attempt capture a number of power sources sequentially until you can attack your enemy's main power node. It does produce longer and more intense games but Bombing Run was a unique gem in multiplayer FPS.

Overall *UT3* is an excellent addition to the series but with games like *Crysis* and *Bioshock* competing in the market, it really should attempt more and not just be a well-implemented makeover. Unless you're a real hardcore UT fan and have bought a new computer recently I would stick with one of the older nations as they offer as much entertainment and still look better on older systems.

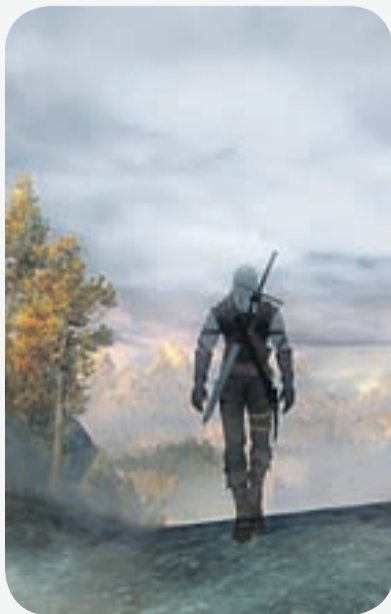


THE WITCHER

So, *The Witcher*, eh? Hell, I don't blame you, I hadn't heard about it either until a friend shoved his copy of it in my hand and told me to play it. And now that I have, I'm a bit disappointed that others haven't heard of this excellent traditional RPG from new Polish developers CDProjekt. *The Witcher* is a brilliant game with oodles of atmosphere, charm and action. It's different enough to feel like a step forwards from the same old, same old of Western RPGs with a load of new improbable-sounding features that mesh into a well-polished whole.

But aside from the streamlined real-time combat, the interesting alchemy elements and meaningful character progression, the most significant trait of *The Witcher* is its writing. In a year when *Portal* showed the world that writing can raise a game from good to mind-blowingly amazing, this game has raised the bar for RPG writing. For a good 50 hours, the writers sidestep the cliches - this game isn't about winning, saving the world or getting the princess (well, it is, but not *all* the time). *The Witcher's* decisions are far more subtle than that, delving deeply into themes of love, loyalty, drugs, politics, marriage, racism, rape and trust. NPCs have histories and very real human motivations and, like real people, they all believe they're doing The Right Thing. It's up to the player to read through the rich dialogue (all of which is voice-acted to a high standard) and pick their own path through it.

But perhaps best of all, *The Witcher* never outright punishes you for any of your decisions, instilling you with an odd sort of self-doubt about your actions. And for that alone, *The Witcher* is a game that deserves to be played - because there are very few forms of media that make you sincerely ask yourself "Am



I doing The Right Thing?"

(The retail version of *The Witcher* suffers from long loading screens and occasional crash bugs, all of which are solved by a recent patch. With these technical difficulties out of the way, the game is much easier to recommend to everyone.)



SPORE

OK, first things first: Will Wright is God. But not only that, he gives you the power too. Creator of the most popular PC game ever, *The Sims*, as well as the frankly magical *SimCity*, he developed worlds entirely under your control. Now he wants to take you one step further: his new creation, *Spore*, will grant you the potential to control the very evolution of a species. From the beginnings of life itself to the spawn of a galactic civilisation, *Spore* will guide you through the ages, where according to the man himself, almost anything can happen.

That is, if it ever gets released.

Currently eight years in the making, *Spore* was first announced at the 2005 Electronic Entertainment Expo. Electronic Arts, who bought Wright's soul in the form of Maxis Software over ten years ago, have announced a tentative release date of spring 2008. This definitely remains to be seen, however, as while Wright has stated that the game is currently fully-playable, no real demonstrations have come forth and the company remains tight-lipped about the actual depth of the game. The *Spore* de-

velopment team aim to create what could potentially be the most open-ended video game in history – a monumental task by anyone's standards. As a result, many are sceptical of the game, leading some to claim it as "vapourware," despite the game being seemingly on track for the release date, and others to doubt its level of creativity, even before it goes gold. This is balanced, however, by the growing number of fan communities centred on its eventual release, geared towards discussion of the game and a means to effectively share the content that the users create.

The game's premise is simple to explain, but tough to create in practice: a comet crashes on a planet of the player's choosing, causing the complex reactions which culminate in living organisms. As these organisms thrive, they evolve into more interesting creatures, which then form societies, which merge into civilisations, which then, as with

human beings, seek to explore the universe to perhaps find some life apart from their own. During all this, the player can manipulate not only the structure of the overall system but the creatures themselves, controlling both their physical makeup and to a lesser extent, their thoughts and actions. In this, it is quite representative of Maxis' earlier games. However, as *Spore* spans such a great transition, from single microbes to advanced city-states, the level of control must change accordingly. As you progress through the five stages, the control over individuals is relinquished in favour of more direct control over the entire population.

The *Spore* development team are very keen to promote their content-sharing service, which automatically uploads your planets to a central database. This information is then shared with other players, who can download the planets and explore them in their own game.

The game features a reporting system which should inform a player of how their crea-



tures are faring in other universes, including the number of times another player has destroyed their own planet. While it seems like a fairly gimmicky idea, it opens doors to vast possibilities – for example, you could groom your creatures towards creating alliances and therefore protecting them as they venture out into the multiverse.

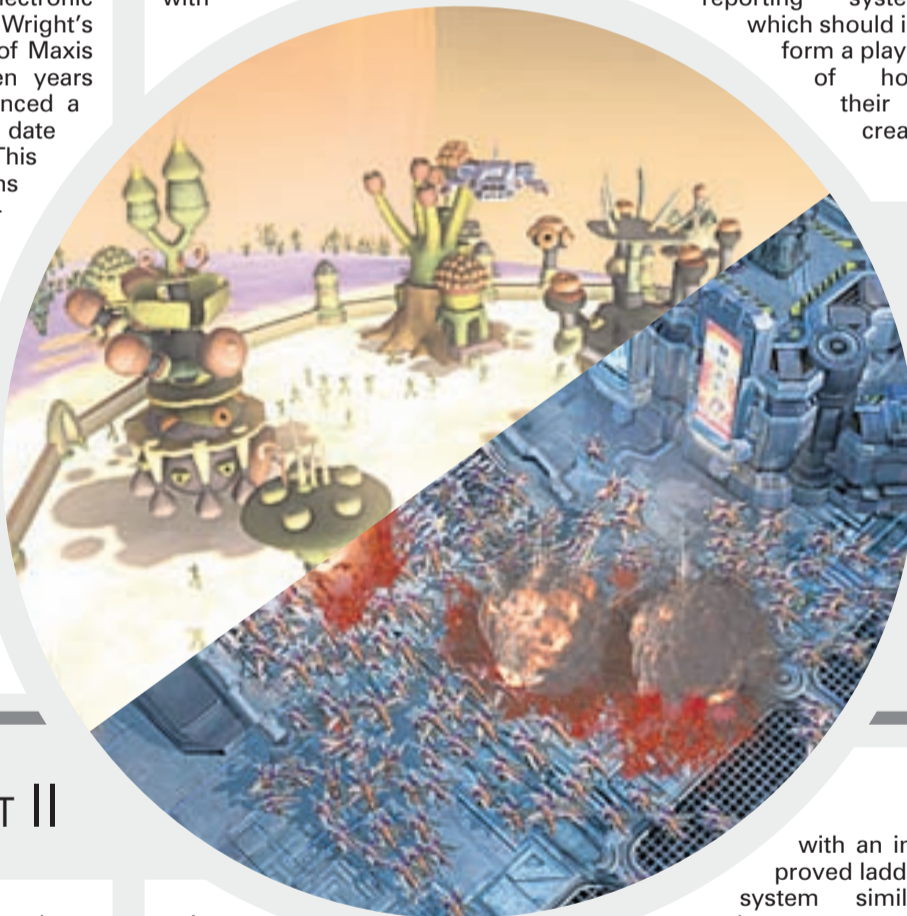
Perhaps the most interesting component of *Spore* from a scientific perspective is what we call procedurally-generated content. Simply put, it is a method of creating the objects in game using algorithms, in order to both minimise the storage needed for the humongous number of possible creations and to maximise the potential diversity throughout the game. While in most games, each character, building and tree is created by an artist, allowing the computer to randomly generate the objects in the game on the fly lets us open up whole worlds of never-before-seen content. When combined with a large variety of textures based on the real world to add realism to the picture, this can allow for massive replayability and will give players a warm fuzzy feeling inside, as you can guar-

antee their carefully-groomed creatures are unique throughout the planet.

Not all is random, however: once we've created the random creature, along with its surroundings, more strict algorithms are used in order to help the creatures evolve and adapt to their environment. Rather than sporadically growing new limbs, these effects are more subtle: losing an unnecessary tail, or sprouting claws to ward off enemies. A combination of these two methodologies should mean that you never play the same game twice.

A bit of variety between each play is perhaps necessary: with today's games concentrating perhaps too much on an epic storyline, *Spore* slides neatly into the gap left, where players are given a virtual sandbox to run the world as they see fit. These so-called "god" games have always had a place in the gamer's heart, where they can let loose and create (or destroy) to their heart's desire. Perhaps the power is what attracts them, perhaps the freedom, or maybe just a need to discover the possibilities lent to them by a game so fast, but I have a feeling that if it is released come spring, *Spore* will spawn a new craze in an industry just realising its potential.

Well, until Duke Nukem Forever comes out, obviously.



STARCRAFT II

May 19, 2007 may be a long forgotten day in the memories of the majority, but for the 10,000 Koreans who attended Blizzard's Worldwide Invitational it remains a sacred moment as Blizzard unveiled its latest product. Yes, finally *Starcraft II* has made it to the screens and the world was in awe. Shortly afterwards, the internet was consumed with ecstasy.

At first look, the game is similar to its predecessor but revamped with alluring graphics: a significant improvement over the now simplistic visuals of the original. The game boasts new features coupled with a array of

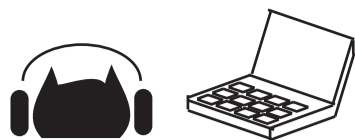
units both old and new. *Starcraft* gamers will recognise the familiar Protoss zealot, which has the ability to charge and engage in melee combat or the zergling swarm, now capable of mutating into suicidal bombs. They will not recognise new units such as the Protoss Immortal, a powerful cybernetic warrior that can nullify powerful attacks with its shield nor initially comprehend the power of a Protoss Mothership till they have witnessed the 'Black Hole' wipe out entire armies. Now, ambushes can be made onto unsuspecting units by those that are positioned on higher tiers of terrain whilst remaining invisible by the fog of war.

Online gamers are promised

with an improved ladder system similar to the one currently in operation for *Warcraft III*, fostering true competition. Rising to the top levels would be challenging no doubt, having seen the uber micro skills of aficionados. Players eager play single-player can watch the *Starcraft* saga unfold as the epic tale continues.

With the enormous size of the Blizzard fanbase in worldwide (especially in Korea where *Starcraft* is considered a sport) and the vast interest generated, the game has been hyped up to be a big success. However, Blizzard's major challenge is to bring *Starcraft II* into an already saturated market whilst satisfying hardcore gamers maintaining the level of quality that the original had delivered. A challenge that is yet to be tested...





Technology

Technology Editor – James Finnerty

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The little guy that'll win your love

The teen-eeepc with a teeny price. **James Finnerty** finds out exactly what is on offer for your cash

I reckon that not very many people reading this will have heard of this easy-to-overlook new product, which I feel should be given a lot more attention, especially within the student demographic. To cut what could be a long story short, the eeepc (pronounced as a single e) is a new laptop from the established motherboard and notebook manufacturer ASUS. Now I know what you're thinking: what's so special about another laptop? It's not a Mac so I'm not going to buy it. Well I'll explain. The big selling point of the ee is the fact that it is one of the smallest fully functional laptops ever produced; it's so portable I'm stuck as to whether to class it as a laptop or a palmtop.

Before going any further I'll lay out all the facts and figures so you can get a better idea of what this device has to offer. Its dimensions are 225mm wide × 165mm deep × 35mm thick and its very low mass pulls in at an anorexic 920g. So it's not going to break your back like every other 'portable' machine brought to you by the other big manufacturers. Its screen can be a bit limiting at 7", but it pulls off a reasonable resolution, for its size, of 800x480 pixels. It uses a 900Mhz Intel celeron M processor with its clock speed tamed down to 630Mhz to save on battery and heat, but there are some warranty-voiding ways of getting it to run at full whack. At the Celeron's disposal is 512mb of RAM and behind this is 4Gb of Solid State memory, fulfilling the role normally occupied by the faithful hard disk. In place of your usual Vista/XP or OSX, you get supplied with a reasonably mainstream Linux variant called



One's big, one's small. One's light, one's heavy. One's fiddly, one's clunky. You'd think with all this crap to worry about, people wouldn't say 'size doesn't matter' any more

Xandros. The ee also has a decent battery life of 3-4 hours and is supplied with a wall-wart style charger, as opposed to a normal laptop charger with a huge brick midway down the cable.

Now to get onto the ee's pros and cons. It's small; this is good and bad. The keyboard, track pad and screen can be hard to use at first, producing typing errors and frustration at trying to click the correct icon, but this is the cost associated with having this level of

carry-around-all-day portability.

A big consideration for many is the small storage capacity. After the operating system and applications you're left with a mere 1.4Gb space that you can use. This isn't a lot for your music and films but it's plenty for all the documents and other work you want to store on it.

People may or may not be put off by Linux (comes with free socks and sandals these days y'know) but as of late

it's started stepping into the domain of the big boys, even Dell now supply it as an option. The ee comes setup with a simplified Linux desktop called "easy-mode" which can be swapped for a standard full desktop. If you're really not interested in dipping your toes in the Linux ocean the manual provided gives a full set of simple instructions on how to install Windows XP and some recommended adjustments to optimize the machine.

You may look at the power of this machine and think: this is a little retro isn't it? My phone has got more grunt. Well the fact is, for day to day tasks such as web browsing (Facebook, webmail etc.) and taking notes in lectures (Facebook, webmail etc.) you really don't need much more power than this little guy puts at your disposal. It could be considered the definitive student tool, especially at the loan-friendly £220.

What's inside this magic wand?

Like taking expensive things apart? Well **Andrew Slater** will save you some time and money

By now I'm sure you've all had a chance to play about with a Wii and found that it's easy to use and (mostly) does what you want. Today we're going to delve a bit into how the Wiimote works and just how Nintendo got it to tick ever so perfectly.

In contrast to a regular light gun which operates off the light emitted by the TV, the Wii sensor bar contains two banks of five infra-red LEDs. The Wiimote has an image sensor which focuses these into two bright points and measures the distance between them. By using this, compared to the fixed distance of the LED banks in the sensor bar, the Wii can use triangulation (that's some fancy form of maths to you medics) to work out how far away from the screen you are and where you're pointing. It can also use the offset from horizontal to work out the angle you're holding the Wiimote at, fancy eh?

The Wiimote has a few more tricks up inside the indestructible shell to work out what you're doing with it. Whilst you're swinging it with enough force to break that expensive HDTV that you bought a few weeks ago you're actually moving a silicon weight of

less than one millionth of a gram attached to a few springs. A current runs through the weight which is measured by silicon plates all around, distributing it equally at rest. With that glorious backhand you move the weight no more than a whopping five nanometres, changing how the current is

distributed. The Wii calculates how smooth, long and powerful your shot was based upon the voltage change, matches it to a swing in its database and decides you were actually aiming at the guy with an afro in the crowd!

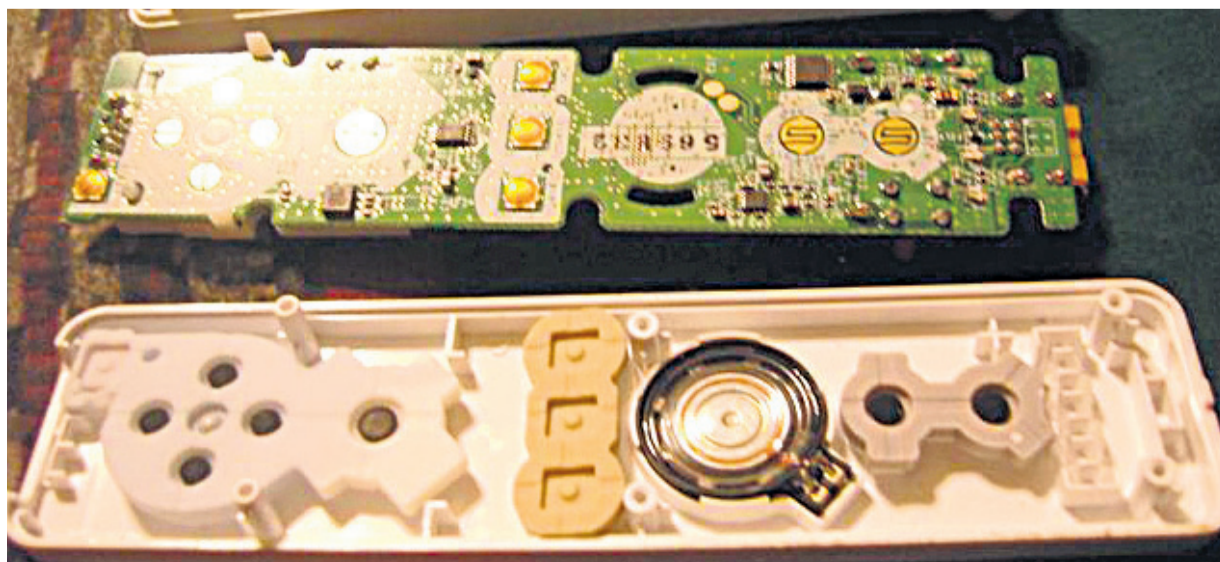
The Wii doesn't know all this info via some kind of voodoo or black magic; it

actually uses Bluetooth to talk to your Wiimote. Now I've not tried using my phone to play the Wii but it's the same technology and does have a built-in limit of up to eight active devices, limiting the Wii to a maximum of seven players. There's also a few other nifty devices hidden away in there including

a 3300µF capacitor in case the batteries come loose during a frantic stick-wagging moment, a speaker that's bloody useful as it'll bleep within a range of up to ten meters to remind you it's you're go (even if you're in the loo) and a 16KiB EEPROM chip that can store your Mii, Pokémon and controller setup. Now that's a useful feature!

Finally, as you probably noticed, there's a huge port on the bottom of the Wiimote too. Currently you can hook the Nunchuk in there and get worryingly tangled playing Boxing, but Nintendo does have plans for extra connectivity.

Expect to get a light gun attachment that mounts the Wiimote along the barrel, a steering wheel and a whole host of other bizarre add-ons. Unfortunately there won't be a charging dock based upon the port as it has limited connectivity. So next time you're frantically wagging your Wiimote or making a perfect serve, just remember that you're moving a block of silicon of less than a millionth of a gram no more than five nanometers, aiming with some LEDs and a bit of IR radiation when all the while the King of Denmark & Norway oversees that your Wiimote talks fair with your Wii.



Okay, Andrew, if you can't put it back together what will you do then hmmm?



Wordoku 1,391

					D	U		N
			N	P		O		
I		N	U			D		
D		C					P	
N			R		P			O
	G					N		C
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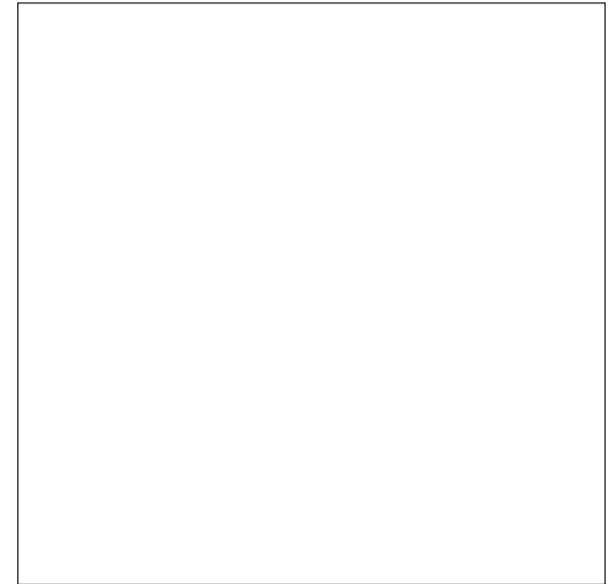
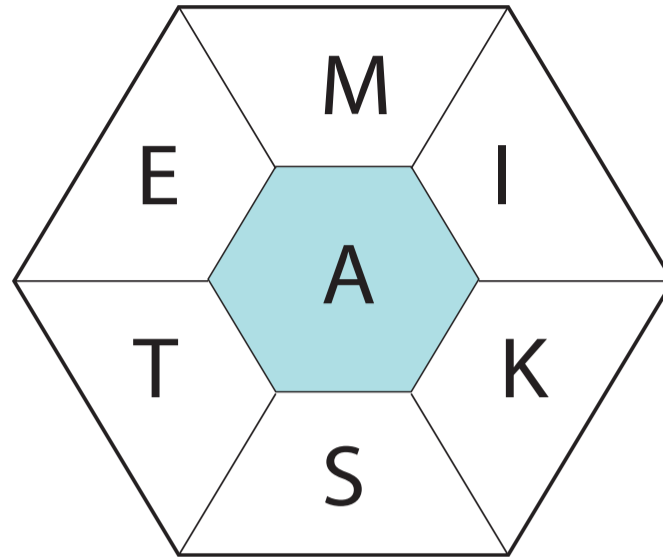
Solution to 1,390

C	s	M	I	T	R	A	S	H
H	S	T	s	C	A	R	M	I
R	A	I	M	S	H	s	C	T
I	H	s	R	M	S	C	T	A
S	M	R	C	A	T	H	I	s
T	C	A	H	I	s	M	R	S
M	T	H	A	R	I	S	s	C
A	I	C	S	s	M	T	H	R
s	R	S	T	H	C	I	A	M

Wordoku is identical to sudoku; we've just replaced the numbers with letters. Once you've completed the puzzle, there is a hidden word or phrase to find. Email in your answers to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk.

The winner of Wordoku 1,390 was **nobody**. Nevertheless, the hidden phrase was "CHRISTMAS".

The Polygon of Gorgeous Goats



How to rate yourself:

Under 8 words: You're so dense that light bends around you. Stoopid.

8 - 13 words: Your brain waves fall a little short of the beach, don't they.

14 - 19 words: You're not too bad, but remember there's no vaccine against stupidity. Practice!

20 plus words: Someone's been playing too much Scrabulous on Facebook. Do some work!

Last week's solution:

The seven letter words were:

PRESENT

Congratulations if you had presents over Christmas. You've clearly been good boys and girls!

Other words included: peen, peens, peer, peers, pees, penes, pens, pent, pert, pest, pester, peter, peters, pets, preen, preens, preset, prest, repent, repents, reps, seep, sept, spent, steep, spree, steep, step, strep.

How to play

Using the letters given, not more than once, make as many words as possible. They must be at least four or more letters long and each word you come up with must include the central letter.

Capitalised words, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in "-ly", comparatives and superlatives are disallowed.

A word you are not allowed in this case would be "Felix" as none of the letters can be found in the polygon. I think you know the rules by now.

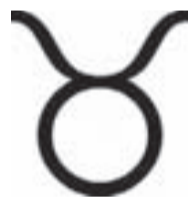
H to the o, r, o, sizzle copes – it's the Horoscopes



Aquarius

#Sing it# Matty Hoban, we love you. Please come back to this page. Stop the horoscopes from sounding poo. With

your help they never age. Some say your's are timeless. I say they just rock. Others say they are a mess. I just say to them: "Get a life, or I'll come round your flat and burn your home down then piss in your basil plant. DIE".



Taurus

This week in your exam, things become rather tough around question 4. No, 4b, not c. You decide to try out the

button under your desk that frail man with the wispy beard sold you for 600 Yen. Your finger twitches over its red, shiny surface. BANG! Bad rabies infected confetti drops from the ceiling instantly decimating 203 people.



Leo

I had a dream last night that I had to remove a bottom snuggler worm from a sheep's ass. I also had to tweezer out

the eggs which look like tic-tacs. I then sold them to a sweet company, but they wouldn't tell me what they wanted them for. I have a hunch, and I'm not eating tic-tacs no more. You have been warned.



Scorpio

This week you grow a draught beer tap out of your left elbow. Unfortunately the amber nectar freely

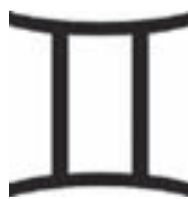
flowing from your arm is not your usual tippie. At first it's enjoyable serving your friends regular, free drinks but soon the novelty wears off and turns to abuse. Metaphor: too much drink kills rabbits.



Pisces

On your way into work this morning, a series of policemen on motorcycles speed past you, followed by a black car

being escorted by more men on bikes. Now, unless Michael Jackson or Winona Ryder was in that car, there better be a damn good reason why both lanes of traffic were stopped! Don't make me mad. GRRRRR.



Gemini

This week you get addicted to Grid Wars 2. Upon falling into your bed, head meeting pillow, your eyelids

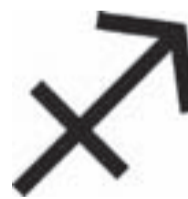
close and you succumb to dreams of luminous blue, pink, green, orange, yellow and magenta shapes against a black background. You're life will never be the same, ever again. Enjoy it whilst it lasts. Addict.



Virgo

So... New Year's then. Fucking Brill.I.Ant. See what I've done there? Adapted the name of a famous rap and

hip-hop auteur so that it fits in snugly with the original sentence. Woohoo! Fireworks! Oh they're finished. Home time. Night. Happynewyear. Foroldlangseyemydear. What a load of fucking nonsense.



Sagittarius

You arrive in Turkey. Your flight was late and you're understandably frustrated and angry. In the airport terminal

waiting for your luggage, you spy an old lady entering the ladies' lavatory. For shits and giggles you stand outside her cubicle simply staring at the door. Upon opening it you stare deep into her soul. She keels over. Satisfaction.



Aries

This week Puzzles is culled to one page as a result of the Great Writers Strike 2010. Like the Olympics and my aunt's bowel

movements, this happens once every three years. During the last great strike of Wellington in 2001, it was feared that over 20 different words were lost to Martian captors.



Cancer

This week it all becomes too much for you. The straw that breaks the <proverbial> back. One <prover-

bial> too far. Too much giving, not enough <proverbial>. All good things must come to a <proverbial>. There's no point crying over spilt <proverbial>.



Libra

"Next stop! Hell's Watering Hole". It had been a long journey for time. The soul on the

River Styx was actually called Dave, not Frank, causing an almost endless furor only ceased by Tim's offer of a fridge magnet and a box of cling film to pass through unscathed.



Capricorn

So... if you had to, you know... Celine Dion or Mariah Carey? Jade Goody or Jodie Marsh? Dean Gaffney or

Barry from Eastenders? Ainsley Harriot or Anthony Worrell-Thompson? Personally, I'd take them all snowboarding. We'd drink Chianti and life would be bliss.

IC Medics topple Reading after 12-0 deficit

Rugby

Imperial Medicals 1st	14
Reading Men's 1st	12

Jeremy Bartosiak-Jentys

Buoyed by the previous week's victory over Oxford Brookes, the Medicals 1st XV went into the first of two crucial pre-Christmas home games with a sense of camaraderie and belief that has not always been present this season. Non-playing captain Cameron Sullivan was forced into three changes with Austin Dekker coming into the back-row and Harry Thompson replacing Tom Maynard at scrum-half. Finally, due to Xander Ancock's late arrival, Jeremy Bartosiak-Jentys came

into the starting XV.

The game's early stages were largely scrappy, not helped by a strong breeze which blew into the Medicals's faces throughout the first half. However, as the match developed two clear patterns of play emerged. As usual the Medicals enjoyed a fair amount of supremacy up front and looked to keep the ball tight around the rucks and mauls. Reading on the other hand looked to spread the ball wide searching for space on the Medicals' wings. Unfortunately for the assembled spectators both styles seemed to cancel each other out for much of the game.

With the match so finely poised, individual errors were always going to provide the best opportunity for either side to score. Lamentably, it was the Medicals who cracked first. Young winger Chidi Nzekwue received the

ball in his own twenty-two. Backing his sensational step and lightning pace, Chidi looked to beat the cover tacklers on the outside but ended up being bundled towards touch. Looking to keep the ball alive the flying Fresher turned over possession which allowed Reading to break through and score. The conversion was missed.

Unsettled by the Reading score, the Medicals were to concede a further try soon after. Looking to counter, Simon Bellringer hoisted a high ball into the Reading half. Despite the good chase, Reading were able to exploit the broken play to slice through the home sides defence and touch down under the posts. The conversion was added to give the visitors a 12-0 lead. Thankfully, these were Reading's last points of the day.

With time expired in the first-half, the Medicals were awarded a penalty on halfway. Being the last play, the home side took a quick tap and putting good phases together worked their way into the Cardiff twenty-two. Here Reading conceded yet another, far more kickable, penalty. Fly-half Dan Neville strode up confidently and stroked over the penalty thus bringing the first half to a close.

During the interval Keith Green pulled no punches and left the Medicals under no illusions as to what was required in the second half. Bartosiak-Jentys and Rory Hutchinson were



You'd think they were jumping for a gold bar or something judging by the desperation in their expressions

for the guillotine as Xander Ancock and Guy Martin entered the fray. The home side took the advice to heart and started the second half brightly. Soon Neville was adding a further 3 points to the Medicals' tally with another superbly struck penalty. Riding the crest of a wave, the Medicals were to get themselves right back in the game with a superbly worked try. After Dan Neville and James Sharples had combined well in midfield Craig Nightingale took the ball on the Reading twenty-two. Breaking a tackle, Nightingale was able to feed full-back Bellringer who hit a great line to dive in spectacularly in the corner. Neville was unable to add the extras.

Now only trailing by 1 point, the home side looked to take control of the game and calmly score the points required for victory. By contrast, Reading began to try more imaginative moves, which,

whilst looking well conceived, never really threatened the Medicals line. In fact, rather against the run of play, the Medicals were awarded a penalty in front of the posts. Once again Neville made no mistake and with 15 minutes remaining the home side were in the lead for the first time. After 65 minutes Gary Woodsford and Richard Nowicki came on to replace Chris Hallowell and Austin Dekker respectively.

The closing stanza closely resembled the game's opening period as the match descended into a scrappy affair, partly due to a serious-looking injury to Simon Bellringer which left both sides trying to keep warm for a number of minutes. With all substitutes used the Medicals had to play out the closing minutes with only 14 men. Nevertheless, aided by some fortuitous refereeing decisions, the home side was able to hang on.



"Take those socks back to Debenhams now! Go on! Shove off!"

BUSA Rugby Union PREM South B

	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
1 Cardiff Med	8	6	1	1	66	19
2 Swansea	8	5	0	3	77	15
3 W. England	8	4	0	4	-17	12
4 Reading	9	3	0	6	-85	9
5 Greyhounds	8	5	0	3	39	9
6 Brookes	8	2	1	5	-19	7
7 IC Medics	7	2	0	5	-61	6

Imperial steal a draw as Queen Mary's get lairy

Football

Imperial Men's 4ths	3
Queen Mary's Men's 3rds	3

Ed Lobb

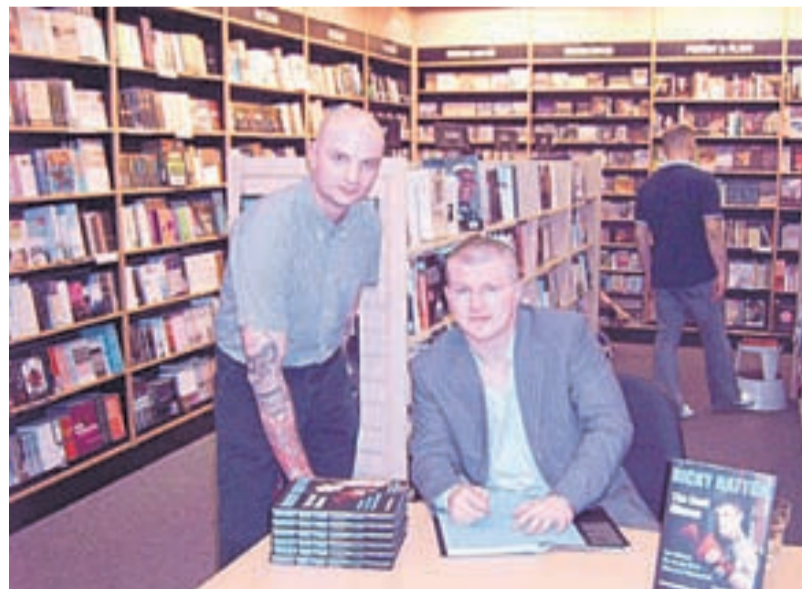
In conditions better suited to egg chasing, IC Homophobic Society 4th XI (IC Football's infamous Wednesday ULU Flagship Team) took on Queen Mary's 3rds in their final game before the Christmas break. Unlike women's football, the 4s went with the age-old tradition of 11 players, despite 2 late withdrawals from the squad, which led to a new formation and new personnel. James "The Shadow" Skeen was forced to don the keeper's gloves rather than take up his usual role as the weak link in defence, and Sam Rickards and El Perry came in at centre mid and right wing respectively.

IC started typically slowly, and went behind within 10 minutes. A great through ball from the QM midfield was latched onto by their striker, who outpaced the IC defence to slot home. IC came back into the game and were ridiculously denied an equaliser by a linesman more corrupt than Robert Mugabe. Sam penetrated the defend-

er to score between his legs, only to somehow be given offside. It's possible that the linesman was so impressed by this attacking master class that he waved his flag in celebration, a gesture misinterpreted by the ref to be an offside flag. This only served to fire up the home side and their pressure was made to count when Jeremy "J-Bruv" Lovett, playing as part of an effective 3 man midfield with Rickards and Matty Smith, picked up the ball 20 yards out and lashed it into the bottom corner.

Skeen was called into action soon after, displaying uncharacteristic alertness and reflexes to keep out a close range effort from QM's rotund striker, Flex QC, and then again to put him off after a clearance ran all the way through. IC however went behind again when a corner wasn't properly cleared, and the ball was floated into the top corner, leaving Skeeno stranded. 2-1 at half time.

Early in the 2nd half IC centre backs Aubergine and Lobster picked up heavy knocks, leaving the already slow IC defence about as mobile as Jon Hill. IC conceded again when a QM midfielder kidnapped the ball from Sam and waltzed through the defence to score, making it 3-1. IC could have hit the wall, a beaten team, but got a much needed shot in the arm when a



Ed Lobb (right) promoting his latest piece of literature with one of his many fans, when he's not dodging punches

walkover for the 6s provided the opportunity for some substitutions. Sim Similisisim replaced Perry giving some much needed energy to the right side and support for the Gut Phelan up front. Almost immediately left-winger Jon Hill picked up a nasty shin injury and had to be replaced by another 6s

player, Mike Turrell.

Captain Aubergine was struggling with injury and spent the last half hour in the centre circle, where he was cautioned for a 2 footed, late sliding tackle in an attempt to stop their centre mid playing football... Ever again. This forced Toby and makeshift left back

Tarik inside to form a back 3, but Lobster and co., a la the great AC Milan defence of the early 90s, held firm. With 2 minutes left, IC pulled one back with an acrobatic effort from Sim following a corner. A great finish from the Sri Lankan, Garo was over the moon that IC football were displaying their characteristic racial diversity.

With 30 seconds to go the 4s won a free kick on the halfway line. After kicking the ball away, QM's centre mid took offence at some colourful language from the Lobster. Both men waded into each other and the QM midfielder threw a punch that was dodged by Ed with footwear Ricky Hatton should make note of. The aggressor was sent off and, from the free kick, Toby swung in a cross that fell to Matty who, with the ball on a platter, passed it in from the edge of the box. 3-3. Final whistle and a great point for the 4s.

The story of the match was not over, however, as QM's red-carded player went on a manhunt for the ref and planted a cracking headbutt onto his nose. Before the ref could get tooled up or summon IC's favourite public service, the police, the QM player had legged it, but it was IC who pulled off the greater escape providing a platform for the greatest ULU Division 1 ascension in the league history.

Drink (water) to your health!



Gil Saville
Energia Fitness Instructor

Water is crucial for us to remain healthy and alive, but all too often it is taken for granted as to why it is so important and to what extent it helps us perform better in exercise. Water is the second most important element to life next to oxygen. The body can survive for weeks without food but only days with out water, and often for a lot less in warm temperatures and high altitudes. The body and all its organs are comprised mainly of water making the average person about 60-75% water.

Water is essential to all bodily functions. It aids our digestive system with the absorption of nutrients, it's involved in the regulation of body temperature and blood circulation, it helps in the transport of nutrients and oxygen to cells and removes waste products from the body. Alongside these functions water also helps to reduce



wear on joints providing lubrication and cushioning, including the spinal cord. Without sufficient water supply (dehydration) we open up our bodies to all kinds of problems. Dehydration can lead to hypertension, asthma, allergies and migraines.

The main function of water is its role in regulating our temperature. We generate heat when we train and there are numerous mechanisms which the body calls upon to lose heat. Obviously the surrounding environment plays a role, but a significant method of cooling is sweating. The evaporation of fluid from the skin is very effective. During prolonged exercise it is possible to lose as much as two litres of sweat per hour. This would be ideal in keeping us cool, but unfortunately not all sweat evaporates, as some drops off the skin and is wasted.

Fluid loss, even as little as 2% of body weight, can seriously impair the capacity to perform muscular work. In temperate climates, most athletes lose 1-5% of body weight in prolonged exercise, even when taking regular fluid throughout.

Water transports oxygen, nutrients, hormones and antibodies through the blood stream and lymphatic system (used to fight cancer, viruses, bacteria and infections). This is obviously important to us as we push our bodies hard in the gym and by doing so we greatly increase the amount of water that our body excretes. When we are dehydrated our immune system is therefore open to invasion from outside entities and we are more susceptible to the attack. Therefore good hydration helps to protect us from this.

Brain tissue is 85% water and it uses a twentieth of the body's blood supply. When you are dehydrated you have less water in the blood and this lack of water can reduce brain functions and can cause fatigue, depression, stress and can also lead to migraines which may be also be an indicator or poor body temperature regulation.

Muscle is 75% water, so it is important that a high water level is maintained in order to prevent muscular dehydration. When muscles become

dehydrated they are open to possible loss of strength and cramps. Cramps are a muscle spasm where a muscle contracts abnormally and locks into an awkward position. Although the direct cause of cramp remains unknown, it is known that muscles that are overworked, injured or exposed to extreme temperatures are more likely to succumb to cramp. Water helps to regulate our body temperature and aids in the transport of nutrients to cells, so by increasing water intake we can reduce the risk of cramp.

Water is a lubricant for the joints and the cartilage between the vertebrae and at the end of long bones at synovial joints there is also a significant amount of water. Cartilage needs to be well hydrated as this prevents abrasive damage occurring when the opposing surfaces of the cartilage make contact with each other. Long term inadequately hydrated joints can lead to friction damage resulting in joint deterioration and pain.

Another reason why water is also important is due to the fact that when we dehydrate, our body's solution loses viscosity, which in turn reduces the efficiency of the protein and enzyme functions of the body. So when we are trying to increase our protein absorption, water is a fundamental aspect as acids and enzymes in the stomach break food down into a more fluid state as part of the digestion process. Lack of fluid means you will not be able to break down the food easily and efficiently.

Water is also essential to us as it is fundamental with regards to strength. Being slightly dehydrated will reduce a muscle's lifting capability, and training when in this state will reduce strength gains that you might normally get. If you can't lift as much as when you are adequately hydrated, then how can you expect to push harder and make gains?

Water can also be one of your most useful tools for weight loss. Water is calorie free so when you are on a restricted diet, drinking water can help fill you up and alleviate some of the hunger.

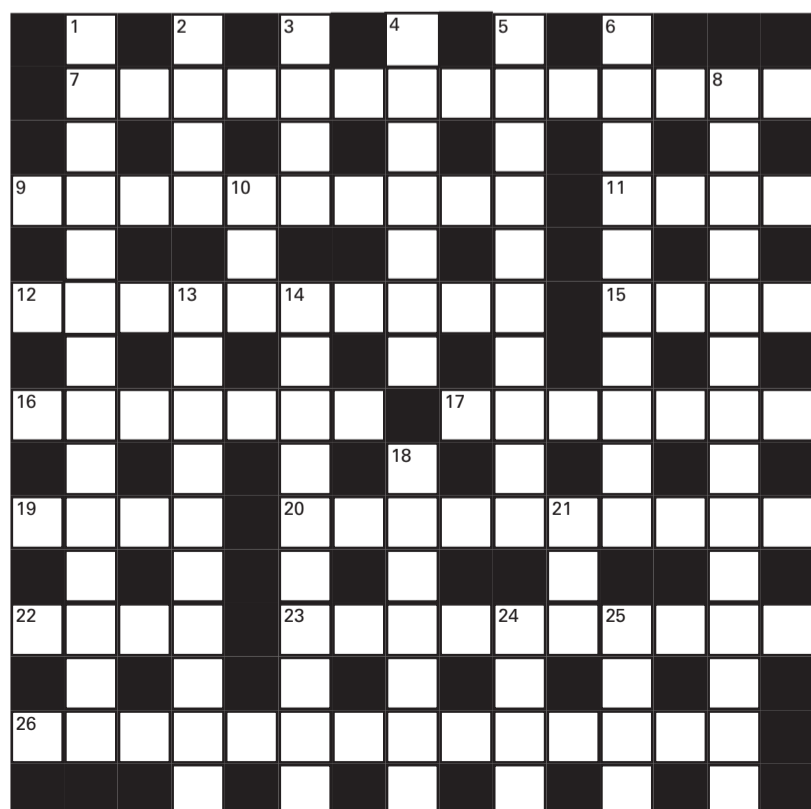


This term we welcome the Medics to the Sports league. The Fixtures & Results table will be back soon. Good luck with the exams Joy!

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	%	FI
1	IC Netball 1st	9	9	0	0	488	254	234	100.00	45
2	IC Squash Men's 1st	9	9	0	0	45	0	45	100.00	45
3	IC Tennis Men's 2nd	7	7	0	0	58	12	46	100.00	35
4	IC Hockey Men's 1st	9	7	1	1	32	15	17	77.78	33
5	IC Rugby Union Men's 1st	10	8	0	2	244	109	135	80.00	32
6	IC Tennis Women's 1st	7	6	1	0	49	20	29	85.71	32
7	IC Squash Men's 2nd	9	7	0	2	30	15	15	77.78	27
8	IC Rugby Union Men's 2nd	9	5	2	2	220	138	82	55.56	21
9	IC Volleyball Men's 1st	6	5	0	1	10	2	8	83.33	21
10	IC Fencing Men's 2nd	4	4	0	0	525	433	92	100.00	20
11	IC Football Men's 1st	8	3	4	1	14	6	8	37.50	19
12	IC Fencing Women's 1st	7	5	0	2	899	735	164	71.43	17
13	ICSM Hockey Women's 1st	9	5	1	3	54	20	34	55.56	15
14	IC Football Women's 1st	6	3	2	1	7	4	3	50.00	15
15	ICSM Football Men's 1st	6	3	2	1	11	7	4	50.00	15
16	IC Volleyball Women's 1st	3	3	0	0	8	4	4	100.00	15
17	ICSM Netball 2nd	6	4	0	2	161	132	29	66.67	12
18	ICSM Badminton Women's 1st	2	2	0	0	11	5	6	100.00	10
19	IC Badminton Men's 1st	9	5	0	4	41	31	10	55.56	9
20	ICSM Hockey Men's 2nd	9	5	0	4	22	21	1	55.56	9
21	IC Lacrosse Women's 1st	7	4	0	3	51	49	2	57.14	8
22	IC Hockey Women's 1st	8	3	2	3	27	29	-2	37.50	7
23	IC Hockey Men's 2nd	9	4	1	4	43	23	20	44.44	6
24	IC Hockey Men's 3rd	9	4	1	4	17	17	0	44.44	6
25	IC Basketball Men's 1st	3	2	0	1	207	176	31	66.67	6
26	ICSM Netball 1st	7	3	1	3	243	256	-13	42.86	5
27	IC Rugby Union Women's 1st	1	1	0	0	50	5	45	100.00	5
28	ICSM Hockey Women's 2nd	9	3	2	4	28	40	-12	33.33	3
29	IC Netball 2nd	6	3	0	3	168	155	13	50.00	3
30	IC Table Tennis Men's 1st	6	3	0	3	63	39	24	50.00	3
31	ICSM Rugby Union Men's 3rd	6	3	0	3	159	104	55	50.00	3
32	IC Squash Men's 3rd	4	2	0	2	8	4	4	50.00	2
33	IC Badminton Men's 2nd	8	3	1	4	30	34	-4	37.50	1
34	IC Rugby Union Men's 3rd	9	4	0	5	165	147	18	44.44	0
35	ICSM Hockey Men's 1st	9	3	1	5	20	35	-15	33.33	-3
36	IC Table Tennis Women's 1st	3	1	0	2	4	11	-7	33.33	-3
37	IC Squash Women's 1st	7	2	1	4	12	16	-4	28.57	-4
38	ICSM Hockey Men's 3rd	3	0	1	2	4	9	-5	0.00	-6
39	IC Hockey Women's 2nd	8	2	1	5	11	39	-28	25.00	-8
40	IC Hockey Men's 4th	7	2	0	5	8	18	-10	28.57	-10
41	ICSM Netball 3rd	7	2	0	5	132	178	-46	28.57	-10
42	ICSM Rugby Union Men's 1st	7	2	0	5	121	182	-61	28.57	-10
43	ICSM Football Men's 2nd	4	0	1	3	8	15	-7	0.00	-10
44	IC Fencing Men's 1st	5	1	0	4	553	600	-47	20.00	-11
45	ICSM Rugby Union Men's 2nd	10	3	0	7	152	273	-121	30.00	-13
46	IC Badminton Women's 1st	7	1	1	5	19	37	-18	14.29	-13
47	ICSM Hockey Women's 3rd	8	2	0	6	7	20	-13	25.00	-14
48	ICSM Badminton Men's 1st	5	0	0	5	9	31	-22	0.00	-20
49	IC Football Men's 3rd	9	1	1	7	11	31	-20	11.11	-21
50	IC Tennis Men's 1st	9	1	1	7	26	64	-38	11.11	-21
51	IC Football Men's 2nd	7	0	1	6	8	22	-14	0.00	-22

Crossword No. 1,391

Answers to: sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk



ACROSS

- 7 Unimpeachable preacher, nobody wrongs (6,8)
- 9 Desolate sheet is scrap (10)
- 11 Group classification largely incomplete (4)
- 12 Military rule leads to Wal-Mart illness (7,3)
- 15 Tear off the end of fashion (4)
- 16 Ruined melodrama loses man in style (1,2,4)
- 17 Able to store the beginning of April in wire (7)
- 19 Formerly occurred in a concert (4)
- 20 The cunning measure could vanish, we hear (10)
- 22 Concluding passage in Vasco Da Gama's journals (4)
- 23 Mechanized river experience (10)
- 26 The UN alternates information, and a number goes unrecognized (14)

DOWN

- 1 President confused by abnormal hail in Connecticut (14)
- 2 Sister's head developed a tumour, I heard (4)
- 3 Card game provides a photograph clip (4)
- 4 EEE (7)
- 5 It sounds like the seamen cry over the animal (10)
- 6 Absolutely insist on a mangled carriage (10)
- 8 All shins canned and consumed in Jersey etc. (14)
- 10 Prophet appears twice in evangelist beliefs (3)
- 13 Heartless replacement thrown off balance by not drinking (10)
- 14 + + C + + (10)
- 18 Angrily dwelt on a disappointment (7)
- 21 Fraternity's traitorous part (3)
- 24 Cause stalk to stop (4)
- 25 Fashionable anger (4)

Congratulations to **Emma Thompson and Emma O'Hare** who won yet again. Will anyone ever put an end to their streak? Find out next week fans.

Enoch

Solution to Crossword 1,390



Second jotting box, double the fun!



Rugby 1sts finish 2007 on a high

Rugby	UBS
Hertfordshire Men's 1st XV	3
Imperial Men's 1st XV	27

Max Joachim

It's been a great season so far for the 1st XV rugby team and they were eager to maintain their form in their last away match in 2007 against University of Hertfordshire 1st. Having arrived at their ground, which also serves as the Saracens Academy training facility, everyone wanted to show who deserved to be top of the table. Our opponents were also out for revenge, however, after their narrow 20-19 loss at Fortress Harlington earlier this term.

The wanna-be Saracens players didn't look so fit during their warm-up, though, and that proved to be detrimental to their game.

Although Imperial dominated from the off, the score didn't change immediately. Imperial got a catch-and-drive try after another amazing line-out but that was about it. Herts fought back

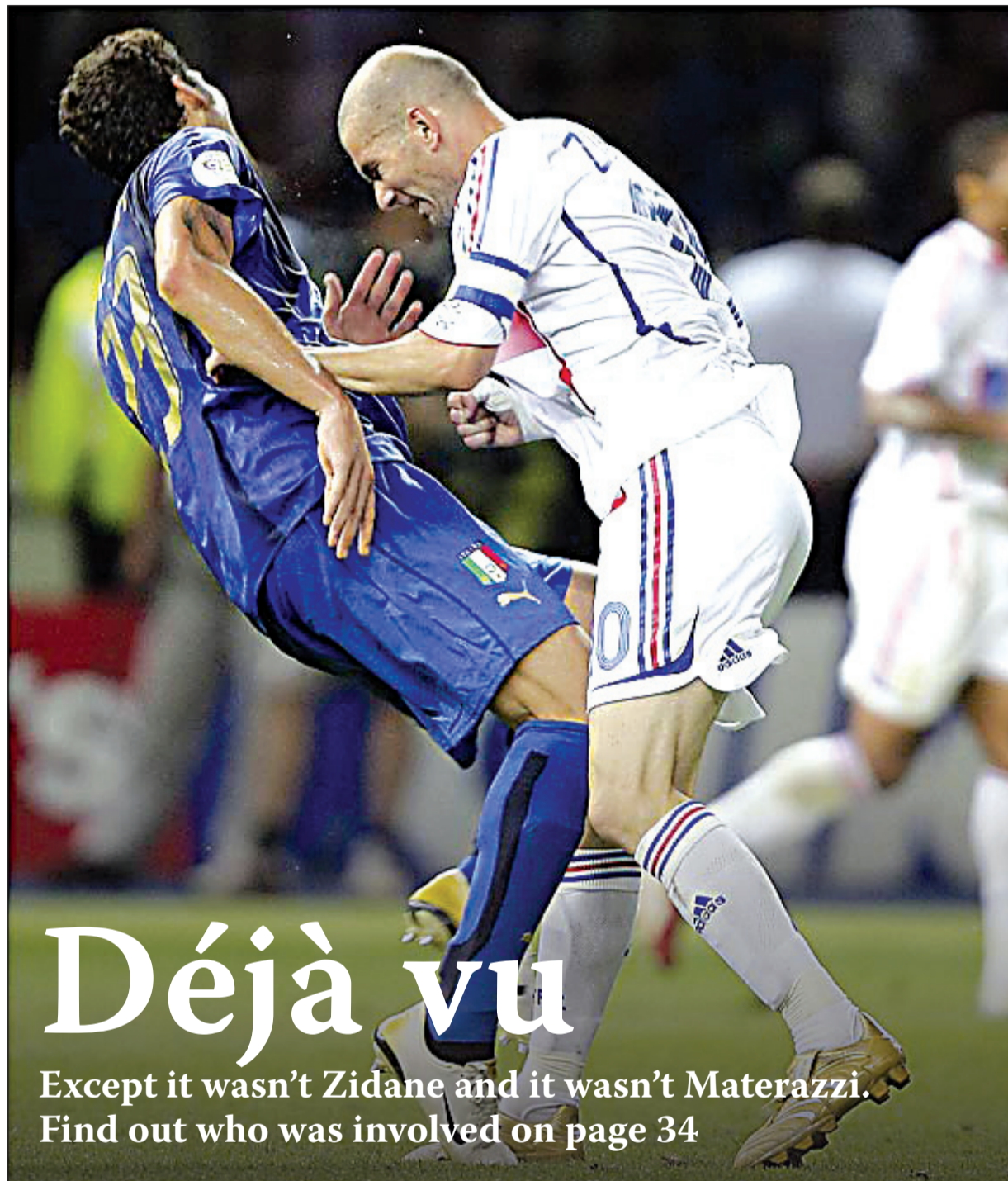
with a penalty but that was as close as they could get to Imperial's try-line. They never looked like pressuring for a try. Then, Flannan O'Mahoney got his first try of the season on the left-hand corner after some great phases. Alexander Johnstone seemed frightened of reaching his 100 point-mark for the term and missed both conversions. Imperial then eased off and didn't score for the rest of the half.

The opponents almost got back into the game with turnovers at rucks and mauls but it was great fitness and support play that got Imperial back on the scoreboard.

Alex Johnstone finished off a try under the posts after a great break by Joe Brown. The conversion was good and the team then started to put on some very nice attacking rugby. This resulted in another stunning try by James Fletcher, literally a millimeter away from the left touch-line after some great phases. Equally important was a draw pass from Man of the Match Tom Zeal, who did what he had done the whole game, arriving in support at the right time. Another penalty from Alex Johnstone brought the final result to 27-3 and the feeling of a great term for Imperial 1st XV.

Imperial dominated from the first kick-off with a very strong pack and excellent line-outs. In addition, fly-half Joe Brown again controlled the game remarkably well. The only Herts player who showed a glimpse of what he was capable of was their fly-half but flankers Nick Johnstone and James Pettit put so much pressure on him that he could never deliver any good balls.

However, the season is far from over, and with the upcoming Varsity match there's still plenty to shoot for.



Déjà vu

Except it wasn't Zidane and it wasn't Materazzi.
Find out who was involved on page 34

BUSA Rugby Union South East 1A

	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
1 Imperial	10	8	0	2	135	24
2 Brunel	9	6	0	3	63	18
3 Portsmouth	10	6	0	4	130	18
4 RUMS	10	5	1	4	7	16
5 BUCKS	9	4	0	5	-99	12
6 GKT	9	4	0	5	26	12
7 Hert'shire	9	3	1	5	-70	10
8 Middlesex	10	1	0	9	-192	3

Hockey freshers tour to Oxford('s nightclubs)

Hockey	
Oxford University	4
Imperial College	2

Ian Lawrence

On Friday 16th December 19 intrepid Hockey club members set sail down the M40 towards Oxford. Most of the group went with DR on the minibus, but four adventurous members were elected(/forced by Sieve) to take the Oxford tube. This turned out to be much better as we had lots of room and were able to consume large quantities of Haribo! The adventurous four bumped into the rest just outside our hostel in the centre.

After getting everyone booked in, we headed into the town centre for our first night out. We stopped off at Pizza Hut on the way in, but some people took exception to having to beg/shout/cajole the waiters into serving us food and went up the road for a much cheaper and tastier pub meal.

We met up with them in the Goose and the drinking games commenced. After one too many "masters" (including spider man master, thumb master, head master, air-raid master and Jack master!) there was a bit too much chaotic behaviour and we bid a hasty retreat! Round the corner our guide for the weekend, Fourplay, led us to a pokey little club that we quickly made our own. The rest of the evening was spent dancing, drinking crap sugary drinks, stopping the crazy guy fighting with everyone in our club and laughing at the copious amounts of sharking taking place!

On Saturday morning everyone blearily stumbled out of bed in time for the hostel's breakfast. After some shuttling in the minibus, everyone got to St Edward's school in time. We met up with Moonie, Jammy Dodger and Toadfish, who were too cool to come on Friday night and had a little tournament amongst ourselves. The captains of the sides were all freshers and the winning one would captain us against the Oxford Blues side on Sunday (I think this is why Star Trek threw the

game!). With Jess the eventual winning captain and looking forward to the next day we had the afternoon to go shopping. Specifically for white shirts from Primark which were graffitied with appropriate slogans and comments from other club members...

These artistic shirts were worn to the curry house for the start of the evening's entertainment. By this time our numbers had swelled to 31 and the curry house looked a bit shocked when we turned up. Despite having obviously laid out long tables for us, they were still unsure if we had booked or not! The food was pretty good, and as the booze was bring your own, the Tesco's down the road did a roaring trade that night! We decamped to a local pub for an impromptu fine circle led by the night's fine master Cotton-Eyed Joe. While we didn't have enough time for everyone's fines, all important participants in the previous night's misdemeanours got their punishments!

It was a short walk from here to the night club, in somebody's basement! (or so it seemed!) Some people didn't feel like clubbing two nights in a row



4 parts debauchery, 1 part hockey in dreamy Oxford

and went off and played cards back at the hostel (mostly guys, so not strip poker, I hope!). For those of us it was a pretty carnage-filled night, with lots more sharking and drinking! I also bumped into the Oxford Blues captain who were going to play us the next day, good to see they prepare for their matches as thoroughly as we do!

We had a fairly relaxed start to the Sunday morning, cleared out of the hostel and got a cooked breakfast and coffee from a nearby pub, just the thing to wake you up! We went to the Oxford Brookes pitch to play the Oxford Blues at 2pm. Yours truly was umpiring and while it started off as a friendly, both teams quickly got very competitive! We were worried we would get soundly destroyed by a club whose first team plays in BUSA premier league, but that wasn't the case. It was very competitive the whole way through, but the difference between the teams did prove to be a couple of Oxford first teamers linking up well. We started well by scoring the first goal, and soon led 2-1 thanks to an awesome run by Shipman. In the end it was 4-2 to Oxford, but considering the number of freshers and the lack of sleep from the night before, it was a pretty good result. Everyone got showered and changed and then we tried to head off, though there was one detour to the hostel to pick up a wallet, and then back to the pitch to pick some left kit; freshers, eh? Eventually everyone got home: tired, hungover and broke!