



felix

The award-winning student newspaper of Imperial College

"Keep The Cat Free"

Issue 1,446

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27.11.09

Not a stitch in sight

The much-awaited return of the naked centrefold, page 20



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Gigs – bigger's not always better



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Michael Caine turns OAP vigilante



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Other good greens in Amsterdam



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CAMBRIDGE

OXFORD

LONDON

Is Imperial dragging down the Golden Triangle?

A new report by the Higher Education Policy Institute shows just how far Imperial is from taking on Oxbridge, page 3



Conservatives keen to go green

Joanna Cai News Reporter

The Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer paid a visit to Sir Roy Anderson and Imperial College London on Tuesday 24th November, with an aim to highlight the Conservatives' green ideas for the UK economy.

George Osborne began the evening by meeting with Sir Roy to discuss the potential that science and technology research holds for the UK. Sir Roy spoke of the event: "It's highly appropriate that the Shadow Chancellor should take an interest in green technologies... Products and solutions developed at places like Imperial will ensure the UK's economic competitiveness on the global stage." After their discussion, Mr. Osborne gave a speech to academics, environmentalists and media in the Business School. This was followed by a question and answer session about the proposals made during his speech.

It is not the first time that Mr. Osborne has visited Imperial: in February 2008, Mr. Osborne held a speech in the SAF Building which addressed the UK's environmental technology and in particular, praised Imperial College for its investment in environmentally green technology.

He called for more universities to follow Imperial's lead and create their own incubator model, which gives green technology entrepreneurs the financial support and business expertise they require.

The proposals made during Mr. Osborne's speech on Tuesday evening came as no surprise, as he had personally written in *The Independent* that morning to announce his plans for the economy. His speech therefore reiterated what he had already published, as well as what other press had promptly reported on, which includes:

- Paying the public to recycle
- Giving government Departments



George Osborne spoke about his vision for a green agenda at Imperial

less money if they fail to reduce energy consumption

- Creating a green trading market
- Cutting government CO2 emissions by 10% in 12 months

Mr. Osborne said: "I think we can go even further in catalysing green finance in the UK. In my speech here at Imperial last year, I proposed the creation of a new green trading market..." This trading market, called the Environmental Opportunities Index, currently has almost a hundred companies signed up.

The notion of the Conservatives going green was exhausted in Mr. Osborne's article in *The Independent*, in which he used the word 'green' no less

than 18 times. His speech presented the idea of Green Investment Banks, which he claims "will help us...to decarbonise our economy". He also spoke about the company RecycleBank which has been able to increase recycling in America "by paying the public to recycle - without the need for any extra government spending."

All of the proposals set by Mr. Osborne, and his five other colleagues within the same week, are clearly in preparation for the global negotiations in Copenhagen next month. Given the Conservatives' anti-EU agenda, it is difficult to see how they will successfully act on climate change alone.

The world beyond College walls



European Union

The European Union elected Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy as the first President of the European Union Council, and Lady Catherine Ashton of the UK as its new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.



The nominations come after

the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, which establishes mandates for the two roles, but the exact distribution of power will depend significantly on how the roles are managed by Mr. Van Rompuy and Lady Ashton. Both politicians were relatively unknown, unlike other candidates who had been touted for the job. The decision should ensure that individual nations will retain their voice on the world stage, instead of becoming subject to the European Union's will.

Following his selection, Mr. Van Rompuy stressed his credentials as a consensus politician, and indeed his 10 months as Prime Minister in Belgium have been successful in bridging the gaps between the country's linguistically divided communities. He made it clear that he would fulfill the role of a chairman rather than a 'globe-trotting statesman'. Lady Ashton's nomination, which is seen as a concession to the UK, has come under attack from critics – she has never held a directly elected position and has served in her previous role as European Trade Commissioner for just over a year.



World

In a report issued on Tuesday in Shanghai, the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) said that an estimated 33.4 million people worldwide were infected with HIV.

This figure is slightly higher than the 33 million in 2007, and most those affected (an overwhelming 22.4 million) live in sub-Saharan Africa. Almost two thirds of the new infections occurred there as well. The second most affected region is South and South-East Asia (3.8 million), followed by Latin America (2.0 million).

Some improvements have been made however, as the death toll from AIDS has fallen by 10 percent over the past five years, largely due to greater access to anti-retroviral drugs.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of infection has fallen to 400,000 people in 2008, down 15 percent from 2001. In the same time frame, new infections decreased by 25 percent in East Asia, and 10 percent in South and South-East Asia.



Mexico

Mexico has seen its credit rating downgraded to BBB by Fitch Ratings, following a fall in output from the oil sector as its reserves in the Gulf of Mexico are drying up.

Fitch, a rating agency, said that decreasing oil incomes, which make up a third of Mexico's public sector revenues, have weakened the country's ability to weather financial problems. The rating was reduced from BBB+ to BBB, which means that the government will now face increased costs of borrowing.

While this rating remains of 'investment grade', a statement from Mexico's Treasury Department said President Felipe Calderon has made important advances to address the structural weaknesses pointed out by Fitch and implement reforms that can increase competitiveness and growth.

By Raphael Houdmont, International Editor

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Elevating the elite within the Golden Triangle

A report released this week by the Higher Education Policy Institute examines the extent to which Imperial still trail Oxford and Cambridge as their main British rivals. Editor-in-Chief Dan Wan investigates how far in front they are actually are

40.4

Number of hours per week the average Cambridge student studies

37.5

Number of hours per week the average Oxford student studies

29.1

Number of hours per week the average Imperial student studies

Imperial cannot claim to be keeping up with Oxford and Cambridge as academic institutions, says a new report published by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI).

The report, *Oxford and Cambridge: How Different Are They?* released on 19 November, investigates a number of aspects of the higher education sector that conclude the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are greatly “distinctive” from their nearest Russell Group rivals, namely Imperial.

Catching the brightest

Imperial, alongside the LSE and UCL are considered to be the London corner in an elite ‘Golden Triangle’ with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The latter two are suggested by HEPI’s latest report to be in a league above in terms of their ability to attract the highest academically-achieving applicants and also in their undergraduate teaching environment.

HEPI is an independent think-tank dedicated to exclusively policing and analysing higher education in the UK.

Admissions data collected for this report show that in 2008, the 58% of undergraduates at Oxford achieved eight A*s at GCSE was four times the 14.4% proportion of undergraduates at Imperial that achieved the same. This in light of 72% of Imperial students felt that their GCSEs had very little or no bearing on their A Level achievement. Oxbridge however are known to still use GCSE grades to distinguish between candidates and hence still hold GCSEs in some level of importance, and probably moreso than other Russell Group universities.

Over the past decade, Imperial College has frequently been ranked 3rd or 4th behind Oxford and Cambridge at an interchanging 1st and 2nd place in the Times Good University guide. The

Times Higher Education Supplement World Rankings 2009 ranks Imperial, at 5th, one place higher than Oxford. Subsequently, HEPI’s latest report focuses in on Imperial as a conclusively unfavourable comparison to the Oxbridge universities.

In a survey conducted by *felix*, it was found that 51% of current undergraduates claimed their GCSE courses had very little or negligible bearing on their ability to perform at their chosen A Level courses, whilst 21% felt their GCSE courses had absolutely no bearing on A Level performance and hence requirement to enter Imperial. Seemingly, despite the stark contrast in GCSE achievement between Oxford and Imperial, Imperial students unaware of it (as not to influence their survey answer) put little importance on their GCSE grades, and prefer to be judged by their A Level grades.

However, Oxford and Cambridge are shown to be attracting brighter students as judged by their prior academic achievements, i.e. A Levels or equivalent. The study showed that the vast majority (57.2%) of Cambridge’s applicants had 540 UCAS tariff points or more. This is in contrast to Imperial where the proportion of applicants with 540 tariff points or more was about equal to the proportion of students starting courses with less than 480 points. Tariff points work as a system to standardise and compare all applicants as they apply to higher education with a range of qualifications. A Levels, BTEC Nationals and International Baccalaureates are just some of the extensive range of qualifications which UCAS tariffs cover. A typical student coming through the conventional British education system can expect to receive 120 tariff points for a top grade at GCE A Level. For example, 540 points of more can be obtained by achieving As in four A Levels and a B in a fifth. A typical student is

generally expected to take three A Level courses and hence most degree streams at both Oxbridge and Imperial have a requirement for three A Levels. Oxford and Cambridge are notorious for issuing offers higher than the a standard three A Level requirement. *felix*’s survey came across some current Imperial undergraduates who had previously been offered AAAA (480 UCAS tariff points), but for one reason or another didn’t not take up on the offer.

“61% of current Imperial students applied to Oxford or Cambridge as their original first choice”

Imperial’s proportion of applicants starting courses with 480 or below tariff points is 35.1% compared to Cambridge’s 19.1% and Oxford’s 21.7%. Degree streams such as Biology, Biochemistry and Material Sciences typically have lower-than AAA requirements. For the incoming 2010 intake Biology, Biochemistry and Biotechnology have minimum entry requirements of AAB (340 points). Oxford require a minimum AAA (360 points) across the board for Bioscience courses. Hence the students achieving over 540 points therefore are “exceptionally talented” students who have undertaken and achieved top grades in extra courses at A Level or equivalent level of study.

The study also concludes that the university’s applicant’s average UCAS tariff points correlates to the proportion of independently-schooled applicants. Institutions with a “larger number of independent school entrants are more likely to have a higher proportion with greater accumulation of [UCAS] tariff points.” However, Oxbridge only has an average of independently-schooled applicants which is 7% greater than the number of current Imperial undergraduate students that have entered directly from a privately-funded institution. These findings do little to dampen the myth that Oxbridge are still ‘socially engineering’ their student intake towards independently school students.

HEPI also highlights a gulf between

Imperial and Oxford’s offer-to-acceptance conversion rate. Over 90% of students that receive an offer from Oxford take up their place once they have achieved the required grades. In stark contrast, less than half of Imperial’s offers are taken up, leading to fluctuations to the number of students admitted onto courses each year. The report suggests that this pattern of offer-acceptance shows that an application holding both an Imperial and Oxford offer, they are far more likely to turn down Imperial’s offer than Oxford’s. This theory is backed up by the survey conducted by *felix*. It found that 61% of current Imperial students applied to Oxford or Cambridge as their original first choice university.

Longer hours

HEPI’s extensive report goes on to detail the differences in teaching standards and student expectations that they claim the Oxbridge universities are head and shoulders above others.

Average hours of study are tabled in the report to point out differences of working hours (both contact teaching time and private study) between the Oxbridge universities and specifically Imperial.

Oxbridge Medics students study 42.1 hours a week, which is claimed to be 14.4% more than at Imperial College School of Medicine. The biosciences are renowned at Imperial for being courses with the least evident teaching time compared to the rest of College, and the study indicates Cambridge bioscientists study nearly 17 more hours a week.

However, the most dramatic comparison comes with students studying physical science courses. At Cambridge, they are said to study over 50% longer than their equivalent course-mates at Imperial.

Across the board, Cambridge students study an average of 40%, and Oxford students an average 30% more than Imperial students. These figures are likely to come as surprise to some Imperial students as they put in the long hours at the Library.

Teaching quality not assured

It is a well-known fact that Imperial has performed extremely poorly in the

National Student Survey (NSS) during recent years. The NSS forms part of a quality assurance framework (QAF) supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The survey collates feedback on the satisfaction rates of students and hence quality of their courses.

During an interview with *felix* last year, outgoing Rector Sir Roy Anderson claimed that one of his aims during his tenure would be to dramatically increase Imperial’s poor ranking of 100th out of 113th in the NSS. It has largely been to blame for Imperial’s inability to challenge Oxbridge for the top spots in league tables which factor in the NSS, such as the Guardian Education University Guide, where Imperial regularly flirts around 8th place.

Oxford is currently 6th place and Cambridge 2nd in the latest NSS. HEPI’s report breaks down this ranking into the 22 separate questions as part of the survey. The Oxbridge universities occupy 1st place in 7 of the 22 questions alone, whilst Imperial tops none.

Despite a lesser workload, Imperial students are still far unhappier than their peers of Oxbridge. This can point to the teaching methods and standards at Imperial being a problem, the massively greater ability of students at Oxbridge universities to deal with heavy workloads, or the apathy of Imperial students not only in their studies, but filling out the entirely optional National Student Survey. It is suggested that only the students with grievances will fill out the online survey, whilst students that are content with academic life at Imperial regularly ignore both College and the Union’s promotion.

While the report does not implicitly state that Imperial is inherently inferior, it does assume the stance of Oxford and Cambridge superiority by stating that the universities are indeed “really different” from “the small number of institutions with which they are sometimes compared”. There is little doubt that Imperial, LSE and UCL make up this “small number” of universities.

Whichever way it is looked at, HEPI’s report this week has greatly distanced the two corners of the UK’s elite Golden Triangle that protrude outside the M25.

Additional reporting: Afonso Campos

58%

Percentage of undergraduates at Oxford with 8+ A*s at GCSE

14.4%

Percentage of undergraduates at Imperial with 8+ A*s at GCSE

All statistics are quoted and calculated from the original report by HEPI

Media Awards fail

Lizzy Griffiths News Reporter

After a year of being the best at something other than research, Imperial College is no longer home to the 'Student Newspaper of the Year'. Despite being nominated for several awards, neither *felix*, nor Live! won anything at the Guardian Student Media Awards on Wednesday. *felix* was in the running again for Student Newspaper of the Year but was unfortunately beaten by *Leeds Student* from the University of Leeds. Dylan Lowe didn't win Best Travel Writer either. Imperial's website Live! was also nominated for Student Website of the Year but the University of York's website www.nouse.co.uk was apparently better.

IC Radio left empty-handed too at the Student Radio Awards even though Roushan Alam had been nominated for three awards: Best Male Presenter, Best Entertainment Programme, and Best Interview (with Derren Brown), which were awarded to Fergus Dufton (URN), The Big Chewsie (RaW), and Joshua Chambers (URY), respectively.

This outcome was a big disappointment for Imperial College, which will just have to recover its credibility at next year's awards.



The sweet smell of success for Nottingham Trent University...

InterFaith success

Alex Karapetian News Reporter

To commemorate National InterFaith Week, eight students from the InterFaith group, each representing a religion, gathered to enlighten an audience of over 300 people and spark discussions promoting better understanding of their religions.

Held on Monday evening, some 50 audience members engaged in group discussions following the event regarding InterFaith and its benefits. The religions represented were Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism and Sikhism. Yousef Salmasi, a co-ordinator of the event and member of the InterFaith group which were behind it, explained that "it's the astonishing diversity in faiths and beliefs at Imperial which adds that extra element to living out your faith".

Yousef, upon asked about the purpose of the event, added: "By having an interfaith forum at imperial, and a launch event of this nature, we can ensure that there is more interaction, and of an appropriate and respectful nature, between different faith groups on campus. People may ask why this is important but the

answer is simple: so that we can finish our journey in university as learned and open-minded ambassadors of the world, whilst maintaining our respective identities."

The event was marked a success, receiving praise from many who attended. Obadah Ghannam, a Medicine undergraduate remarked that witnessing these religions "come together in such a visible form of unity was absolutely amazing." InterFaith was noted by Harsita Patel, another undergraduate studying Medicine as being a "fantastic opportunity to promote and spread the fantastic teachings and morals of various religions." He plans to "educate others about Hinduism and gain a better understanding of other faiths, whilst getting to know and befriend a new group of people."

InterFaith holds many dialogue events in an effort to apply a variety of perspectives to religions and allow the audience to discuss and explore cultural and other differences in depth. Former president of the Jewish Society, Yoni Weiner, is currently a representative of InterFaith, explaining that "InterFaith is very important for dispelling myths and misconceptions and increasing understanding and co-operation between different faith groups."



Dan Wan
Editor-in-Chief

As we roll into the latter stages of November, there is plenty to be looking forward to in the near future. One date almost everyone will have earmarked as one to look forward to is Christmas, and I am not the exception. The Christmas break will provide me, like most, with the chance to catch up with some sleep and termly quota of distinct idleness that I have become accustomed to in the past two years at university.

However, before I'm content to truly appreciate the fuzzy sentiment of Coca Cola's "The holidays are coming" advertisements, there have been, and still will be, some important happenings regarding *felix* as a newspaper, institution and community.

The first issue has been a pressing matter for over a year now; the server that essentially runs the office and is vital for the production of every issue was dying on its feet. Last week, I'd say it was taken to within a few days of its complete failure, and in that event we would have been royally screwed. Luckily for me and my distinct lack of knowledge about local networks and Apple products, none other than Comment Editor Ravi Pall organised a swift and wonderfully effective server change this week. A personal apology would go a lot further, but I think I've been incredibly short with so many people these past few weeks, a public one will have to do. So, if I've seemed a little ratty recently, please do accept my almost sincere regrets.

This week also saw the *felix* team go to the Guardian Student Media Awards

2009 in Camden. As Student Newspaper of the Year last year, a collection of editors led by last year's Editor-in-Chief Jovan Nedic went with a huge amount of pressure and expectation on their shoulders. Nominated once again for the night's main category, alongside Dylan Lowe's nomination as Travel Writer of the Year, we left North London empty-handed. Despite losing our title we coveted so dearly, I am still immensely proud of the work done last year. The Guardian judges may not have thought it was worthy of an award to Jovan's disappointment, but his characteristically bullish editorial style has commanded great respect amongst College and his peers. Truthfully, I personally value the opinion of the editors and readers of *felix* far more than the Guardian judges, and I hope Jovan does too. To see someone intently reading or casually enjoying the paper on a Friday morning is a great honour that an award ceremony once a year will probably never emulate. A nomination still means we are a top 5 student newspaper in the entire country, and that is enough to be proud of.

We've been barking about this for a fair while now, but *felix* reaches 60 years old on the 9th of December, and it's an opportunity for celebration. We've got a special anniversary issue coming up, so look out for a special issue. Pints in the Union are on us that day. When I say 'us', I definitely 'yourself with your own money'. *Felix* is already free of charge every week, it would have cost you 9 pence in 1949. What more do you want? Drink up and sod off. Oh, there's me being ratty again.

Are you Prepared?

Posi+ively Red Week 30th NOV – 4th DEC

Monday 30th

Central Line Pub Crawl to
for  after party
Collect buckets from SAF
at 7pm

Tuesday 1st

Positively Red Week
TAKE OVER the Union
SUPER QUIZ

Prize for top team
DB's Bar from 7pm

Red Ribbon Projection

Queen's Tower is lit up with a Red Ribbon
to mark World AIDS Day.
Queen's Lawn from 4–6pm

Human Red Ribbon

Wear red and join the Human Red
Ribbon formation for a Felix Bird's eye
photograph!
Walkway at 1pm

Wednesday 2nd

Global Health Forum Talk and Debate
'The role of religion in HIV transmission
and prevention' - Free Starbucks
G34 lecture theatre in SAF at 6pm



Thursday 3rd

Roman Slave Auction
Bid for your own personal slave
Reynolds Bar from 7pm

Friday 4th

Stalls all over campus from 12pm



World AIDS Day 2009
1st December 2009

More Details

Join our Facebook Group:
"Medsin Imperial"
Email: re107@ic.ac.uk



+ GLOBAL HEALTH + LOCAL ISSUE
medsin

imperial
college
union



Rhys Davies reinvents kitchen science



"That mammoth carcass I left near it has changed colour. Oh, it's hot like the heat-light! Mmm, that's new..."



The undersized room is packed out with complex, esoteric instruments. Jars of powders, preserves and preparations, both exotic and eldritch, line the shelves. Essays and treatises by greater men and women, heavy with inky annotations, lay strewn about, covering all surfaces. The air is filled with smoke, fire and heat. All is silent as the room's sole occupant rises from a stupor. He finds the result of his investigations, the fruit of countless years' toil. Euphoric tears stain his cheeks, blackened by his endeavours.

You may think this is a description of the quarters of some mediaeval master of alchemy, finally realising his search for the fabled philosopher's stone, but you'd be wrong. It was my kitchen last week, and I had just perfected the boiled egg.

Many people think that modern chemistry arose from the mystical

half-science of alchemy. But they'd be wrong. What we think of as alchemy was nothing more than tricks and cons to fool the rich and the stupid. Alchemists were certainly interested in making gold but they didn't need a fancy stone for that. No, science takes its cues from a much purer discipline.

Just consider the similarities between the kitchen and the laboratory. In both, you have to carefully measure out your reactants and set up the necessary apparatus. Safety measures must be taken, usually involving a blast screen of some kind, especially when dangerous compounds/baked potatoes are involved. Hypotheses are formulated, tested and refined for the next experiment/meal, bringing us ever closer to understanding the divine mysteries of the universe/cookbook. We can read about the investigations others have undertaken, either in Nature or Reader's Digest, and try them for ourselves, assessing their validity and delicious-

ness. And there are those pioneers who give their lives (sometimes literally) in the never-ending pursuit of knowledge and flavour.

As an aside, I was once almost counted among those brave souls, following a catastrophe of a pasta bake. That night I stared Death in face, with my arms tightly wrapped around the toilet bowl. I thought my time had come. The timely application of sliced bread and a great deal of ketchup was the only thing that kept me in this plane.

Also, fire. Fire is important. Heat, energy, we need these things to drive our testing forward. Since the dawn (and full English breakfast, presumably) of man, fire has been vital to man's survival and learning. Fire refines, fire rejuvenates, fire changes! Without fire, of some kind or another, you are barely experimenting and you are certainly not cooking. What does the science lab revolve around? The bunsen burner. The kitchen? The stove. Without fire,

you'd have to eat salad all day long. And salad isn't cooking – rabbits eat salad and they don't even have opposable thumbs!

With the advent of fire, cookery and science really took off. Our primordial ancestors were the first to realise the potential of this strange dancing light. "Ah, this heat-light I found out by the dead trees is superb! Hmm, but that mammoth carcass I left near it has changed colour. Oh, it's hot like the heat-light! Mmm, that's new...it feels different to how Wife does it... and even though it's been a few days, this still tastes quite good. Maybe if I put more meat near the heat-light, I can make it taste better too?" Thus, observation and hypothesis were laid down as the foundation, the very cornerstone, of both cookery and science, by some rather well-spoken hunter-gatherers. And naturally, fire was a brilliant way of keeping warm through the long winter nights, before gas bills

were invented.

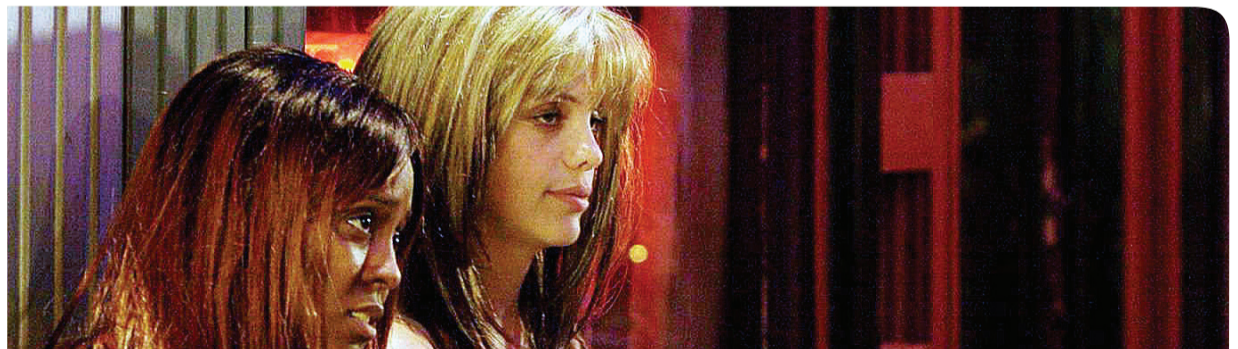
While it's great to talk about science and cookery in these logical, rationalistic terms, there are also times when you just have to throw the scientific method to the wind and see where an open mind and dumb luck can get you. In science, you have to put more effort in pretending you're a mature adult but this is more acceptable in cookery; I remember last term using raspberry jam as a substitute for pasta sauce. The results were sticky but extremely tasty – the resulting diabetic coma was a minor side-effect. Some of our greatest discoveries lie in these unexplored frontiers, these brave new worlds. Kekulé worked out the structure of benzene while high off his tits on opium and Emperor Shennong discovered tea when drinking hot water under a tree with an arboreal alopecia.

Ah, the maillard reaction has finished now; I can have toast. Mm, butter-topped science!

Milli Begum with a retort to Mariash



"I'd like Mariash to apologise to all other females she has disgusted with her views"



LIKE ROUGH SEX TOO. Apologies for being crude, but I want to attract the same audience as Mariash Notelling, the people who were made to feel like shallow sluts throughout that comment piece. What first struck me is the anger and venom the writer felt against other people – I really did wonder why they were getting so worked up by other people's business! Rather than attacking bits of last week's column though, I'd like to use my couple of hundred words to approach the points raised using a different view.

felix and the student population are only as obsessed with sex as say – most

of the 18 – 21 yr olds around the world! It'll always crop up, as a scientist you will be familiar with the evolutionary concept that humans function to the four basic F's: fight, flight, feeding and... reproduction. Of course we can all rise above it and discourse on other matters, but it would be futile to say that a sophisticated society should be exempt of the desire to fuck.

First years are usually fresh out of school. For many of them, it is the first time that they will have been let loose, out of the advisory guard of parents and the school system. Some may choose to crash head first into a yard of ale, but it's a phase that is normally

shed as time passes. That first year away, especially the first term, is when they will grow-up and hone their instincts. This worldly knowledge cannot be gained however, without launching yourself out there and accumulating as much experience as you can. "La connaissance, c'est la transformation d'un savoir en une expérience de vie". This isn't a call to sleep around as much as possible. What I'm trying to convey is that, as first years, and throughout the rest of your life, you will be learning and doing new things, and sometimes – whoops! – you'll make a mistake. Don't take shame in it. That experience is a small part of a book that makes

you. You're not a generic "slutty female fresher", and no-one, including anonymous comment writers, has a right to judge what you choose to do.

Onto the most irksome point in Mariash's column. Why do you mention your virginity? Does it really matter? I thought it detracted from the power of your piece. Already bordering the line between being facetious or not, that really sent it to the nutcase pit. The concept of having not "given in" is particularly worrying. It suggests that all non-virgins, including those that are in loving relationships, are weak of mind. Clutching to your virginity has neither any say in your

character nor any bearing on the validity of your opinions. Holding the status of a virgin does not elevate you above others. Your sexual interests and status are completely irrelevant outside of intimate personal relationships. Sure there may be some Mariash out there judging you or conversely a patronising wanna-be cool kid looking down on you for your lack of experience. Ignore them: they are not worth your time.

I'd like Mariash to apologise to all the girls she has offended. Not only the promiscuous ones, but all the other females she has disgusted by her narrow-minded views.

Gilead Amit reaches his final destination



"You find yourself staring into the disgruntled face of a heavily pregnant woman"



Some of you may remember last week. It was long, green, and to be honest with you a little dull. I can't claim all the credit for the dullness myself, you understand, but I like to think that I added to it in some small way. My contribution took the form of a piece in last week's issue – a piece which rather naughtily bit its own nails and hung itself over a cliff before reaching a conclusion. Though I'm sure you'd wish a similar fate to befall me, the dramatic finale to last week's episode is here at last.

Those of you who actually gave a damn last saw me rushing across Euston station, desperately trying to be the first person to set foot on the platform...

Because being first on the platform means you have the crucial strategic advantage. Most importantly, you can be the first to race all the way across to carriage A, which is traditionally the emptiest and least popular. Ergo, you think, the best place to find a free seat.

You board carriage A a good kilometre and a half ahead of the puffing investment banker running behind you. You scan the electric signs above the seats, looking for one that says 'available'. Aha! You find one – and it's a window table seat facing in the right direction at that – what luck! You throw your case in the overhead rack, arrange yourself in the plaid cliff-face of seating, rip the Saturday Guardian out of its plastic wrapper, and begin perusing the first of its 12 special supplements in perfect inner peace.

A short while later you hear, through your shimmering golden bubble of happiness, the bustle of several thousand people boarding a carriage which has exactly forty-seven seats. You raise the Business section a little higher and hum 'The Battle-Hymn of the Republic' quietly to yourself.

"Excuse me..."

Dah-dum-Dah-dum-Dah-trumpet.

"Excuse me..."

Dah-dum-Dah-dum-defeat.

Dah-dum-Dah-dum-Dah-hearts-of-men-Dah-dum.

The paper is unceremoniously ripped from your hands, and you find yourself staring into the disgruntled face of a heavily pregnant woman with babies in either arm and a Hamleys bag draped over her shoulder. Her face is flushed with an otherworldly glow and her eyes are like tungsten filaments on the point of incandescence.

"You're sitting in our seats", she growls.

"But I can't be," you calmly point out, "Look at the..."

Your breath catches in your throat as you see that the word 'available', which previously hung over your head in the manner of a protective charm, has vanished. It has now been replaced by that most cruel and dispiriting of words: 'reserved'. The writing is quite literally on the wall. An unreasonably friendly voice on the PA chooses this moment to announce:

"The seat reservation data has only

now been uploaded to our on-board software. We apologise for any inconvenience caused."

You flush an unbelievably deep shade of crimson, and attempt to gather together all the sections of the Guardian. You soon dismiss this task as being humanly impossible, and concentrate on extricating yourself from the situation as quickly as the limited manoeuvring space will allow. Some agonisingly slow minutes later, you find yourself standing in the doorway of Carriage G, trying to stop the door from giving you a complementary circumcision whenever it arbitrarily sees fit to close. Often, I should point out, with a large and hairy dog using various parts of your anatomy for target practice.

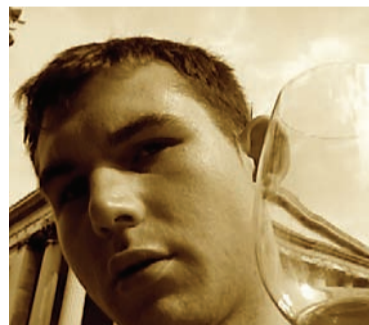
It is experiences such as these that lead me to wonder what is so appealing about Heaven if it involves having a train of seventy-two virgins for the taking. God knows I've taken seventy-two Virgin trains and I feel as though I've been through Hell.

Possibly the only thing that makes the English railway system halfway bearable is the knowledge that things are so much worse abroad. In Italy, for instance, where once the trains used to arrive bang on time and leave, and the leaders used to fall apart with alarming frequency, now it is the trains which regularly fall apart, and the leaders who arrive, bang on time, and never seem to leave. Not much of a joke, granted, but at least the timing was right. Which is more than can be said for the damned trains.

In the end, of course, you get to your final destination. This is assuming that the train is able to navigate its way through the minefield of obstacles which include leaves lying on the line, rogue children stealing lengths of cable, and the force field around the M25 which attempts to keep the good people of London safe from the depredations of the North.

Ah, trains. You can't live if you miss them, you can live if they miss you.

David Stewart's sounds of ejaculation



"I'm about to come, I'm going to come! I'm coming! Oh, my God, I've just come!"



Sonitus (n. masc. fourth declension): a sound; pl. sonitus (pronounced 'sonitoos').
Ejaculare (v.): to throw out, to hurl, to ejaculate; ejaculandum (gerund, gen. plural): of (the) throwing, of (the) ejaculating.

Hence, sonitus ejaculandum: the sounds of ejaculating. Or, more colloquially, 'cum noises'.

After much agitation, I was torn as to whether or not to write this article, not least because of the ribald and licentious nature of such a sticky subject. But it's clearly an important issue, so germane to human existence, that it seemed callous not to have a crack at it. Still, we are civilised enough that we can at least substitute 'cum noises' with its proper medical name 'sonitus ejaculandum', henceforth 'S.E.'

There's a school of thought that says that you don't choose your S.E., that

it is thrust upon you by the vagaries of nature. I would like to raise a bone of contention with this view; it suggests that the people who whinny like horses when they pop the weasel are in no control of themselves. It implies that some people are genetically programmed to squeal like worried guinea pigs at a church fête while they spend a creamy penny. To say that their predicament is incurable is to condemn such people to a life of seeing their sexual partners cringe mid-coitus every time they start rehearsing a symphony in the key of mad cow disease.

Call me a snivelling leftie, but I believe such people can and should be rehabilitated.

I hope this article makes inroads into achieving that aim. Even so, it's worth mentioning that prevention is better than cure. Many of you are in a position to cultivate your S.E. from its infancy. You can act now, before your house-

mates have to buy earplugs to block out the din of you and a special friend recreating a radio play of Abu Graib prison. Ultimately, someone is going to hear your S.E. and it is best that they don't need serious counselling afterwards. And if you think it's bad for your mate with a wall between you and your tortuous moaning, imagine what it's like for the girl or boy you're evacuating: your emetic gurgling could be doing him or her some serious mental damage.

The first thing to do is to get stuck in and start thinking about the sort of S.E. that you would like to hear yourself. Watch documentaries (porn) and see if there are any S.E.s that you think you could pull off. Record some practice runs on your laptop. Play back your efforts. Does it sound like a rhinoceros with a giraffe stuck up its bum? Then it's got to go. Experiment a bit: try changing the pitch or the vowels ('ee'

rather than 'oo' for instance). Once you think you have a winner on your hands, why not swap mp3s with your friends on Facebook and ask for their advice? If they have to listen to you grunt-bonanza at one in the A.M., the least you could do is to give them right of veto over the noise that sounds like a chimpanzees' circumcision party.

One mess we must mop up is vocabulary. Of course you may take the traditional approach, viz. 'I'm about to come, I'm going to come! I'm coming! I'm coming! Oh, my God, I've just come!' While dependable, this is not exactly love poetry. To spice up the butter, you could try it in French: 'Je vais arriver. Je suis sur le point d'arriver. J'arrive! J'arrive! Sacré bleu, je suis arrivé!' (N.B. Grammar: Don't say 'j'ai arrivé' or you will be a laughing stock.) Alternatively the German can carry a more punchy tone: 'Ich werde kommen! Ich komme! Ich komme! Ich

bin gekommen!'

Let's go in a bit deeper: once you've mastered the basics in your chosen language you can be more adventurous. Instead of: 'I'm going to come.' try 'Here comes the choo-choo.' Instead of 'J'arrive' try 'J'habite à Croydon et j'ai un frère et deux soeurs'. There's not much time during the victory wail for much more than an extended vowel, but for a challenge, try pus-howling 'Harriet Harman!' during the Big Bang. To finish off you could announce: 'I've just curdled your receptacle.' With enough practice you could even build up to something like this:

'Ooo, ooo, eee, I'm on the 4:17 from Portsmouth. ooo, eee, I've really got the wind up me now, aah, eee. I CAN SEE THE SEA! Ooo, mmm. That's it. Mmm, oh. that was good value, urgh, yeah, I feel like I've just had the best piss ever.'

Let's get the creative juices flowing.

Raz Jabary

The future of Iraq

Iraq is as divided as an apple pie. Arabs and Kurds make up its two main ethnic groups. A further religious division puts the Arabs into the two main camps of Sunnis and Shiites. Not too long ago critics spoke of a 'civil war' going on in the country. Laws are vetoed, deadlines fail to be met on parliamentary level, infiltration into the national police and army by insurgents still remains. What is to be the future of such a country? As inhabitants of Britain, the country which first ruled Iraq and had a big role in the creation of the 'new' Iraq, we ought to familiarize ourselves with its future prospects.

Nearly two weeks ago the controversial election law was passed, paving the way for national elections in coming January. The source of the controversy around the law was the Kirkuk governorate in the north. Under Saddam and many preceding governments ethnic Kurds making up the majority within the city and its surroundings were deported, in the hope of putting claim to the oil-rich governorate as one being of 'Arabic identity'.

In 2003, after the fall of the dictatorship, many Kurds returned back to the city with the hope of restoring their lives. Nevertheless, the city's relatively

dangerous security situation combined with the neglect of the city's essential infrastructure and facilities such as water supply and electricity put many original Kurds from Kirkuk off from returning. Many thousands more have permanently settled abroad, with no intentions of going back. Now, with the tyranny gone and a new democratic government system, the Kurds want to incorporate Kirkuk into their federal region, based on a referendum in which the city's inhabitants can decide their own future.

Unlike general elections here in Britain, those in Iraq are still very reflective of people's strong expression and association with their identity. Sunni Arabs voting for their Shiite counterparts or the Kurds voting on either are simply unthinkable phenomena. It is the result of many decennia of oppression by the subsequent Iraqi regimes targeting communities just because of who they are or are not.

As a result of people's votes being mainly based on identity rather than ideology, Iraqi politics has indeed been dominated by the former. There is no such thing as an 'Iraqi people's party'. To me, this phenomenon underlines that Iraq is already a much divided country and in fact has always been so ever since it was established as a British mandate

in the early twentieth century. The British were quick enough to recognize this and as a result handed over power to Iraq's Sunni Arab minority upon leaving, thus depending on an iron fist rule to keep the country together. George W. Bush failed to follow the British in his understanding of the country's divisions in 2003.

Why would the international community not take the responsibility to call a stop to daily inter-ethnic and sectarian disputes, claims of oppression and feelings of insecurity by giving in to the demands of a great proportion of the Iraqi people, namely far-going federalism or even independence? The fact is that the reality on the ground is a much more complicated issue than it sounds.

Inter-related marriages between Shiite and Sunni couples will lead to a new generation that will find it hard to express a preference for one side or the other. I know such people and I am aware of their 'identity crises'; they simply term themselves as 'Iraqi'. In an ethnically mixed city such as Baghdad people of various backgrounds have lived there for generations, often in the same street or even as neighbours. How do you divide such a place? Not only is it not an easy task, but it actually approaches the extent of being impossible.

The expression of support from abroad for a continuation of a united Iraq is immense. Saudi-Arabia is fearful of having an independent oil-rich Shiite state to its north. Iran, Syria and Turkey – each with their own Kurdish minorities seeking self-rule – strongly oppose the creation of an independent Kurdish state as neighbour. The U.S., already highly criticized for having gone into Iraq and widely associated with failure of its intelligence and military apparatus, would be even more humiliated if its initial promise for a 'free, united and democratic Iraq' would turn into an Iraq broken up into different pieces as a result of the failure in the practical implementation of the envisaged democratic system it sought to bring.

In case a break-up does go ahead, how will the Kurds and Sunnis cope with suddenly becoming landlocked and depending upon neighbouring states for essential supplies or the allowance of the operation of supply routes? All in all, it is a very difficult matter indeed.

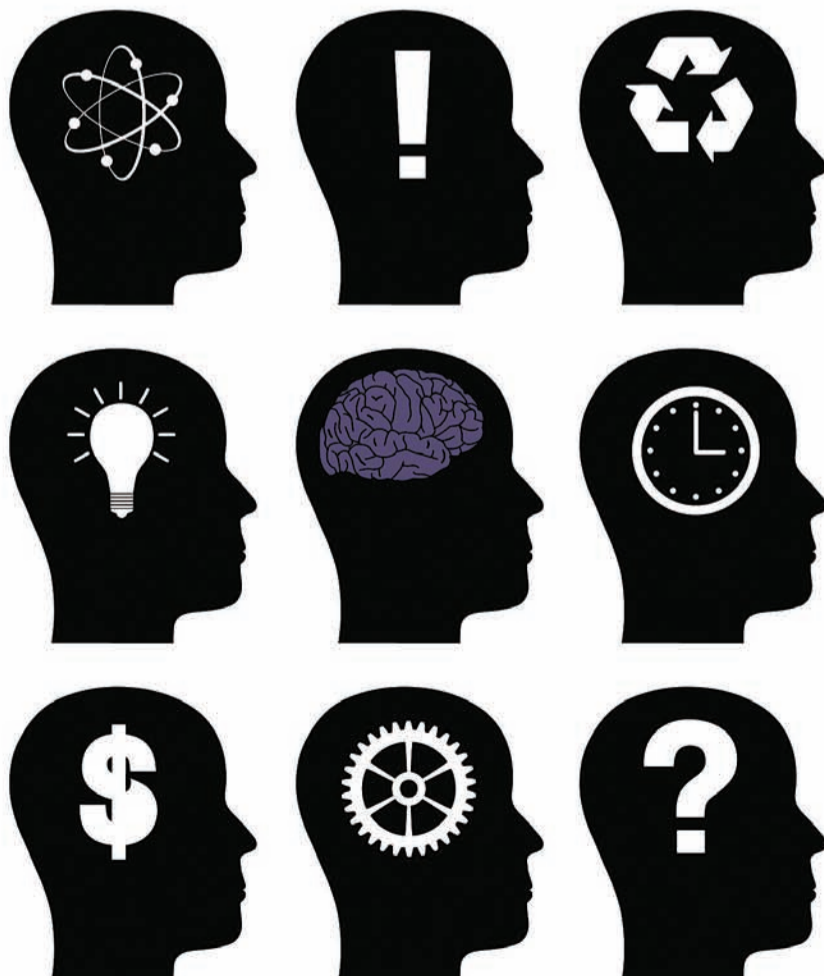
Would I, born an Iraqi myself, prefer to have the old regime back instead of facing all these everyday problems? No, definitely not. I strongly believe the Iraqi people are far better off without the cruel dictator who did not hesitate

to mass murder thousands of his own people or order the killing of his closest relatives. The Iraqi oil sector is up and running, but this time instead of its revenues going to arms and palaces for the dictator, they go to ordinary Iraqi citizens struggling on a day-to-day basis to build up a normal life free of violence.

Unfortunately, facts cannot determine Iraq's future, but instead it is seen and approached differently by each and every person. A divided Iraq, the tendency as a consequence of the failure of the country ever since its creation to serve its people equally and rightfully, is a justified measure through many eyes.

However, as mentioned before, this would be a rather difficult and time-consuming task and will therefore not be realised anytime in the near future. After decennia of fatal decisions from outside Iraq that have come to affect and cause suffering for the people within it, it is fairest to conclude that any Iraqi way forward indeed should be completely in the hands of the Iraqis themselves.

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Placenta fluid: football's 'miracle' cure

A massage using fluid from horse placentas? It's all the rage for the treatment of sport-related injuries

Shupaula Dass Science Reporter

When perusing a footballer's shopping list, one would expect to find not much out of the ordinary. Vitamins, protein shakes, lean beef steaks, thongs, and horse placenta. Okay, perhaps shopping for Black Beauty's placenta is a bit extreme. But players can receive treatment for their injuries using equine placental fluid. Just when we thought these pillars of male finesse could not transcend any higher levels of bizarreness, they do. Arsenal's Van Persie is the latest player to surrender the bread and butter that is his ankle to Dr Kovacevic for treatment. But this is not the first time the placenta has been used, and indeed, is not its only use.

The placenta, from the Latin word for 'cake', is unique to mammals. Connecting a fetus to the uterine wall it delivers oxygen and food, taking away any fetal waste. As culture has evolved, so has perception of it. In Nigeria, the Nibo people view the placenta as the deceased twin of the baby and conduct a funeral for it. Then there are people spread throughout the world who eat it. The act of eating the pla-

centa, for anyone who wants to use this as a dinner date discussion is placentophagy. Humans who tantalise their taste buds in this activity come from America, Europe, and Mexico to name a few places in the world. Animals, including herbivores also eat placentas. Apart from placentophagy being believed to alleviate postpartum depression, it is also used as an ingredient in some Chinese medicines. Medically-speaking, the placenta contains a lipid compound named prostaglandin. The presence of the compound stimulates the return to normal size of the uterus. Oxytocin is present in small quantities, easing stress of the birth process.

So what's with the recent placenta craze? Robin Van Persie is the answer to this. Through the sporting grapevine Van Persie heard of Dr Kovacevic's miracle cures for injuries. Before he left he commented that the doctor is 'vague about her methods but I know she massages you using fluid from a placenta.'

Another treated native Serbian player was able to offer a more detailed explanation. "She uses a combination of electricity and the miracle gel that is her exclusive product. The electric

current goes through a stick holding the gel, which is applied to the injured spot."

There must have been something in that gel. Physiotherapists predicted Liverpool striker Yossi Benayoun to be out for up to 5 weeks, healing from a hamstring injury. After receiving the placental treatment, he was back within a week. On the pitch. Not only was he able to play, but he scored the equalising goal.

The treatment however does not seem to work for all players and there are people who remain skeptical of it even within the sporting profession. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is among them claiming that sometimes it "can be psychological for the players to feel they can be helped. I'm not a fan, but I'm not a doctor either. I respect the freedom of everybody to be treated in the way they want to be treated."

Numbers of players considering this

treatment have risen. Almost as high as the result from the recent Spurs/Wigan game. Yet the treatment has not been scientifically supported, thus causing much uproar. Dr Mariana Kovacevic has not registered her business under Serbian law which could cause problems for her patients. Her clinic will be shut down until she files the necessary paperwork to legalise her business, that is, if officials can find her. Van Persie left for treatment but has not been reported to have turned up at the "official" Kovacevic clinic. She is shady as she is notorious. Rumours of her miracle secret formula have spread to other European teams, such as Real Madrid, who have asked the Serbian doctor to divulge her recipe.

Madness. Pure madness is the only way to describe this placental controversy. Sure it's a useful organ, full of goodness, eaten for hundreds of years. I don't doubt that. What I question is the mental state of ball-kicking, thong-wearing players that represent this wonderfully-conservative island. Victoria Beckham...forget your knicker drawer, worry about what's behind David's motivation for you popping out another one.



Arsenal striker Robin Van Persie after a horrific challenge from a dirty Italian

Are revolutionary bioplastics environmentally sound?

Nuno Helder Science Reporter

Every time the Aerosmith song "Pink" springs to mind, I readapt the two first verses: "Pink, it's my new obsession / Pink, it's not even a question" to "Green, it's our new obsession / Green, it's still a question". Why is this? Broadly speaking, society has been pushing forward for a 'green' change in habits and technology; however, many still question the need to go green. Also, narrowly speaking, the issue of what's 'green' or not is controversial. Such is the case of bioplastics and biodegradable plastics.

Biopolymers have been around way before humanity, appearing, disappearing, mixing, dispersing, forming organisms, forming more complex organisms; even more complex than the plots of Mexican or Venezuelan soap operas. In the same way that these soap operas are full of beautiful people, biopolymers are full of beautiful molecules. Look at DNA; how impressive is that with its long double helix shape? And multifunctional proteins with their sensor-actuator characteristics?!

A biopolymer is a polymer (a long molecule comprised by repeated small molecules, the monomers) derived from renewable sources (e.g. vegetable oil or starch). A bioplastic is a biopolymer with something mixed, such as pigment to give colour to the mixture.

Biodegradable is a characteristic of a material being broken down into smaller molecules or elements by living organisms.

Not all bioplastics are biodegradable, as is the case of Polyamide 11, used in automotive applications. We can then divide bioplastics into two main fields: those that are biodegradable, with the packaging industry being the main consumer and those that are not biodegradable, mainly found in the automotive and electronics industries.

As with everything in life, everyone has a different definition of what is a biodegradable plastic. To address this issue, the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) released the standard EN13432, establishing how fast and in which conditions a plastic must degrade.

The other issue that generates great discussion (mostly due to commercial and not scientific or engineering aspects) is whether bioplastics have a lower environmental impact than "petroplastics". Both sides should not be dismissed, however, the opponents of bioplastics generally do not take into account (many times, consciously) that the technology is new and that the economies of scale are still not as developed as in petroplastics, in spite of continuing to show a promising increase. Statistics vary, but bioplastics consumption has been growing at about 17 % per year and is forecasted to reach 900 kilometric tons in 2013. Now, it's important to have in mind that this is less than 1 % of the total yearly consumption of plastic.

Leaving Mexican soap operas and chemistry aside, let's talk about the engineering of bioplastics.

Presently, they have 3 main drawbacks that reduce their utilisation compared to petroplastics: manufacturing difficulty, lower performance, and higher cost. So, the obvious markets are those where products have a short life and/or are reasonably protected from certain environmental conditions, and mass-produced. For these reasons and together with environmental concerns and marketing (the 'look-good-to-others' factor),

the packaging (e.g. trays, containers, and bags) and automotive (interior trim and under-the-bonnet applications) industries, followed by the electronics (e.g. laptop and mobile casings) industry are investing more and more in these materials.

Not all bioplastics are biodegradable; they tend to be harder to manufacture and have lower performance. Due to this, they are found in particular applications, mostly in packaging, au-

tomotive and electronics. While their consumption has been growing about 17 % per year, they still amount for less than 1 % of the yearly plastic consumption. As they are relatively "new", the science and technology involved is recent, leading to a higher cost and some controversy regarding sustainability. There is another advantage to bioplastics...some of them are edible and yummy.

Who's up for some starch?



The Honda FC Sport Concept is a hydrogen fuel cell sports car with body panels made from bioplastics



Nobody's in power

James Lees Politics Editor

It has been a tumultuous week in politics. Firstly the President of Europe has been elected, the little known Belgian Prime minister, Herman van Rompuy, is now set to ascend to the world stage and represent Europe to the world; and this appointment has been causing quite some controversy. He certainly doesn't seem to have the "traffic stopping power" of other world leaders. Frankly it will look a bit ridiculous at a press conference where he is representing Europe with other world leaders such as: Hu Jintao, President of China and as a result, in charge of the largest military in the world; Barack Obama, the man running the country with the largest economy in the world; and Herman van Rompuy, the man who was PM for 11 months of the country which... has the world's only fully lit road network?

Still, on the other side of the argument, the new position is not the leader of a country like Jintao's or Obama's, his role is mainly to chair meetings of the European Council. The European Council is made up of the leaders of the member states and it is they who have elected van Rompuy into his new position. The decision was made behind closed doors at a dinner/meeting of the Council, where they also divided up the other top jobs created by the newly ratified Lisbon treaty. One of these was the new high representative for foreign affairs and security which has gone to Baroness Ashton - a British Labour peer.

This decision seems to be generating much more controversy, in Britain at least, than the election of van Rompuy. While neither has much political clout, at least not as of yet, van Rompuy has been widely hailed as a success in Belgium. Van Rompuy has been praised for the way he has held the Belgian government together despite difficulties arising partially from separatist movements.

Baroness Ashton though, is much less commendable. After failing to get elected to the House of Commons she was made a life peer by Labour and eventually became leader of the House of Lords. Then, last year, after Peter Mandelson returned, she took on his job as commissioner for trade for Europe. So essentially she has never been elected by the public and has no experience with foreign affairs.

Of course it's no great surprise that two 'nobodies' have been elected into the new roles. If they were to take on any real power then it would take away control from Paris and Berlin, something unwanted by France or Germany. The status quo remains - Europe won't project the views of Europe but of France and Germany.

All said and done, I am in favour of the appointment of a relative unknown for the top job. If the role had been filled by a political power-house then the job would have evolved from be-

ing a chairman of the council to being a chief, in much the same way as the President of the US is nothing like the job laid out in the constitution originally. This would mean a 'real' President of Europe and that needs a 'real' country, which has to result in even less sovereignty in each member state and as such, a lesser degree of control by the people as we traipse along the road to a big centralised government.

Also in the news this week was the state opening of Parliament which peaks with the Queen's speech. Of course the Queen's speech is in fact the government's speech: all of the bills that the government plans to bring into law over the course of the year are announced normally preceded by "My government will". Effectively, at least in these situations, our monarch is a puppet so frankly, I wish someone would pull her strings to do something more entertaining like the dicks, pussies and assholes speech in Team America.

Unfortunately it would seem that the government has a much more twisted sense of humour. Instead they made her read out a list of things that are simply never going to happen, which might also be called the Labour manifesto. With the Tories luckily still in the lead for the next general election and the Lib Dems saying they won't support Labour if the election ends in a hung parliament, it is extremely unlikely that any bill proposed by Labour now will ever make it into law.

This brings to mind having the Queen do something much more sensible - dissolving parliament. This is what King Abdullah of Jordan has done this week, forcing an ineffectual government to break up and go to early elections. Of course nothing is ever as black and white as that, with the opposition saying it has been done to force through proposals that couldn't be passed otherwise. In Britain though, I can't see a single good reason to let Labour carry on running the country with the unelected Gordon Brown at its head.

A personal highlight of the proposals from the Queen's speech for me was the idea of writing into law that the government must cut the deficit in the next 4 years. Who exactly is going to go to jail for that?

More sensible ideas are being pushed by the Tories however, David Cameron has announced that if they are elected in then they will hold an emergency budget within 50 days. The Conservatives are actually slipping in polls at the moment, with their lead now at the lowest point since December last year.

Some police are also threatening to quit over the Conservative plans to have elected local commissioners. Which is understandable, you can't have a Police state if it's democratic, and of course the Police aren't legally allowed to go on strike so they would have to quit.

North Korea vs Human Rights

Rory Fenton

Five North Korean refugees were recently arrested in China after fleeing their country. They are likely to be forcibly repatriated to face ill treatment.

North Korea was officially established as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1948 and has been communist ever since. The guiding principle of its dictatorship is the idea of Juche (self reliance). This has resulted in the brutal oppression of the country's 24 million strong population. Democratic only in name, its people suffer terribly.

Up to a million people are kept imprisoned in North Korea. There is no judicial mechanism whereby North Koreans can be heard by an impartial judge, and where allegations of wrongdoing by authorities can be answered. Political dissidents (such as Christians and democrats) are sent to a prison called a Guryujang which is divided into two facilities: one for 'preliminary examination' and the other inside the camp. According to the Citizen Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, most of those sent to this latter camp do not survive. The Government also practices the principle of guilt by association. Without a legal basis, up to three generations - grandparents, parents and children - related to the accused can also be incarcerated.

According to Amnesty International, prisoners are forced to undertake physically demanding work for ten or more hours each day, 7 days every week. Prisoners are punished if suspected of "lying, not working fast enough or forgetting the words of patriotic songs".

Due to the combination of forced hard labour, inadequate food, beatings, lack of medical care and unhygienic living conditions, many prisoners fall ill, with some having died in custody or soon after release. Torture is regularly used in interrogation facilities, "sometimes to the point of disability, paralysis or death". Prisoners have also reportedly been used for medical, chemical and biological experiments.

A recent report by the organisation Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has found that pregnancy is not allowed in prison and testimonies show that, "should efforts by authorities to induce abortion not be successful, babies alive at birth are killed... some accounts even describe prisoners being forced to kill their newly born child". Women detained for having crossed the border have suffered similar treatment.

According to CSW, North Korean defectors give testimonies of executions both inside and outside the detention and prison system. Inside, the penalty has reportedly been carried out for acts such as "foraging for or stealing food, attempting to escape, rioting, assaulting guards, refusing to abandon religious beliefs and criticizing the country".

It has also been used as a punishment for those North Koreans, repatriated from a neighbouring country, who have had contact with South Koreans or Christians. Outside the prison system, the acts subject to execution



North Korea has had a troubled history for such a young nation

are often simple efforts such as those to secure food.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that North Korean children face discrimination and punishment on the basis of the status, activities, opinions or beliefs of their parents, or other family members, and that collective punishment of a whole family is common for political offenses. The Asia Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) has found authorities evade reporting on torture or abuse against children in prisons or by national agencies.

They have also found that "custody facilities serving the purpose of protecting children without parents, or those forcibly separated from their parents, resemble rather a detention facility more than a protection facility". Children in these centres are "deprived of education and exploited for labour".

The ACHR has also found that, despite the fact that the minimum working age defined by law is 16 years old, it is commonly accepted that children are mobilised for agricultural work from their middle-school years (12 years old). In the poverty-stricken Northern provinces, children are mobilized as early as 8-9 years old. Children also

have other "assignments" such as raising rabbits, but also are mobilised for heavy labour, such as flood damage recovery, railway maintenance and road paving.

According to the ACHR, there were reports of "children being sentenced to death" and that authorities make the watching of public executions compulsory, in the hope of preventing juvenile crime. The ACHR also found reports of "11 year-old children sent to forced labour camps for stealing electric wires."

With the world's focus on North Korea's nuclear programme, it is essential that we remember the immense suffering of the North Koreans themselves. They have no one to speak for them; no natural resources or strategic position that could be of real interest to us in London. But we must speak for them. Suffering on this scale cannot and must not be ignored.

Organisations such as Amnesty International are doing great work in applying political pressure on the country via the UN, lobbying our own ambassadors to intervene and getting into the country to compile evidence against the Orwellian regime.



Scandal at top climate research centre

Edward Townes reviews an email leak story that supports his speculations in last week's edition

Last week I wrote an article for *felix* that briefly outlined why I am a 'Climate Change' sceptic. In that article, I tried to answer the frequent question: Do you think it is a conspiracy? I said that yes, I do think it is a conspiracy, because I do believe a few key individuals are being consciously deceptive, and that is what defines a conspiracy.

Less than a day after that article was published, my suspicions were stunningly confirmed. Someone hacked into the email database of the climate scientists at the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit (CRU), arguably the most important climate science research center in the world, and published 1,073 emails on the Internet. Schadenfreude aside, I do not condone this transgression against privacy. That being said, the work and correspondence of these scientists is very much in the public interest, and I wish to discuss the content of those emails here.

The first observation is that there are numerous instances of discussions on how to utilise various statistical tricks and omissions of data to exaggerate warming trends in their results. Many commentators have pointed out that this shows that these scientists are more focused on reaching a preconceived conclusion in their research than being objective in their judgment. There are many clear demonstrations of this lack of objectivity in the emails, such as "The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't." (Kevin Trenberth, Oct 2008),

However, I do not believe this is the big news here. We already know

that these scientists are zealots with an agenda, and it is no surprise that their research practices mirror this. The far more shocking and disturbing evidence in these emails is that of a concerted campaign to pervert and undermine the peer-review process, thus rendering the scientific method virtually impotent.

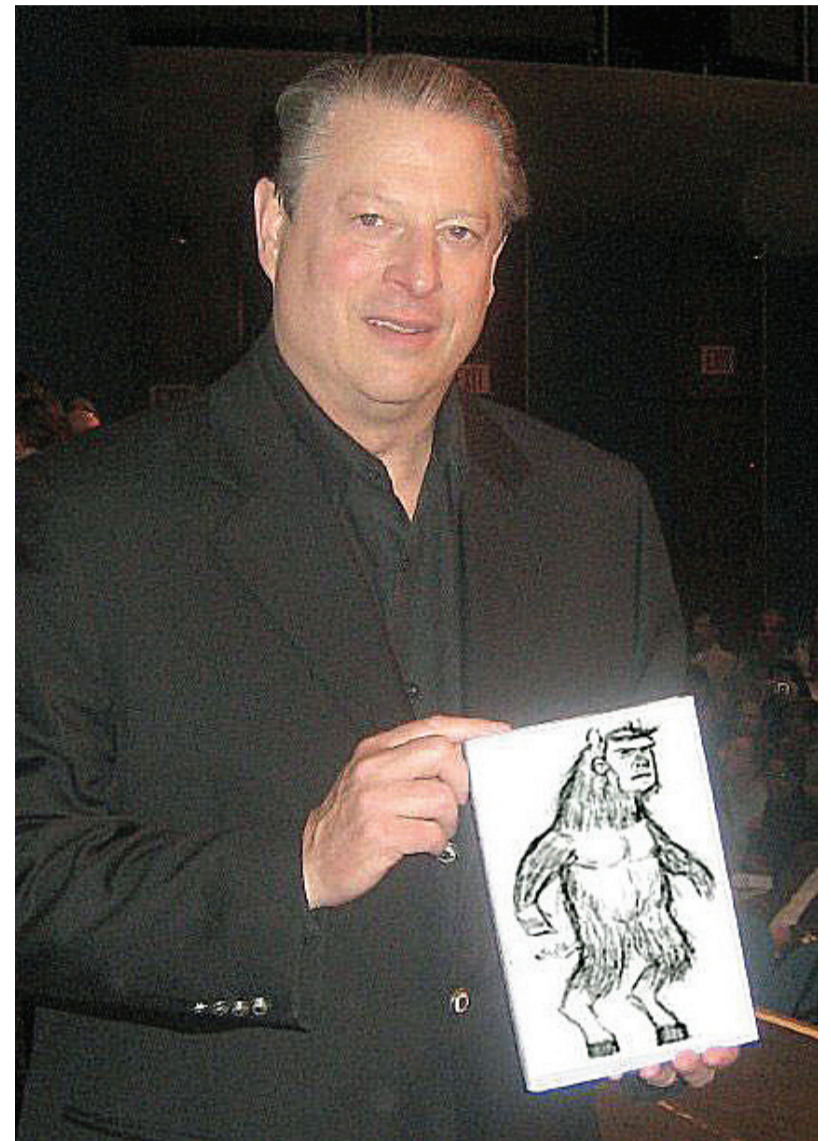
There are many emails, for example, where these scientists discuss how to avoid transparency in their work and raw data. One email says "If they ever hear there is a Freedom of Information Act now in the UK, I think I'll delete the file rather than send to anyone." (Philip Jones, Feb 2005) – showing us a willful effort to prevent other people from being able to review their work. They seem particularly concerned with hiding their data from people who may be critical, thus implying they only want those who will agree with them to check their work and demonstrating laughable insecurity in their research. This evidence also shines new light on instances like in August 2009 when they claimed to have "lost" all the original data from which they constructed their global temperature record, in response to a Freedom of Information request.

You might ask why exactly transparency on the data is so important. The reason is simple: the data is not repeatable. Collecting data on things such as global temperature is very expensive, and only institutions like the CRU have access to resources, given to them by the collective people through government, to do this. Therefore, it is impossible for other scientists to produce work in this field because they selfishly and nefariously refuse to allow anyone else to interpret their data. Their lack

of transparency is legally, scientifically, and morally unjustifiable.

Another aspect of the perversion we find in these emails is efforts to bully and eliminate people who may be critical of their work from the peer-review process. Examples include efforts to fire journal editors who approved publication of papers that they disagreed with, "I will be emailing the journal to tell them I'm having nothing more to do with it until they rid themselves of this troublesome editor." (Philip Jones, Nov 2003). Efforts to undermine entire journals that do not conform to their manipulation of the peer-review process, "Perhaps we should encourage our colleagues in the climate research community to no longer submit to, or cite papers in, this journal." (Michael Mann, Nov 2003), and "If the RMS [Royal Meteorological Society] is going to require authors to make ALL data available - raw data PLUS results from all intermediate calculations - I will not submit any further papers to RMS journals." (Ben Santer, March 2009). Even going so far as to make statements such as, "I can't see either of these papers being in the next IPCC report. Kevin and I will keep them out somehow -- even if we have to redefine what the peer-review literature is!" (Philip Jones, July 2004).

You may have noticed that many of the more damning quotes came from Philip Jones. Just who is this man exactly? Why, he's only the head of the CRU! I'll leave you with the worst example of this man's hubris, "If anything, I would like to see the climate change happen, so the science could be proved right, regardless of the consequences. This isn't being political, it is being selfish." (July 2005).



Al Gore has warned against this leak distracting attention from the urgent and ongoing efforts to find Manbearpig, the biggest immediate threat to our planet.

Campaign to audit the Fed passes first of many major hurdles

Sina Ataherian Business Editor

Ron Paul's Audit the Fed bill, which would remove restrictions on the ability of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to audit some of the most secretive activities of the Federal Reserve has passed committee. The Fed has spent months arguing that this could hinder its job of protecting the value of the dollar, which has fallen by 97% during the Fed's reign. It enjoyed broad stability in the century and a half before the central bank was chartered in its present form.

Congressmen who rely heavily on campaign donations from special interests have been trying to thwart Dr Paul's efforts over the last few weeks. They were joined by "economists" who wrote open letters in support of the Fed. Most of these people have since been found to have strong undisclosed links with that same institution.

The latest measure against monetary policy transparency had been Democratic Congressman Mel Watt's

attempts to water down the bill with his own amendment. But this week the text of HR1207 was attached in the form of the Paul-Grayson amendment to the House Financial Services Committee's upcoming financial regulatory reform bill. The amendment received bipartisan support, being passed by 43 votes to 26.

If HR 3996 now passes, blanket restrictions on GAO audits of the Fed that have existed since 1978 will be removed. All items on the Fed's balance sheet will be auditable, including all credit facilities, all securities purchase programs, and all agreements with foreign central banks. The wording of the bill removes any remaining challenge that it could allow the legislature to put undue pressure on monetary policy as it leaves a 180 day period between decisions being made, and those decisions then being audited. With 313 co-sponsors of HR1207, who will presumably now support HR 3396, the bill can even pass under suspension in the likely event of an Obama veto. Ironically, in characteristic fashion, Dr Paul

himself will not be voting for HR 3396 because of the unconstitutionality of some of its other parts.

The congressman makes a good point, as the bill will empower the Fed to distort the financial sector even further in the name of its mandate to enforce price stability, of course based on its own, ever-changing, definition. However, many of those in support of HR1207, including 75% of the American people, viewed it simply as an opportunity to get more ammunition in the fight to end the Fed, as details of its unacceptable dirty dealings become clearer.

The demise of central planning for the money markets, will also send a clear signal to the Bank of England. One of its strongest lines has always been that central banks are necessary as long as all other countries have them.

It will be interesting to watch this space and see what will happen with this legislation, and its effects on the continuation of central banking in America and across the pond.



Congressman Paul has spent 26 years advocating for a Fed audit, but the issue has only gained mainstream traction after the recent recession.



Death by Art

Caz Knight Arts Editor

Apologies for the significantly smaller arts section this week. The half way mark of the term has been reached which means lowered energy levels and impending deadlines, leaving little time for writing about life's more pleasurable distractions such as museums, art galleries, books...

I have had a ten day grace period between handing in one load of course-works and being given the next load. I have made use of this time not by brushing up on the lectures covered so far this term, but by devouring as much of my new book as possible: *Cancer Ward* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (yes, the arts section covers books too). This outstanding novel not only explores in great detail the unavoidable notion of death, but gives thorough insights into the corrupt workings of 1950s Soviet Russia.

Death: a subject which has made itself apparent in many forms to me this week. Besides reading, I have had to time to nip round the British Museum, the National Gallery and the bite-sized White Cube, all of them teeming with the idea of mortality. A ten metre long horizontal cabinet filled with a lifetime's worth of pills, photographs and medical records track the birth, life and death of one man; one is reminded again of death by the impressive mum-

my collection in the Egyptian wing.

The presence of and relevance of death to religion is obvious in bloody realism in the *Sacred Made Real* at the National gallery (reviewed here last week by Bernard Pereira). The sculptures of dead and putrefying Jesuses bring home death's inevitability and also death's necessity, for it is through death that life is what it is.

Damien Hirst is a fine example of an artist who is fascinated by death and one who finds beauty in it, hence the multitude of skulls and animal corpses suspended in formaldehyde. His latest exhibition at the White Cube showcases his oil paintings, hauntingly similar to the nihilistic and macabre work of Francis Bacon and also bringing to mind the barren landscapes created in the plays of Samuel Beckett.

Hirst's blue paintings are messy and unsightly and lack the beauty of his previous, more famous works. Watch this space for the full review of the appropriately named 'Nothing Matters' exhibition which is spread between both the Mayfair and Hoxton galleries.

But for this week the content is cheerfully devoid of death. Arts editor Lucy Harrold tells us why she likes musical theatre genius Stephen Sondheim in a new feature: 'Why I Like.'

Got someone creative you love and want to rave about? Email us at arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Artist, Georges, and his girlfriend/muse, Dot, in 'Sunday with Georges'

Why I like: Sondheim

Lucy Harrold spearheads a new weekly feature: Why I Like... This week she tells us why Stephen Sondheim is so great

Stephen Sondheim is possibly one of the most prolific and innovative musical theatre writers ever. His works span from the ridiculous (*A Funny Thing Happened on The Way to the Forum*) to the melancholic (*A Little Night Music*). I think this is why he can be classed as one of the greats; unlike his contemporaries such as Andrew Lloyd Webber or Frank Wildhorn, he is able to turn his hand to anything. Sondheim has written for film, theatre and even TV, originally starting as a script writer for *Topper* (an American series I've never heard of), and going on to make a made-for-TV musical about the night time goings on in a department store.

The thing I admire most about *Stevie-baby* is his determination to strive for something new and different- a rare feat nowadays.

His influences are wide and varied and input directly into his own work- who else would write a Japanese Kabuki musical or a horror operetta about killer barbers and human meat pies or even an entire show written backwards? Fair enough, not all of his shows have been financially successful but that has never stopped the greats in other art forms- most painters are not financially viable until after their deaths.

I guess part of Sondheim's visionary success is due to his collaborations with Hal Prince. Most of his artistic and financial achievements were produced and directed by Prince. Without someone to turn his ideas into reality, Sondheim would just be another penniless writer with untapped potential.

Sondheim's Best Work:

Company- My favourite of Sondheim's shows, *Company* is based on a series of short one-act plays set in the 1970s by George Furth. These scenarios were combined to form a character study of New Yorkers. Bobby, the central character, is reaching his 35th birthday to discover he is still very much alone in his life despite his many friends we encounter. The play explores Bobby's alienation and the truth behind the rose-tinted relationships of his (almost all married) friends. Sondheim's musicals never try to be happy for the sake of being happy and *Company* is a prime example of this. Bobby starts the show feeling a bit grumpy about all his friends being married, journeys through cocktails, weddings, weed-smoking and various parties do discover that, actually, maybe it doesn't matter as much as he thinks. *Company's* songs take their influences from various forms of music but are all strong melodically, lyrically and in their place in the musical.

Best Songs:

Company- Sondheim cleverly took the "beep" tone of an answering machine as a starting place for this song, gradually adding in more and more of Bobby's friends to culminate in an epic wall of sound finale. It has to be listened to in full stereo!



The man himself: New York-born Stephen Sondheim

Being Alive- Possibly Sondheim's best ballad. Bobby has reached a moment of realisation right at the end of the show and expresses this in a heart-wrenching song about how no one can be truly alive without having someone to look after them.

Sunday In The Park With Georges- another of Sondheim's arty-farty type shows but probably his best. Remember doing pointillism in Art class? (Of course it's been a long time for most of you) 'That' dude Georges Seurat who spent forever painting people by a river in a park? Yep, that's him...well sort of.

The first act follows Georges as he endeavours to finish his painting without losing his girlfriend, and muse, Dot. Sondheim cleverly echoes the process of pointillism in the rhythms of his songs and the characters echo the people in the painting. The second act portrays another George; this time Seurat's great-grandson who is also an artist but of a more abstract vein.

The actress who portrays Dot now becomes George's grandmother (and Seurat and Dot's daughter), thus exploring a completely different relationship but still of a man who just can't finish his work.

Best Songs:

Putting It Together- an ode to lengthy and stressful process of completing any form of art. This song explores why we make art and how the process can be just as much a part of it as the final product.

Move On- Dot returns to question George's motives and push him along his creative pathway. A beautifully melodic piece with repeating refrains to move on and keep creating art.

Assassins- Yes... Assassins... I like it when Sondheim tries to be edgy. *Assassins* is a musical about every person who has tried to kill an American president. The show is set in a fairground with The Proprietor inviting the characters to "come shoot a president" as each of them recounts their story of fame, triumph or failure. What Sondheim does with this less than cheery premise is present the audience with an extraordinarily eclectic bunch of people with one trait that binds them together. These range from the almost comedic Samuel Byck, dressed in a sloppy santa outfit, who failed to kill Richard Nixon to John Wilkes Booth, who famously assassinated Abraham Lincoln at a theatre. The show culminates in the previous assassins persuading Lee Harvey Oswald to shoot John F Kennedy. Not a high-kick or jazz hand in sight.

Best Songs:

Everybody's Got The Right- aah, an a rousing anthem for killing people; well not quite. This song sets the tone for the rest of the show- combining comedy and tragedy as Sondheim does so well.

Unworthy of Your Love- So why do all the best love ballads have to be about something unsavoury? Like vowing to Charlie Manson and Jodie Foster that you'll kill Nixon for them? This is a beautiful duet which just happens to include phrases like "I would crawl belly deep through hell" and "You are wind and devil and God Charlie, take my blood and my body". There is a rewritten version without these references but that would be like watching *Pulp Fiction* without any of the swearing.

MUSIC

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LL Cool J trapped in an oven by a shark...

Alex Ashford Music Editor

The pop world is a harsh place, just making music isn't enough, you have to be a character and spread your image into different facets of the media's money-making machine according to your demographic. Once upon a time this meant making dolls that look nothing like you and stationary sets for kids to nag their parents to buy for them from Woolworths. Nowadays, if you're a pop band like Girls Aloud, you make a line of false eyelashes for Boots, presumably for girls who will end up looking like Jodie Marsh in ten years time.

But that's just for the throw-away flavour-of-the-months. Anyone who's anyone in the music world is also... *dramatic pause* ...an actor! The latest actor to take a turn on the silver screen is Jarvis Cocker who plays himself with a Banjo (a.k.a. Pe-tey) in Wes Anderson's latest film, Fantastic Mr. Fox. It wouldn't be a Wes Anderson film without characters in brown suits and cravats, suitably retro animation and a cameo from a suitably cool indie personality. This isn't the first time Jarvis has graced our screens in a kid's film, he played in the band the Weird Sisters in one of the Harry Potter films, doing "the hippogriff" for those wizard kids to get down to at Harry's winter ball.

Mariah Carey and Britney Spears somehow persuaded enough people that it would be a good idea for them to star in

their own films, 2001's *Glitter* and 2002's *Crossroads*, respectively. Needless to say, as they are both such vacuums of talent anyway these films crashed and burned at the box office.

Some artists have managed to dabble on both sides throughout their careers (and no I don't mean Miley Cyrus). Where many rappers have tried, only one has truly managed to bridge the gap between film and music. Mos Def started his rap career in the 90s and had already had a role as Bill Cosby's sidekick in a detective show called *The Cosby Mysteries* (I'm not making this up!) before his rap career took off. Now he's been in everything from Dave Chappelle's *Block Party*, to quirky comedy *Be Kind Rewind*, to an episode of *House*. Others, like Will Smith, Eminem and Queen Latifah, have only found huge success on one side of the bridge (although Will Smith did give us "Miami" and "Summertime").

But my personal favourite has to be LL Cool J (that stands for Ladies Love Cool James, don't you know), who stars in one of the best films ever made: *Deep Blue Sea*. I don't want to say too much about this film, because I encourage you all to watch it, but LL Cool J stars as a chef with a pet parrot (which, yes, sits on his shoulder) and a super-intelligent shark manages to trap him in an oven, and turn it on. If that isn't top quality high brow entertainment for you I don't know what is.

100 will always be greater than 1000

Tom Jennings

I'll explain. Frequenting small music venues and undergoing the micro-gigging experience are infinitely more rewarding than seeing chart-topping bands in high capacity venues for the following reasons:

Crowd/band interaction is fundamental for small bands as they all need a distinguishing feature to earn them a reputation. If your band name is Pink Floyd or Kings of Leon, playing a tight set of perfectly honed album material that everyone recognizes won't enlighten anyone's lives; they might as well stay at home and listen to the goddamn album. Gig experiences are made more unique if you happen to be asked to play an instrument along with a band, if you bring along your own instruments, if you are asked to come up with a new song title, if they accept your inebriated bellows for song requests or just give you dance moves to groove away to. If the headline act walks off stage and sits at the nearest table you can have a chat to find out who their influences are, who they're shagging and even where the best places to buy instruments are.

Random memorable moments are the crux of all good nights out, and there are very few bands that can pull off an electro theme tune of *The Antiques Roadshow* for their opening



They look nothing like the silhouettes

number. If you notice a band's bass guitarist voraciously rubbing his cock into the back of his guitar you can be reassured by the fact that other bands are willing to throw sweets and party poppers at their devoted audience instead. Lyrics can be fairly abstract and obscure, like the tales of love based around the uselessness of Jar Jar Binks, and my favourite lyrics of the past week have been "You gotta pull your dick out at the restaurant in front of their aunt, and jerk off with your balls smackin the windows of the Mitsubishi Galant!" (f.y.i. this wasn't Coldplay). A woman

resembling Edith Piaf slashed a knife through the air towards my face at the previous gig as part of a French mock-cabaret act, whilst a close acquaintance of mine was being ordered to turn the pages of a flick book with obscene words on it. This is not the kind of experience you forget in a hurry.

Tight budgets and creative minds make for an interesting array of instruments being 'played', some of which I have seen recently include ukuleles, a melodica (mouth-organ keyboard), banjos, a handsaw, flutes, spoons, shoes, guitars made with planks of wood, a cello with no body, a ukulele made with an ice cream box, saxophones, a big 'ole jar with a hole, reel to reel tape, cowbells, flutes, a hang (type of Swiss steel pans) and a lesser-known instrument that I like to call the guitar.

Cheapness is of vital importance to students, and £3 on the door or free entry beats a £50 ticket planned 5 months in advance every time. Not only is entry cheaper, but booze is cheaper and more varied too. Small venues often have a bar or two on site and serve a wide variety of liquid meals, putting many large venues to shame with their extortionate prices and lack of choice (Wembley Arena only sells two types of beer!!!!)

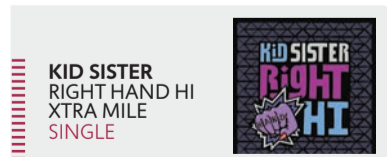
In every way, small venues beat large venues into the ground. Now if we can only split the O2 Arena into 50 different smaller venues...

Reviews



JAMIE T
THE MAN'S
MACHINE
VIRGIN
EP

'The Man's Machine' is the kind of song that puts some swagger in your step. It's bass-heavy with crashing cymbals and rising electronic nuggets putting the icing on the cake. Lyrically he's on top form telling tales of travelling with his usual dexterity "Met a matador, he said a wild woman is more, terrifying than any red bull he saw". The other tracks on the EP will appeal to Jamie T fans but 'Man Not A Monster' is a great classic ska feet mover that few will be able to resist. - Kadhim Shubber



KID SISTER
RIGHT HAND HI
XTRA MILE
SINGLE

This song is basically just syncopated synth beats combined with repetitive hip-hop vocals. It's meant to be fresh but it's bloody awful. It lacks any feel good factor but would probably go down well at Tiger Tiger. - Ed Knock



FABRIC 50
MARTYN
FABRICLIVE
ALBUM

The Bimonthly Fabric compilation albums have reached a legendary 50 releases (the clue is in the name - who needs a creative album title anyway?) and are still going strong after 8 years of trance-inducing techno, house, electro and not forgetting drum and/or bass. Album opener Joy Fantastic is a catchy glam-electro number armed with wispy falsetto vocals and I'm pretty sure Elmo gets involved too at the end. Most tracks create a chilled-out lounge atmosphere with the inclusion of heavy bass that makes you think your head is being slowly torn apart, fast but light erratic drum loops and a variety of hand claps, bongos and other such percussions. As with many DJ mixes it is not so much a collection of good and bad songs as it is a hazy journey through a fantastic musical jungle. - Tom Jennings

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PRODIGY
INVADERS MUST
DIE/THUNDER
REMIXES
TAKE ME TO THE
HOSPITAL
EP

Catchy electro house is the music of the day, as it always has been for the Prodigy, and this is certainly a higher quality remix collection than I am accustomed to from musicians (bar Fabric). Personally I prefer the original tracks from *Invaders Must Die* to the remixes and would rather listen to them properly in my own intoxicated rave-orgy, but either way you still receive that rush of euphoria and the feeling that Keith Flint could kick down your door any moment and set fire to your lab reports. - Tom Jennings



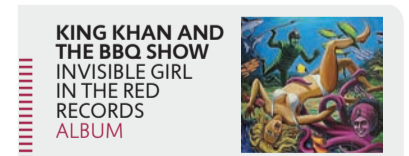
BOYZ II MEN
LOVE
DECCA
ALBUM

This is the third consecutive album of covers they've done and it's so, so good. You have to listen to it, it's on Spotify, go... Seriously they cover *Time After Time*, go now. - Kadhim Shubber



TODD
BIG RIPPER
ROUGH TRADE
ALBUM

This album is how modern rock should sound. Heavy guitar, distortion and vocals matching Nirvana's, this is a sound of growling rock. Some songs sound sluggish and painful but this is their sound. It lacks some dynamic as songs sometimes blur together. This debut album gives a window to this band's potential, they don't feel like they're giving all that they've got. - Luke Turner



KING KHAN AND
THE BBQ SHOW
INVISIBLE GIRL
IN THE RED
RECORDS
ALBUM

This album takes you back to when guys with slicked back hair and sharp suits were called crooners not bankers. The vocals are stylish and charming while the melodies make you want to get your friends together, dance around and take sepia-tinted photos. It's basically been on repeat on my iPod for about a month. - Kadhim Shubber



FILTHY DUKES
NONSENSE IN THE
DARK
FICTION
SINGLE

Nonsense in the dark, a track taken from the Filthy Dukes album that bears the same name plods down a dreamy synth pop road for six and a half minutes. I assume (and hope) there's going to be a reasonable length radio edit because only one idea seems to prevail throughout, stagnating well before halfway.

It is a case of purely unoffensive electro with a large dose of sugary pop, leaving it devoid of any notion of substance or passion.

The vocals are just running through the motions, apathetic warbling a mere substitute for anything interesting to say. I wouldn't be surprised find its way to soundtrack a teen TV drama of similar calibre.

- Christopher Walmsley

On the search for singer-songwriters...

Emilie Beauchamp seeks out **Colin Hays** and **Billy Franks @ Bush Hall**

If given the names of the two artists that have illuminated the Bush Hall last Wednesday November 11th, very few would recognize them. That appears to be the cruel fate of singers-songwriters, however famous they might get at some point in their life. Maybe there's too many of them? Maybe they're too mellow to turn the beat around? I personally blame it on the fact that too many singer-songwriters fall indubitably into the slow romantic ballads that make me want to...

However, with tenacity and an adventurous mind, you can find good ones. For example the London-born Billy Franks who sings his thoughts with a sometimes soft, sometimes gut-

tural voice to give us an insight on various facts of life. How it is to grow up in a Fulham Court council tax estate, how you most often sleep better when it rains, or how an idyllic summer in New York can turn sour. Said to have been praised by Bono, Peter Gabriel and Oasis, Franks was part of the 80s band The Faith Brothers before starting a solo career trooping around London pubs. His lyrics are genuine and amusing, his voice is definitely charming and his scene presence flattering.

However, the guitar rhythms are often quite simple, especially in comparison with the icon following his warmly received performance.

Second on stage and awaited by a fairly good audience was half-Scottish

half-Australian Colin Hay, who has transcended decades with a few, but widely known hits. Remember Men at Work's "Down Under"?

Well, Colin Hay was the lead singer of Men at Work... While quite an obscure persona, Hay has been re-made popular by his numerous appearances in the American television series Scrubs in the past few years and thus touched several generations throughout his career.

Still, Hay is quite aware of his non superstar status and jokes about it throughout the performance. Quite talkative in the beginning, I was almost convinced he was chatting about Australian goats and the Scottish landscape because he had lost his talented

voice. But he thereafter provided a wide array of pieces, from his new album American Sunshine to his first hit Down Under (assisted by his lovely wife at the back vocals and imaginary flute), passing by his 1990s singles and some of the Scrubs' fans' requests. Remarkable voice range, perfectly and creatively produced, with striking guitar skills; the almost-duo was extremely amusing and entertaining to watch, connecting with the audience for a short but impeccable performance. Colin Hay will probably remain a famous but still low-key singer-songwriter that would easily become legend in a couple of decades. As for Billy Franks, it is worth trying to find his next performance to see him in his element.

The *felix* Music Charts

1. Animal Collective
2. The xx
3. David Bowie
4. Bloc Party
5. Air
6. Grizzly Bear
7. Radiohead
8. Kings of Leon
9. Coldplay
10. Nina Simone

The latest results are in! Biffy Clyro have been blown out of the top ten and are somewhere around the tail end of the top 50. In similarly good news, Animal Collective reign supreme. What I want to know is, who's listening to Nina Simone? Email us so that we can track you down and shake your hand. Join the group at felixmusicchart.tk, on a side note, type 'Daft Punk Samples' into youtube...

Albums that you should know

Hugh Crail looks at modern classics that shaped music today



They were forced to add the 1979 to their name by LCD Soundsystem leader; James Murphy's DFA label, which is funny because this album for many represented the antithesis of the early 00's dance punk scene. DFA records were the cool looking people with their designer drugs, whilst DFA 1979 represented the kids with bleeding noses who start mosh pits in the trendy clubs. They even declared a "Jihad" on James Murphy, elaborating; "if I had the resources I would fly a plane into his skull." It's this kind of unfathomable bad taste that typifies this album.

DFA '79's sound is simple, comprising of just a heavily distorted bass guitar, drums and voice. Described by Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age as akin to the sound of dinosaurs

fighting. The album is relentless in pace and by all accounts should come off as a straight punk album, but the vocals sound as if they've been harvested from pop songs and given a course of steroids. Every song is stripped down to its raw parts, with no excess fat, making it accessible to fresh ears.

Lyricaly, as the title of the album suggests, it is full of chauvinistic one liners like "You're a woman and I know It's true / from the things that I have done to you" and angry break up ranting: "Now that this is over this weight is off my shoulder/ now that this is over, I love you more and more." In any other context these lyrics wouldn't work, but the driving force of the music grounds and empowers their meaning.

The ferocity of their music translated to the band's working lives, cre-

Death from Above 1979
'You're a woman, I'm a machine'
Vice Records
2004



ating a rift that would end them after just one album and a handful of eps. Including a remix ep that drew talent like Justice and Erol Alkan. Brazilian band CSS immortalized them, in the

loosest sense of the world, with the song "Let's make Love and Listen to Death from Above", and all being considered it's probably the best way to enjoy the album.

Exclusively online @ felixmusic.tk

- Karen O & The Kids review

Friday

- Lily Allen :: Brixton Academy :: Pop
- James Morrison :: Wembley Arena :: Acoustic
- Florence + The Machine :: The Tabernacle :: Alternative
- The Magic Numbers :: Tapestry Club :: Alternative Folk
- Chuck Berry!!! :: Hammersmith Town Hall :: Blues
- Jools Holland :: Royal Albert Hall :: Boogie Rhythm
- DJ Hype/Commix :: Fabric :: Drum & Bass
- Kasabian :: The O2 :: Rock
- Levellers :: Shepherds Bush Empire :: Punk
- Kode 9 :: Plan B :: Dubstep

Saturday

- Motorhead :: Hammersmith Apollo :: Hard Rock
- The Gossip :: HMV Forum :: Indie Rock
- DJ Yoda :: Plan B :: Hip-Hop
- Coki/The Others :: AREA :: Dubstep
- Sham 69 :: Borderline :: Punk
- Swervedriver :: The Garage :: Indie

Sunday

- Mos Def :: The Forum :: Hip-Hop Rock
- Kasabian/JLS/La Roux & More :: Earls Court :: Various
- London Blackmarket :: The Watershed :: Soulful Gospel Punk
- The Vibrators :: The Underworld :: Punk

Monday

- Yeah Yeah Yeahs :: Brixton Academy :: Indie Rock
- Kid Harpoon :: Hoxton Bar & Grill :: Folk Indie
- Melanie Pain :: Jazz Cafe :: French Pop
- Har Mar Superstar :: The Garage :: R&B Pop
- Propagandhi :: KOKO :: Punk

Tuesday

- Ellie Goulding :: Cargo :: Indie
- Deer Tick :: Borderline :: Alternative Folk
- Angela Luzi :: The Underbelly :: Jazz Folk Fusion
- Official Secrets Act :: Barfly :: Pop

Wednesday

- W.A.S.P :: Shepherds Bush Empire :: Heavy Metal
- Tori Amos :: Jazz Cafe :: Alternative
- The Living End :: HMV Forum :: Psychobilly
- Goldhawks :: Barfly :: Rock

Thursday

- Amadou & Mariam :: The Forum :: Afro-blues
- The Crips :: Brixton Academy :: Indie Rock
- Marc Almond :: 100 Club :: Jazzy Pop
- Hadouken! :: Banquet Records :: Indie Dance
- AutoKratz :: Cargo :: Hard Rock :: Electronica

LISTINGS::LISTINGS::LISTINGS::LISTINGS::LISTINGS::

Souls of Mischief back with a new album

Kadhim Shubber
Jamie Fraser

As Jamie and I wait in the corridor, outside Souls of Mischief's hotel room, Opio suddenly emerges, gives us a brief glance and heads off to who knows where. We're then led in by their PR manager and introduced, I go for a handshake, Tajai presents his fist instead and an awkward mangle of knuckles occurs. There's not much space so we sit on the bed and I get the feeling, as Tajai gets the measure of us, that he's forming as much of an impression of us as we hope to form of him. "How are we doing this, recording or filming", he asks, and I reply weakly that I'm just going to take notes. He looks at my flimsy file-pad and assents, first impressions confirmed.

Their latest album, *Montezuma's Revenge* (named after the street where they recorded it, not the nasty sensation you get after eating a dodgy burrito) was produced by the legendary Prince Paul (who produced De La Soul's landmark album *3 Feet High and Rising*). Phesto explains that he met him on tour and approached him. "He's a genius, everything that he touches is gold, an instant classic". We ask him what it's like to work with such an influential producer, "It's a big deal obviously, he upped our game. He's got a vision for the record that he wants you to follow, he's not just a beat maker like some other producers, he shapes the whole song".

Although the group are predictably full of praise for the producer (even calling the knobs on his mixer, Prince Paul's 'weapons'), they're obviously reiterating the same stuff they've been saying all day. However when the conversation turns to the music industry, Tajai becomes more animated.

I ask them if they think the changes in the music industry over the last twenty years affected how they approached their album and Tajai is quick to point out a flaw in my logic. "The industry hasn't changed, sure the



Tajai (far left) is the only one who loves sunlight - *Montezuma's Revenge* is out 8th Feb 2010

method of distribution is different but making a record is the same as it's ever been: it's hard work". He continues saying that the major record labels are still the same: "There's always been a few artists who are innovators and about 30 others that labels sign just because they sound the same as the innovators".

When you remember that for the last 20 years Souls of Mischief have been ignoring musical trends and hype and making the kind of music that they like making, it's less surprising that Tajai has little time for doomsday predictions of the music industry.

Later in the interview, he pours cold water on the supposed death of the album. "People don't remember singles, when you look at the history of music, who talks about singles? It's short stories vs novels, they both have their place but ultimately it's novels that make an impact".

He similarly has little time for the 'controversy' over the use of Auto-tune, hailing T-Pain as a genius and saying that like most things, "It's good when used well and bad when used badly. It's nothing new, it's been used

in dancehalls for ages."

Phesto however does call out people who use it to disguise a lack of talent. "They don't want to get someone else to sing it, it's narcissistic, people will say "but you weren't in the video" but they're not proud enough to just say "yeah but I wrote it", people don't think like that anymore". He hammers home his point with a guitar analogy for our benefit, "If you've got a distortion pedal but you can't play guitar, it's not going to help is it?"

I pick up on Tajai's comment about albums making an impact and ask him why after their classic debut *93 til Infinity* in 1993, *Souls Of Mischief* haven't made as big of an impact on the rap scene. He takes a moment, considering the question before answering. "Timing, it's all timing and newness. When we released the first *Hieroglyphics* album, people talked about that as a classic". It's clear that he doesn't waste his thoughts on how much hype their music creates but Phesto adds, "A lot of the success of that album came from the video for *93 til Infinity*"; "Back then" Tajai interjects, "Music channels were varied

but today they're all owned by the same company and you get the same music on almost every channel" which ties in with his belief that the industry hasn't changed, just the methods of distribution.

Jamie turns the conversation to the guys themselves and what's kept them together over 20 years. Tajai responds tiredly; the day's wearing on and they've been doing non-stop interviews for almost 6 hours, "We're all friends, we've known each other for decades" before giving us another analogy for our benefit: "Friends meet through soccer and even if they don't always play, they're still going to hang out". It's nearing the end of the interview when Opio returns. His dark shades combined with his afro all but disguise his face but he's keen to pick up the thread of the conversation, "We're lucky to have the 'job' that we have, you can't complain when your job is rapping with your homeboys", he thinks for a moment before adding "Although people sometimes forget that it's a lot of hard work, it's not just 1 hour on stage, it's the other 23 hours of the day as well, it's not just sex, drugs and rock n roll".

Questions for Ty Vaughn



Broadway Calls are supporting Set Your Goals at the Islington Academy on 16th December.

Portland's musical heritage: "We don't fit with typical Portland bands, The Decemberists, The Thermals, those guys. But Oregon means a lot to us."

Converting from hardcore punk to pop punk: "The hardcore scene really welcomed us with open arms. I think the kids enjoyed having a break, something they could sing along to." EB: I know hardcore scenes can be closed-minded. "If anyone was closed-minded, it was me... I didn't want to play hardcore shows, but all our friends were in hardcore bands and we couldn't get any others. I'm glad we did it now, though."

Influences: "Green Day were a huge influence on us... well, everything they did more than a decade ago. They're still one of my favourite bands though."

Billie Joe Armstrong's part on signing the band to his label, Adeline Records: "He didn't. I think right before *American Idiot* he realised he couldn't juggle playing in a band, touring and running a record label while still having time for his family."

Basement gigs vs festival shows: "It's completely different. We like both. At Reading I saw Gallows, and that was amazing... for most of the gig most of the band were playing out in the crowd. They're a great band."

The Smiths and hardcore punk: "I didn't get it for a long time. You'd go to shows and there'd be hardcore kids with "The Smiths" tattooed on their arms. But they were a great band."

Hardcore or post-hardcore? "Hardcore."

Hip hop or drum 'n' bass? "Hip hop."

Death metal or grindcore? "I'm not sure I know the difference between those..."

Emo or crunk? "Emo."

Black Flag or Bad Brains? "Black Flag."

Tupac or Biggie? "Tupac. Gotta keep it west coast, you know?"

Swine flu or bird flu? "Um... I'm not sure of the symptoms, but... bird flu."

Interview by Eliot Barford

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At the moment there are around 200,000 Saharawi refugees living in the harsh Sahara desert in south-west Algeria. Despite the harrowing conditions, the Saharawis have managed to build a society based on the values of health, education and democracy.

Special Events during the week include a discussion led by Jeremy Corbyn MP on November 30th, documentary showings provided by arts charity, Sandblast, as well as special guest appearances and lectures.

For more information about the lecture series please visit the IEF website at www.iefund.org.uk

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photo provided by ana arenas

FILM

Film Editors Zuzanna Blaszcak & Ed Knock

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The trial of Mel Gibson

Ed Knock Film Editor

As many people were this summer, I wasn't so excited by the impending *Transformers* sequel but more so by *Inglourious Basterds*, the return-to-form film by Quentin Tarrantino we had all been promised. However it wasn't the masterpiece we had been anticipating, with Christoph Waltz's exquisite performance being diluted by a too ambitious script and 'ahem' Eli Roth (which should distract any director from casting their friends again). But the most interesting aspect of the film was the alternative history plot which became apparent towards the end of the film.

Along with bad science, Hollywood is notorious for its rather imaginative versions of history and it's inaccurate portrayals of eras by-gone (especially biblical and medieval). What makes *Inglourious Basterds* different is that Tarrantino decided to take this cliché and run with it setting up an all-American, guns blazing, *Dirty Dozen* style climax oozing with delicious self-deprecating irony. Unfortunately this was lost on some people and they left the cinema scratching their heads; "But I thought Hitler shot himself!" I, on the other hand, thought it was brilliant and it got me thinking how it had taken so long for someone to ridicule this tradition of historical butchery which is nearly as long as the history of Hollywood itself.

U-571 is the most notorious offender. The story of a brave American submarine crew capturing the German enigma machine during WWII was sure to be a big crowd pleaser but there was one major error - the submarine was British. There was such an uproar about this insult to our veterans that the president Bill Clinton actually offered an apology.

The Americans love to screw with our history, probably because they have little of it themselves and there is one man who can't resist mixing melodrama into antiquity. Let me introduce public enemy No.1 - Mel Gibson. Mel has directed a long list of abominations including *The Passion* (based on medieval plays performed to incite anti-Semitism) and *Apocalypto*, which confuses the Mayans with the Aztecs and completely fabricates their whole culture. But when it comes to British history, Mel is at his destructive best. I imagine him crouched over the Bayeux Tapestry, spray paint in hand and giddy with excitement over the prospect of defacing King Harold and drawing penises all over William the Conqueror. I'll let Mel off the hook for *The Patriot*, as he only starred in it but he must atone for *Braveheart*. This trial will be controversial for I am going against the judgment of the most 'enlightened' Academy who thought he deserved an Oscar. Charged with irreversible damage to British history, will the defendant Mel Gibson please take to the dock:

Prosecutor: Mr. Gibson, do you not believe your character, William Wallace, would have been insulted as his portrayal as a peasant?

Defendant: Well, more people can identify with him if he was a commoner. **Prosecutor:** But that's twisting the truth, he was a knight and therefore a noble. And why did you decide to reduce Scottish society from a sophisticated network of Medieval towns and villages to mud huts and drab colours more atune to the Dark Ages?

Defendant: Well, that's what people want to see!

Prosecutor: But it's detrimental to the Scottish people as well. *Prima Noctis*? Most historians agree that never existed.

Defendant: But I needed the audience to hate the English.

Prosecutor: I gathered that from the film. You never made it clear Edward Longshanks was trying to end centuries of Scottish invasions of Northern England and secure his borders by occupying Scotland.

Defendant: I did show Wallace sacking York.

Prosecutor: But that never happened too. You also managed to confuse the Battle of Stirling Bridge with the Battle of Bannockburn, most noticeably by leaving out the bridge.

Defendant: I wanted a big battle scene!

Prosecutor: Why didn't you do a film on Bannockburn then?

Defendant: Because Wallace wasn't at that battle.

Prosecutor: Of course, he was your character. Do you not feel guilty turning him into a paedophile? You have him impregnating Queen Isabelle of France in the film, a girl who would have been three years old.

Defendant: Hello? Sophie Marceau?

Prosecutor: Oh Catherine McCormack wasn't good enough for you? Her character didn't exist either. Your 'convincing' Scottish accent, what part of Scotland does it come from?

Defendant: Erm, Edinburgh?

Prosecutor: But Wallace was born closer to Glasgow, not in the Highlands which you decided he was.

Defendant: But Highlanders get to wear kilts and woad paint!

Prosecutors: The Celts stopped wearing woad a thousand years before and the tartan kilt wasn't invented until the 19th century and probably by an Englishman!

Defendant: Err well, it looked good... and blue matches my eyes.

Prosecutor: I rest my case.

I hope now you might understand my wrath for every time I hear some say *Braveheart* was a "well good film". It started a dangerous surge of anti-English feeling in Scotland with sensationalist crap whilst most Scots didn't realise they were being mocked. The Jury's verdict? Guilty.

A very Jewish mid-life crisis



Jacobs went to the headmaster's office for a good old fashioned whipping. He came out with a creaming too.

Tim Davies

The latest Coen brothers serving *A Serious Man* is a dark comedy that's light on the comedy and heavy on the darkness.

It tells the story of Larry Gopnik, a Jewish physics professor who constantly tries to do the right thing and be a good man despite the fact that his life seems to be falling apart around him. Gopnik has typical middle American problems: his wife is leaving him for another man, his daughter steals his money and his son lives in fear of his marijuana dealer. His misfortune is unrelenting, and in his desperation he follows the advice of those around

him and turns to his religion. But when the Rabbis can't offer him more than meaningless parables and empty words he becomes truly lost. It's a prudent critique on a modern society in which people increasingly find religion incompatible with their problems.

You really feel for Gopnik as he tries to reach out to the people around him, only to have them fob him off and say things like "It's not always easy, deciphering what God is trying to tell you".

Gopnik often tries to do the right thing, only to have it blow up in his face. At one point a student leaves a bribe in his office expecting it to improve his grades. However, he hasn't reckoned by Gopnik's excellent moral character, and finds himself being reported. The

student's dad later visits Gopnik to tell him he's going to sue him for defamation. Our instinct, programmed by years of happy Disney endings, tells us that Gopnik will be rewarded for his behaviour, but it just causes him more problems. It's a refreshingly honest depiction of reality. After all, bad things happen to good people.

The film's execution can't be faulted, and it feels like a labour of love that a lot of thought has gone into. It's a film that perhaps might slip under your radar, but still has a lot to offer. The Coen's sharp script, and their lack of concession in portraying a relentlessly honest life, means this film has a resonance that will leave you thinking for longer than most films will.

Michael Caine plays Dirty (old man) Harry

Stefan Zeeman

Comparisons to *Gran Torino* aside, an OAP vigilante set on revenge-fuelled killing spree is an interesting idea to say the least. Harry Brown is Director Daniel Barber's first feature length production, and a memorable one as well.

The film starts extremely poignantly, following Harry Brown (Michael Caine) through his gloomy and bleak life. Brown is an ex-marines pensioner who has lost it all. The passing of his wife and his daughter has left him alone in his shabby council estate flat. He's a frequent witness to drugs and violence on his estate, although the police apparently do nothing about it. After the murder of his one remaining friend, Leonard (David Bradley), he is left a broken man with nothing left to lose.

Quicker than you can say ASBO, the ex-marine within Brown is released with inevitable bloody consequences. Michael Caine is brilliant, and gathers the best bits of Rambo and Columbo to form the ruthless Harry Brown. Brown's first stop is to acquire a gun from some ridiculous junky drug dealers, and from then, the heart-of-gold

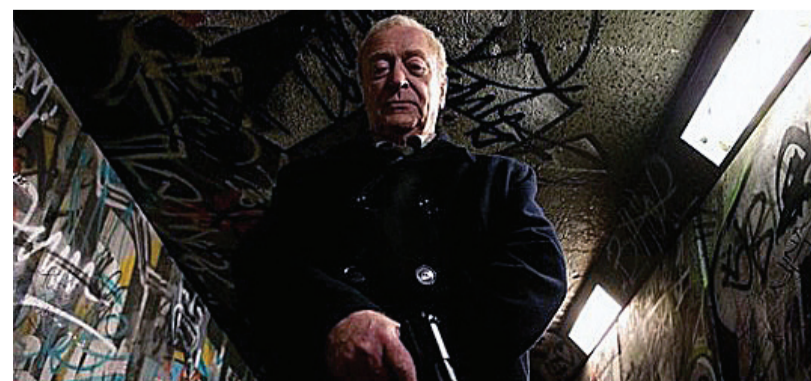
pensioner's only concern is the life of Leonard's murderer. The film becomes more and more over-the-top as Brown's journey continues, yet still manages to keep momentum with several heart-stopping moments.

The estate is (somewhat unrealistically) portrayed as a venomous, hateful place where you can be potentially stabbed at every corner. At the same time, it appears to be completely impenetrable by any police investigation. An earnest police detective (Emily Mortimer) is given the case. She follows Brown through the film, and is the only person in the police force who believes an OAP is capable of killing

the hoodlums - ridiculous no?

At the intense climax of the film, the police raid the estate, and cause a riot which they cannot stop. Despite the obvious obstructions, Brown manages to shuffle through in an attempt to claim his final piece of revenge cake.

Caine's performance is powerful enough to receive sufficient sympathy while he tops a load of hoodies and pretty much anyone else who gets in his way. The gritty film is captured well, with some great cinematography. Overall, the film lacks finesse and realism, but is still a brutally brilliant. Just think of *Kill Bill*, with less leggy blond and more granddad.





Special Infected

Michael Cook Games Editor

This week, I am mostly ill. A cold virus is attempting to vassalise my body like some crazy Civilization player, and I'm slowly succumbing. This time next week my editorial may just be a series of growls and moans. And as every gamer knows, nothing soothes an ailing mind like running through a whole game in one bleary-eyed Lemsipped weekend. So last week, I played Modern Warfare 2.

In retrospect, playing such a game through in a few long bursts is not a great plan. It's such a draining experience that by the end you're completely desensitised to the murderously intense segments that the game is composed of, and there's simply no adrenaline left in you to eke out. After a few hours, I found myself putting down hostage situations with the sort of nonchalance I'd normally afford to making toast, and I suppose that's not entirely the fault of the game.

What I did find lacking, though, was the consistency that Call of Duty 2 had. There was a nice sense of peaks and troughs; a campaign evolved over time and landscapes slowly changed. Of course, CoD2

had the benefit of a basis in history, and many stories of World War 2 would be unmarketably dull had they not happened for real. Perhaps Infinity Ward simply felt that bigger was better when it came to fictional settings, and I think that looking at the way they've marketed MW2 they're probably right. For me, this doesn't make it as fun to play, because there's no breathing space between each blistering engagement. We've got an article to come that gives a great reason why it's still fun - we'll try to fit that in this term.

Still, this week - the Dragon Age review which never made it into last week's issue, along with a chance to win one of four copies of the game for the Xbox 360. I may never manage to take a look at DA, as I just can't get the hang of those sprawling RPGs, but our handsome Mr. Roberts' tales of his playthrough really do make it sound like Game of the Year material.

Finally, we've got a nice and inflammatory comment piece that we've been waiting to run for some time now. Rasheed has a bone or two to pick with Nintendo, and feels quite strongly about it indeed. Reckon he's wrong? Write and tell us why - games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Win Dragon Age!

This week, the divine and manly *felix* writer Tomo Roberts gives us his hard-earned verdict on Dragon Age: Origins, a 2009 late-comer that many are billing to be the highlight of the year.

Thanks to the delightful, shiny and generally attractive people at EA Europe, we've got four copies of Dragon Age: Origins for the Xbox 360 to give away to *felix* readers.

We know how much you like being asked to sing for your supper here at *felix*, so we're going to make it as blisteringly simple as possible. Bioware, the Dragon Age developers, have a proud history of quality role-playing games. What Star Wars game were they involved in developing?

- A) Star Wars Galaxies
- B) Knights Of The Old Republic
- C) Jar Jar Binks Pinball

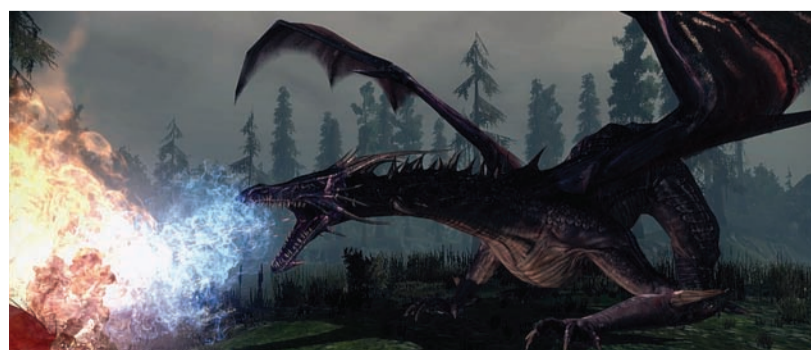
Answers on a postcard, then scanned and attached to an email (or just typed into an email) and sent to games.felix@imperial.ac.uk.

Our deadline is next **Friday 4th December**, so we can announce the winners in our Christmas issue the next week.

Are you reading this in the future like a crazy person? Is the above question too mentally taxing for someone such as yourself to answer? (Clue - the answer's B)

Not to worry, because our Christmas issue will be featuring a mass giveaway, including a fifth copy of Dragon Age for the 360 among other goodies including some of our favourite games of 2009, so there's another chance to bag a copy then, too.

Make sure you pick up a copy in the last week of term!



Nintendo - Rise or Fall?

Rasheed Islam has something to tell you - but you may well not like it

Nintendo. A name once synonymous with quality, loyalty and perseverance amongst gamers all over the world. They were a games developer who showed the competition that when it comes to games, quality and hard work is what pays off. Ever since they came into the home console market in 1983, they have built a repertoire of well known, if not legendary characters such as Link, Samus, Fox McCloud and officially the most recognised video game character in the world, Mario.

of Time', was released on the N64.

Nintendo may have been the underdogs in the past two generations of the consoles, but one thing they always had was a loyal fan base. These were not the typical 'fanboys' that we see these days, arguing that Microsoft is better than Sony and changing sides as they please. They were true gamers who valued and appreciated the hard work and artistic talent that the developers invested in the games. I myself am one of these fans and it saddens me to say that we are a dying species.

In the apocalyptic year of 2006, Nin-

had attracted, the so-called 'casual gamers', are in fact, casual gamers. They take no notice of the artistic and technical talent in video games. Games are a minor part of their lives; it is something they do as a pastime. Whereas, true gamers see video games as a lifestyle, and amidst all the furore of catering for these casual gamers, Nintendo have lost their true essence. Quality is nowhere to be seen in their games. Of course, at launch the Wii had some quality games such as 'The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess', followed up with 2007's 'Super Mario Galaxy', but soon after that a drought followed. 'Things' such as 'Wii Fit' and 'Wii Sports Resort' were released that were equivalent to digitised faeces. Whatever games were released on the Wii were not games, they were gimmicks. Things that are entertaining for a few months, then get boring. The 'revolutionary' motion controls have turned out to be simple 'stick wagging' and any half decent game that has been released can be played better with a controller. It has been months since a quality game has come out on the console. All Nintendo see now is money, and they are milking that market until it goes dry.

Sadly, the market is going dry. This month Nintendo lowered their profit forecasts by \$3bn and even their president Satoru Iwata has admitted: 'The Wii has stalled'. The casual gamers have abandoned the Wii as it is no longer their 'new toy' and the true fans are shocked at the sight of what their beloved developers have become. Worst of all, Nintendo cannot generate enough interest for top games developers to produce quality games because the Wii is widely perceived as a gimmick. They know that their games will not sell on the console because the owners of said console cannot even differentiate from a first person shooter to an action adventurer.

Fortunately, there is still hope for Nintendo. The names and legends of the great developers they were have been kept intact. As long as Nintendo can return to their roots and start producing quality works of art as they once did, they can, and will once again, win our hearts over. I just pray that someone knocks some sense back into them.



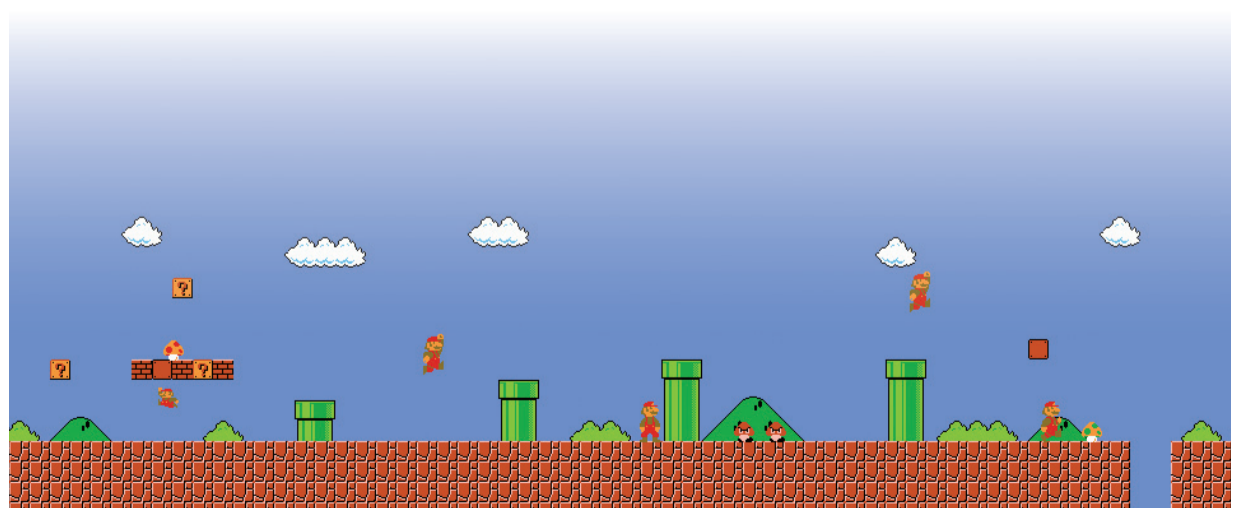
Is this what we endured the Gamecube for? Two pillocks and a urine joke?

When the Famicom was first released in Japan in 1983, Nintendo instantly became a household name. Within two years they broke the global market and their games were instant hits. Gamers loved 'Super Mario Bros.' for its challenge, 'The Legend of Zelda' for its depth and sense of adventure and many other games which now have become classics. Needless to say, Nintendo crushed the competition.

Through the years to come, Nintendo released console after console, from the 'Super Nintendo Entertainment System' (SNES) to the 'Nintendo 64', and even though the competition was getting fiercer with Sega and Sony becoming major players in the industry, Nintendo persevered by churning out the same high quality games that their fans loved. The highest rated game of all time, 'The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina

tendo introduced their newest member of the family, the 'Nintendo Wii'. Hyped as the most revolutionary console in gaming, with motion sensing technology, they promised that the Wii would bring gaming to a whole new audience. Indeed it brought a new audience, 56 million buyers to be precise. People from as young as newborn babies to as old as wrinkled grandmothers were taking up gaming. It was a phenomenon. Even though the Wii had the least horsepower under the bonnet, rivals Microsoft and Sony were blasted away by its popularity. Wiis were flying off the shelves in every continent. It was as if the credit crunch did not even exist for Nintendo and they even increased their forecasts for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

However, what Nintendo failed to realise was that the new audience they



Mustard with your plate of sphincter?

Tom Roberts ventures to Ferelden to battle demons and dragons but gets served by bandits and skellies



This massive cretin is an ogre – the first boss you'll encounter in *Dragon Age: Origins*. Just you wait and see the size of the other ones... once you've reassembled your bowels after facing this chap

I haven't had my arse kicked this badly in ages. There was one recent encounter when I downloaded the demo of Ikaruga and my eyes began bleeding at the sight of a million round blobs of death occupying my craft's personal space, but that moment aside, it's been years since a game really handed my arse to me on a plate. *Dragon Age: Origins* is quite the deviant, however.

After a few hours wandering his family's castle, chatting up some tail and ripping the shit out of his auntie for not locking her pantry leading to the dog chomping on whatever he pleases, Backerons – my warrior's name, obviously: take the piss at your peril – retires to his sleeping quarters for the night. With a loud thud at the door, noble Backerons is awoken, bolt upright. The castle is being overrun, the castle's guard is at war and Backerons is one of a few remaining warriors left to fend for his family's life.

Whack! Thwack! Slash! Slash! Plink! Ugh... "Load your last save?" the game asks after about my third or fourth enemy encounter with the minions sent to storm the castle. A baptism by fire it seems, but baby am I going to quell these flames.

Dragon Age is an RPG. A pretty beardy one at that, although not in the same league as its 'spiritual' prequels *Baldur's Gate 1* and *2*. It's got your usual good versus butt-ugly humanoid plot, spells based on the elements: earth, wind, fire and ice, XP, leveling up, loot – gotta have the loot – and more, but since *Baldur's Gate 2* the difficulty in RPGs has dropped noticeably. To be fair, this is an issue across the entire gaming spectrum, not just confined to this one genre, but look towards other recent mainstream Western RPGs and they have become much easier. *Oblivion*, *Fallout 3*, *Mass Effect* and even the

Knights of the Old Republic series pale in comparison to the isometric forefathers they are so in debt to.

Bioware aren't pussy-footing around any more though. *Dragon Age* is a kick in the bollocks type of alarm clock. It's not for the impatient, and it's not for the gamer with an attention span the length of Marcus Fenix's vocabulary. The thing with *Dragon Age*, however – and the difference between it and an exercise in sadomasochism like *Ikaruga* – is that dying is never unfair. When you die in *Dragon Age*, it's your fault. Not the game's, it's yours. So, get up, dust yourself off and try again, dammit. And you will if you have any ounce of resilience within you.

You can be walking through a dungeon admiring the gloriously designed

architecture that puts *Oblivion* and *Fallout 3*'s copy-and-paste environments to shame, and out of nowhere eight Walking Corpses will ambush you, outnumbering your band two to one. With a group of party members whose health probably totals less than your enemies', every fight is a battle. Combat happens in real-time, though you'll need to make liberal use of the space bar - your pause key - to assign orders. Think small scale *Command & Conquer*, with knights for infantry and a stop time button.

Back to Backerons, where I've already had to reload three or four times. By now I've found a few cohorts includ-

ing camp compadre Alistair and a rather handy, unnamed mage, who we'll call Jasper. Simply charging at the undead has proved fruitless. Outnumbered and outgunned by some archers lurking in the background, the brute force approach hasn't worked. New play required. Pause. Jasper paralyzes the archers from afar. Backerons engages

the undead scappers, keeping them occupied while Alistair brings up the rear, for maximum backstabbing damage. Unpause. Fight, scrap, bosh. Pause. With the archers incapacitated, Jasper can go about shooting bolts of lightning at the Corpses now. Unpause. Soon enough the Walking Corpses are back where they belong, lying twisted and mauled on the cold, hard concrete. Pause. Backerons, Alistair, Jasper: destroy archers. Unpause. Throwing caution to the wind, the remaining undead are scythed down in an instant. If every fight is a battle, every boss is a war. The first encounter with an ogre is a frightening prospect; its name highlighted in blood red to signify how in a few seconds your party is going to be reduced to dust.

But you'll try again and you will learn, which is why *Dragon Age* is so endearing and such a resounding success. Combat is an RPG's most basic game mechanic. Whether it's first person, turn-based or real-time you'll be spending tens of hours wading through hordes of monsters in an RPG, so it had better get the basics right. *Dragon Age*'s combat is compelling, varied, challenging, requires nous, and most of all, is deeply satisfying. When you die for the tenth time in a row, you positively want to go back and try another approach. How many times have you had that feeling in the past decade of gaming?

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got a save game to reload.



The Hero of Ferelden. The esteemed, noble, courageous and womanising, O surely-Lord-to-be.... Backerons

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FASHION

Fashion Editor Kawai Wong
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Gerard Butler @ Imperial

Kawai Wong Fashion Editor

All my single ladies, I have an important bit of news to relay to you. Imperial is no longer a desert to handsome men (or man).

At precisely 11:15am on Tuesday, I almost died. This beautiful man - a Greek version of Gerard Butler - was queuing behind me in the SCR. You know when you look at someone and your jaw drops, your heart stops and your body melts? He has the curliest of all hair, brown in the shape of a barrister's wig. I had to pretend that I was looking back to check my friend just to catch another excessive glimpse of him. As I requested my baguette to be toasted, he smiled at me (oh my god, oh my god) and said 'maybe your sandwich will be soggy with the salad in it'. To which I replied, totally sensibly and appropriately - 'Can I touch your hair?'

He grinned (oh my god oh my god, oh my god) and lowered his head. I touched it (oh my god) and he said 'I like people touching my hair in the morning' in the cutest, kindest possible way without any sarcasm.

'So what course do you do?' I might have been playing with my hair at this point. 'Biomedical Engineering, used to be based in Mech Eng you know. And I tell people I come to London, and of all the exciting places... I work in a basement.' 'Yes, the corridor looks like a tunnel to the death, ha-ha.' I think I laughed harder than he did. I commented on his hair again (another terrific joke about not having to wear a wig to a courtroom) and we went our separate ways. He said, 'nice to meet you'. Oh my god oh my god oh my god.

My friends say 'point him out to us when you run into him next time'. My friends, I can assure you, there will be no 'pointing' when I run into him. It is likely that I will be in my heels, my height the exact level as his. And I will

accidentally run into his face.

While I am on the matter of heels, may I congratulate Giuseppe Zanotti, the greatest shoe sculptor that ever existed in human history, whose unpronounceable name has not done him a great deal of favour so far (ju-'sep-pee zan-'not'ti). He has been awarded shoe designer of the year by *Footwear News*, a title previously held by Manolo Blahnik. Giuseppe's work does not need a red under sole or a cute name to divert attention. His shoes are to buildings a Norman Foster's design; to fast cars a Bugatti's masterpiece and to chairs a Ron Arad's creation.

Giuseppe's shoes are mad creations of orderly details. The shoes look streamlined, the seams look perfect, the embellishments are just right. When the shoe paints a picture of lightning, it paints it, and finishes with 10 times more edginess. When the shoe stands as a sculpture, it stands with confidence and conveys a sense of frivolous fluidity. A bit like Banksy's sculptures - it's fun and serious.

Incidentally, Giuseppe Zanotti also has one of the best shoe ads out there. Anja Rubik has been the brand's spokeswoman for two seasons. The ads are colourful, youthful, playful and are always very aesthetically pleasing.

For Carrie Bradshaw, the woman who keeps choosing the wrong man; may I advice that this Man-olo may not have been the best shoe choice after all.

Anyway, if you are going to splash out on Boxing Day, head down to South Kensington and knock yourself out at Giuseppe Zanotti's boutique at 206 Walton Street. If you're the handsome man I talked about earlier and if you have any questions at all about what I've written, please phone the *felix* office. I will be happy to attend to your queries personally. And no... I am not crazy! So folks, until next time.



Giuseppe Zanotti's SS09 and AW09 ad campaign featuring Anja Rubik.

Must-have Items of Autumn Winter 09

Sales have started! Gabriella Gentilcore tells you what to look out for



The Vagina Boot

Named as such due to the close proximity that these come to the you know what. Not for the faint hearted, these are possibly the sexiest item to be found in the shops at the moment. If you cannot afford the £1000+ price tag for the real deal, many high street shops do lovely copies. Wear them. Ignore the stares.



Sequins

The 80s are back and they're everywhere. Connect with your inner superstar and go for all out sparkle or just a subtle hint in the form of a beret or a scarf. The cheapest and simplest way to update your look for the winter.



The Snood

Well...because you need to keep warm... And the name of it is cute? All fails, get a huge scarf and wrap round.



Feathers

The ultimate party finisher. Be it on the hem of a dress, a bag, jacket or head piece there is no escaping these this winter. Embrace the fun and look amazing. Start small with maybe a hair band to instantly add a high fashion spin on your normal party attire.



Skinted

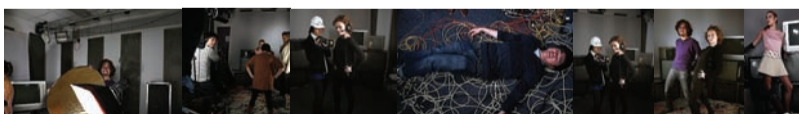
Topshop 'Priscilla' £125



Minted

Christian Louboutin 'Circus' £820

Photoshoot anyone?



You may have seen from our last issue that we do photoshoots here. The trouble is, we always need new blood to help out on the operational and the creative front. First and foremost, we need models! Male and female alike! If you're not afraid to wear catsuits, clown outfits and cool designer clothes... Send your headshot, full body shot, your dress size and shoe size to fashion.felix

There is so much preparation work

involved in a photoshoot; from meeting with designers, fitting and collecting clothes, to doing hair and make up. As well as finding shoot locations which includes nagging restaurants, museums and the Royal Albert Hall alike for permissions to shoot... we need persistent and dedicated team players this January for an immensely fun shoot now titled 'Growing Up'. For now, we are looking for Outfit Organisers, Locations Liaison, Sponsorship Manager and anybody who thinks they can help.

News Strip

Gabriella Gentilcore

Fashion Reporter

Erdem is the latest Fashion in Motion designer at the V&A

Erdem will follow the footsteps of Stella McCartney, Gareth Pugh and Giles Deacon to show a small collection at the V&A on the 11th December. The V&A's Fashion in Motion series is a chance for those outside of the fashion industry to see some top catwalk shows. Entry is free but booking is essential, phone 020 7942 2820. Booking starts Monday 30th November 9am.

Legendary Parisienne boutique Colette arrives in London

Parisian boutique Colette is to open a pop-up shop in the East End. This week The Cube Store unveils Colette's first UK pop-up shop at the Old Truman Brewery. To gain entry you must apply online or look out for Nissan Cube cars around the city and ask the driver for a membership card to admit you into the store.

Charity jewellery sale at Imperial

The jewellery is handmade with an oriental twist and priced between £3 to £8. All proceeds from this sale will go to Shining Your Life, a charity to help single mothers setting up their own businesses. Visit G/F of Sheffield between 1-2pm on the 30th Nov. Visit their facebook group at Shining Your Life for details.



Classic Hepburn memorabilia goes under the Hammer

Some of Audrey Hepburn's most famous dresses, designed by the likes of Givenchy and Valentino, will be going on auction in London this week. Mostly from the 50s and 60s, there are over 30 items on sale with 50% of the proceeds going to the Audrey Hepburn Children's fund, and also to UNICEF.

Singer Leona Lewis to design her own Vegan clothing range

Leona Lewis is the latest celebrity to turn their hand to fashion design, but she was lucky enough to get Stella McCartney's advice. The singer, who refuses to wear leather or any other animal by products, has launched her very own range of vegan clothing and accessories.

Young model believed to have taken her own life

Daul Kim, the beautiful 20 year old South Korean model has sadly passed away this week. She was found by her boyfriend in her Paris apartment. Daul Kim has graced the runway of Chanel, Vivienne Westwood, Rodarte, Dries Van Noten and the like. She was recently featured in Vogue's supplementary magazine in association with Kurt Geiger. Reports have suggested that the model may have committed suicide.



Cambodia: A True Smokin' (Pol) Pot

Ever wanted to get off the beaten track? **Tom Culley** has and ended up travelling through one of the poorest and most corrupt countries on the planet and was shocked and amazed by what he found

It might be a bit of a cliché but it has to be said that Cambodia is a land of contrasts. It is relatively new to the tourist trail owing to a very chequered history of violence and grinding poverty, but the stories of wild, remote, overgrown ruins and beautiful beaches and a thriving city life are slowly making their way back to the Western world. On the one hand it is the home to the world's most awe-inspiring temples, was once the seat of the Khmer empire and is an emerging economy which is slowly catching up with Thailand and Vietnam after the SE Asian financial crisis. On the other hand, it is littered with landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs) making much of the country uninhabitable and it was almost destroyed as a result of one of the biggest social experiments in modern times.

Now, for those of you as ignorant of Cambodian history as I was, we shall need a short history lesson before I continue.

In the sixties and early seventies Cambodia was heavily bombed by the Americans who were fighting in Vietnam, which was followed by a civil war until 1975. That year the Khmer Rouge took control of Phnom Penh, and hence the country, and forced everyone into the countryside. All the cities, industries and money were abandoned leaving the entire population to live in small communes growing rice. There was no choice in the matter, regardless of the fact that

most people did not know how to farm because they had grown up in the cities. The new government was attempting social engineering on a massive scale which involved reverting back to a subsistence lifestyle, one in which class distinctions did not exist. This was bad news for anyone who had an education or access to finances, and people wearing glasses or who could speak a foreign language were executed as parasites. And all this happened only thirty years ago, so at least half of the current population were directly affected by it.

My journey started by flying from Kuala Lumpur to Phnom Penh with Air Asia, Malaysia's answer to Ryanair but with cheap and efficient service. My first port of call was the Lakeside, where all the best guesthouses were situated with awesome views across the lake. However, for some reason the lake is being filled in with sand in order to build hotels and casinos for the nouveau riche of Cambodia, so if you want to see it you'd better do it soon because by next summer it will probably be all gone.

The most famous attractions in Phnom Penh, if you can call them such, are situated some way from the lake, so the only way to get around is by putting your life in the hands of a tuk-tuk driver and praying that you don't hit another vehicle travelling the wrong way. The pilgrimage to the Killing Fields and the notorious S21 detention centre are an essential part of visiting the country and is almost



The daily commute in Cambodia back to town at sunset along the estuary in Kampot.

an initiation to help you appreciate it so much more. I was letting myself in for one of the best, if most horrific, days of my travels.

The Killing Fields was not much to look at other than the Memorial Pagoda containing 9,000 skulls of the victims that died there. Signs signifying the mass graves were dotted around, although I think the Killing Tree distressed me the most. The Tree was where the children and babies were tortured and executed, mostly by having their heads bashed in against the trunk. It seemed a bit surreal, especially considering the school next door where the children play in the river as though nothing special had ever happened there.

I am in fact more surprised by the lack of respect shown by many westerners. Several girls were posing for photographs next to the grinning skulls, while one guy I met in Thailand told me how he had found a tooth on the ground and kept it as a souvenir, which is pretty much grave robbing as far as I'm concerned. But then again, far worse crimes have been committed than stealing a tooth.

The next stop was at S21, formerly the Tuol Sleng School, which was converted into a torture camp early on in the regime. Inmates were tortured for information or even just for fun at the whim of the camp warden, Duch, and those that were unlucky enough to survive the torture were mostly shipped off to the various killing fields around the country where they were dispatched with a pickaxe or shovel to the head, to save on bullets. Coincidentally, Duch is currently having his own 'Nuremberg Trial' and

is likely to be jailed for life. I only found out it was happening a few days later so I missed an opportunity to watch a war crimes trial for myself.

The building is preserved mostly as it was left by the withdrawing Khmer Rouge, with many rooms containing a simple wrought-iron bed and photographs of people lying on the beds with their blood covering the floor.

In one room was an exhibition with the photos of every person that had passed through the Centre, including small children, and it was odd looking

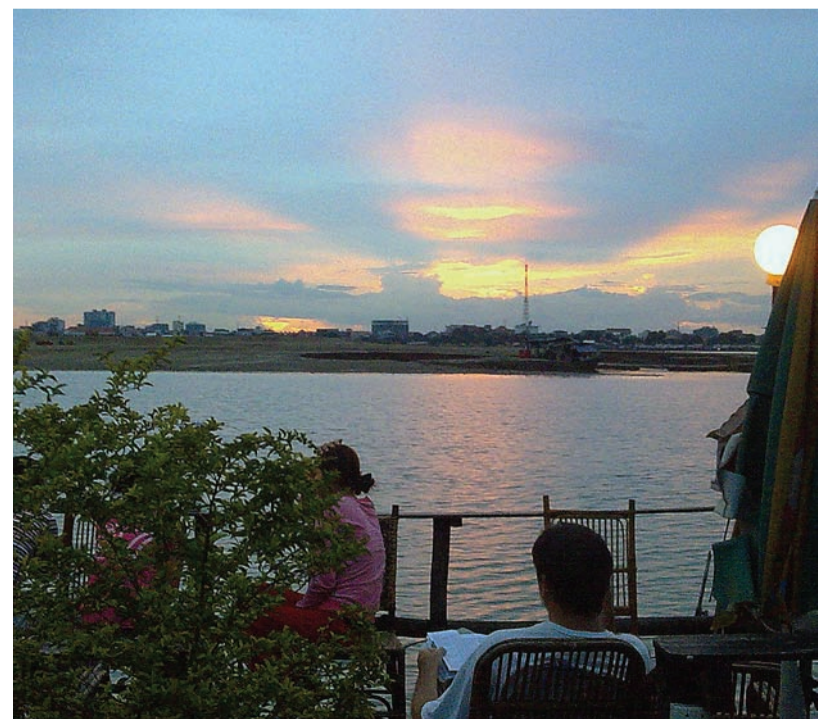
them all in the eye and knowing they all died horrible deaths at the hands of their peers.

I had spent two hours in the school before I had even noticed the time, and having had enough of death for the day, I headed back to the lake.

Moving onto the rest of the country seemed a good idea after that, so I took the first bus to Sihanoukville on the coast. For those of you that have not been to Asia, the roads are an experience in themselves. Road laws do not exist and so to get around, drivers



One of the more horrific uses of a tree, just to save on bullets



The view of Lakeside in Phnom Penh from the Happy Guesthouse



The Memorial Pagoda contains over 9,000 skulls that have been excavated so far, but there are still an estimated 10,000 buried just in Phnom Penh. Across the country there are many more killing fields containing even more bodies.

simply make a lot of noise and expect others to get out of their way. This particular bus driver insisted on honking his very loud horn at least once every 6 seconds for the entire 5 hour ordeal and once I arrived at my destination I was tired and pissed off. This was compounded by the fact that my backpack had been left in the luggage compartment next to a giant block of ice transporting fish, which then became a smaller block of ice with the excess meltwater and fishjuice soaked into my bag. I have washed it several times but even today it still stinks, as

many of my friends will testify. Off to a good start then. However, I thoroughly enjoyed Sihanoukville once I had settled in. My guesthouse was on the beach next to half a mile of bars on the sand. The strange thing about this part of the country is that the chief of police actually owns the local marijuana plantation and hence very little law is enforced in the area. In fact most bars sell joints openly for \$1 each. This lack of law enforcement unfortunately also attracts the bad parts of society. After dark it is not recommended

to leave the beach to walk into town as the road is a magnet for muggers and carjackers and walking along it as a westerner is tantamount to suicide.

So of course on the first night, I ended up in a karaoke bar halfway between the town and the beach on the dark road. I spent most of the evening wondering whether we were about to be robbed by the group of Cambodians that had dragged us there, but apparently they were genuine, or at least genuinely drinking all the dirt-cheap beer we were buying. At the end of the night we needed to get home, but none of the moto drivers wanted to go back so we had to walk, or rather run very fast and hide from oncoming vehicles while thinking we were about to be murdered at any moment.

Having made friends with two hot Swedish guys, I finally managed to relax, helped by a banana shake of the happy variety, so much so that I lay on a sofa on the beach for four hours before I could be bothered to go to bed.

However, even amongst this laid-back touristy atmosphere you can forget the true world that is Cambodia.

Kids wander up and down the beach trying to sell you trinkets for a few dollars; and amputees beg for food and money while hobbling along on their arms. There is no social security or benefits system and education is only provided for free up to age eleven, and even then only 20% of the population can afford to take advantage of it.

Having stuffed my face with food and knocking back the drinks with my friends, an amputee crawled past and asked for some food. He was quite persistent even though we didn't have anything on us, and I couldn't help wishing that he would just move on and leave us alone to have fun. As soon thought went through my head I realised I had become the stereotypical western tourist that I so despised. After this startling realisation, I felt that some good deeds were in order.

To see more of the real country rather than following the tourist trail I took a minibus to the town of Kampot, formerly the most lawless area in

SE Asia as it was the last stronghold of the almost defeated Khmer Rouge. Only a few years earlier, three tourists were kidnapped from a train by the KR and then executed when the ransom wasn't paid. Even in light of this recent history, it is one of the more laid back areas, allowing several days of simply wandering around and soaking up the local vibes.

Another essential trip I had to make was to Bokor Mountain. The journey consists of a very bumpy 4WD vehicle trekking slowly up the mountain along 40km of muddy, windy roads towards the ghost town of Bokor. Old houses and hotels were left to rot after the civil war, and even the town church was used as the KR stronghold where they planned their next invasion. The pièce de résistance was in fact the casino, built on the edge of a cliff where the rich and famous would come to gamble away their fortunes in better times. The losers of these fortunes would then throw themselves over the cliff.

The casino itself is still structurally sound, although years of mould growth and being open to the elements makes it all the more disturbing when the storm clouds suddenly smother the entire landscape and fill the rooms with fog.

However, due to the ever-resourceful Cambodian government, the entire mountain has been sold to a

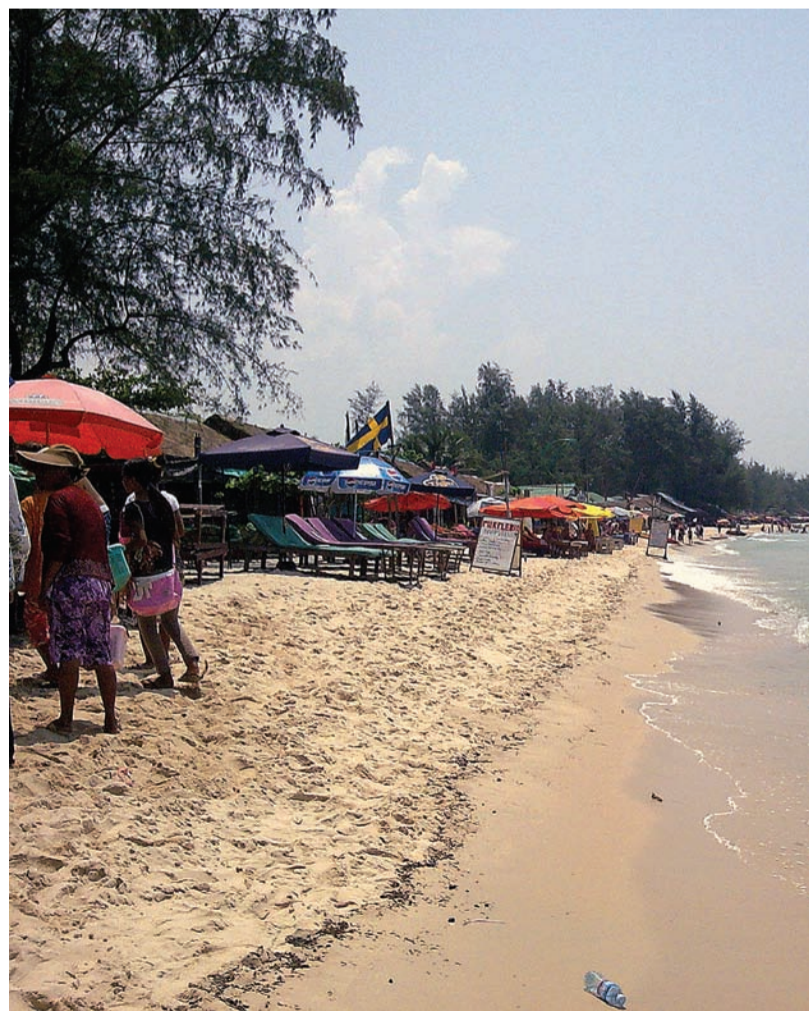
South Korean conglomerate who are going to build a mega-casino and 2000-room hotel, amongst other facilities, on the site of the old buildings, and then build a cable-car from the summit to sea level to bypass the road. So again, if you want to see Bokor, you'd better go soon because it won't be there in a year's time.

I didn't think it was possible, but the journey back to Phnom Penh may actually have been the worst ever. The bus took a completely different route to the one I was expecting, travelling along small dirt roads via tiny little villages, and I spent most of the journey worried that I was being taken to Vietnam. Most of the road was unsealed and the dust that was kicked up by the vehicles in front was sucked into the ventilation and filled the bus with a thick orange cloud. However we had it nowhere near as bad as the people in the many minibuses designed for 15 but seating 50, mostly on the roof.

Those people clearly had a far worse journey than me, but then again you get what you pay for; I paid \$6 for the whole journey, whereas they probably only paid 50 cents.

I was glad to be back in Phnom Penh and began preparing myself for the temples of Angkor Wat...

To be continued in next week's felix



The beach at Sihanoukville, many, many bars to choose from

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In search of good food in Amsterdam

Chris Sim embarked in a bewildering mission through Amsterdam in hope of satisfying his desire for quality grub.

Having worked and lived in Amsterdam for two months, you would've thought I'd have this city all figured out. But no. In fact, the more I think about it, the more it mystifies me. Or to use a cricketering phrase, it bamboozles me. The city has so many contrasts it is really hard to see how it all manages to function so well. The serenity of the beautiful canals and their arched bridges lie in harmony with the symbolic red lights of one of the world's most famous areas for legalised prostitution. Cultural marvels such as the van Gogh museum are just a stones throw away from parks where scores of people enjoy the intoxicating effects of tolerated soft drugs. With all this going on, the relaxed nature of the city remains uncompromised by the seemingly dangerous cocktail of tram routes and cycle lanes.

Equally baffling to me was the food scene in Amsterdam. It was neither here nor there, sometimes sublimely brilliant, sometimes absolutely atrocious. Let's start with Dutch food. Simple and hearty, their cuisine can really hit the spot if you can find the right restaurant. Bear in mind, however, your wallet will really feel the pinch no matter where you go. Moeder's restaurant (Mother's) is a charmingly relaxed little eatery where every inch of the walls and ceiling is covered with pictures of, you guessed it, people's mothers – don't worry, the pictures contain friendly smiles and it adds to the atmosphere, rather than making you feel like your every mouthful is under close scrutiny.



Febo. Food from a machine. Surprisingly edible stuff at reasonable prices. And even faster than McDonald's.

They specialise in home-style Dutch food, and, whilst I'm no expert, it didn't really excite me. Don't get me wrong, the central theme of stews and mash was OK, but for 20 euros? Questionable. One thing that is out of the question is trying a Hema sausage. Oily, bland and a host of nasty adjectives come to mind when I think of that horrifying component from their sausage selection dish. On the bright side however, New Dorrius is one Dutch restaurant well worth a visit. Their slogan, 'Inspiring Fresh Dutch Food', summarises the core ideals behind its modern approach to cookery. Dishes like their pan-fried sea bream,

accompanied by an unctuously rich risotto packed so full of sweet lobster flavour that I could write a thesis on it, are worth every euro cent. Also, their lively combination of red cabbage and apple puree with a moreish beef hotpot add a twist to what would otherwise be a rather forgettable dish.

If the native food of the Netherlands doesn't get you going, then cuisine emanating from the country's glorious colonial past provides a satisfying alternative. Indonesian restaurants, whilst ubiquitous in Amsterdam, can vary greatly in quality and price and thus discretion is well advised when making your choice.

Popular with tourists and locals is the renowned Kantjil en de Tijger, whose busyness has probably made its owners forget that we've barely survived a deep recession. A recommended and far cheaper alternative to actually eating at the restaurant itself is to order from their takeaway menu and to enjoy your meal beside the beauty of the canals, (it can be hard to find benches, but sitting with your legs dangling over the water is equally pleasurable). The only question mark that hangs over this restaurant is its authenticity, which is made even more obvious when you try a rijstafel at Tempo Doeloe. A rijstafel (ricetable) is a tra-

ditional Indonesian banquet comprising up to 25 different dishes. This meal will entertain you with a multitude of flavours, from hints of aniseed to peanutty tones, with various curry embodiments present throughout. It is also a cleverly constructed meal, for you are instructed to eat the dishes in order of increasing chilli heat. Reservations are essential for this restaurant, but before you pick up the phone, please bear in mind that I had to spend nearly 40 euros for this indulgence. If you are wondering where the cuisine of Suriname fits into the picture, then I guess it fits in here. Heavily influenced by Indonesian cuisine, Surinamese food is equally diverse, though finding a good restaurant was, disappointingly, one gastronomic mission too far.

Unfortunately for Amsterdam, the high prices of its restaurants are not balanced by a cheap selection of street vendors. The omnipresent hot dog stands and frites (fries with mayonnaise) outlets may fill your belly, but even they are overpriced. Just for novelty's sake it is worth trying food from Febo, a chain of fast food stores where you can obtain your food in a vending machine-esque manner. In my opinion, the city's fast food scene is rescued by its large Turkish and Middle Eastern communities, whose falafel and showarma eateries offer some satisfying nibbles.

To summarise, I'm not advising you to leave your tastebuds behind when you pack your suitcase for Amsterdam, just to warn them that on this vacation, only a hefty spend will keep them truly happy.

"London restaurants are far too expensive for students"

Chris Sim has a few handy recommendations that go at least some way to dispelling the aforementioned myth

Misato, 11 Wardour Street, W1D 6PG

Nestled just off the main street of Chinatown, this popular fast food Japanese joint is instantly recognisable with its long queues of students huddling outside, awaiting their turn for some great value grub. I don't need to mention that unless standing in a long line of people is your thing, I'd recommend you turn up early.

To squeeze every morsel of value out of each and every penny, going for a main meal highly recommended. Tempura, teriyaki chicken, katsu don (breaded pork cutlet with egg and rice) are just a number of flavoursome, hearty treats which are well worth a try. Personally, I am a fan of their chicken katsu curry dish, which comprises succulent pieces of chicken deep fried in crisply light breadcrumbs, laden with a slightly sweet and spicy Japanese curry sauce, accompanied by salad and a bit of pickled radish. These main dishes on their own are considerably sizeable,

and that's without mentioning that a Mt Everest-sized scoop of rice accompanies them. I have previously tried to think about trying a starter or side dish, but my bulging belly warned me that further additions could lead to a disaster of sorts. So at £6-8, this restaurant's value hardly ever comes into question. I guess my only complaint is that the service is sometimes a tad slow, or maybe it was me being sluggish, after all, a meal this formidable makes for a lethargic, yet pleasantly satisfied diner.

Food: 7.0
Value: 9.5
Service: 6
Ambience: 6.5

Overall: 7.5/10

Belgo Centraal (Beat The Clock Deal), 29 Shelton Street, WC2H 9JL

The flagship restaurant of this Belgian-inspired chain doesn't strike you as the most obvious place of gastronomic pilgrimage for students, with its standard prices easily setting you back £20 for a good dinner. But do not despair, for delicious and wholesome Belgian food can be available at a price which corresponds to, well, the time on your watch.

Let me explain further. From Monday to Friday, from 5pm until 6:30pm, you pay the price which corresponds to the time at which you ordered your meal. For example, order at 5:42pm and your meal will cost you exactly five pounds and forty two pennies. So what do you get for this interestingly low price? There are five choices on the menu, with the two best being Belgian classics. A pretty safe bet is a bowl of perfectly steamed, juicy mussels dressed in a light white wine, garlic and parsley sauce matched with a size-



able portion of robust frites. Great for this time of year, now that the cold is really starting to get cosy in London. If sea-dwelling creatures aren't for you, go for their half spit-roast chicken with guessed it, a bowl of fries. Moist chicken flesh, which oozes rich juices upon incision, is enveloped by sticky, slightly caramelised skin laden with a not-overpowering mustard and slightly

Food: 7.5
Value: 8.5
Service: 8
Ambience: 8

Overall: 8/10

sweet leek sauce. Quality, hearty stuff.

Gone are the days when for the same price, a glass of beer or wine accompanied the meal. Thanks, Mr Recession. But still, either of these quality alcoholic accompaniments should keep your bill per head at just around the ten pound mark, and with a huge selection of quality beers on offer, well, in my opinion, that's not too bad. And with a unique Narnia-like interior, equally oddly dressed waiters whose service is more than adequate, an early dinner at Belgo Centraal is well worth rushing off to after braving the challenges of another day at uni.



Google loves your data

How much is too much & is your data safe with Google?

Feroz Salam Technology Reporter

In the 21st century, there are few more valuable things than information. It's what drives the technology revolution, the ability to transfer and process large amounts of information.

Of course, if there's one company uniquely poised to make the most of this, it's Google. With roughly 24 server farms containing an estimated half a million servers dotted across the globe, Google handles 6% of all internet traffic. That's six times more than any other one company, with their main website being the most visited page on the internet. Google has invested large amounts of money into maintaining the current status quo, from their wide variety of desktop applications to undersea optical fibre cables that maintain blazing fast response times.

But how does Google handle the responsibility of being the world's largest repository of private information? The unofficial company slogan "Don't Be Evil" only serves as a reminder of just how much evil Google could do if it wished. Thankfully, Google to this date has not betrayed its user's faith. It has been fearless in going up against governments, when requested to disclose user information and hasn't had minimal embarrassing data leaks that some of its competitors have suffered from. All in all, Google has proved itself relatively responsible in dealing with sensitive user information. But how much are you really willing to let Google store information about your life?

I decided to write down a list of Google products that I use. The list came up to roughly 20 of their products, ranging from mapping services to webmaster tools. All of which are free and many of which are the best products offered in their markets. The beauty of Google's business model is that they can offer free, quality products to users because they make money from the information gleaned

from that usage. Companies pay large amounts of money to show up in Google's subtly targeted ads and in exchange all Google has to do is make sure that a large enough number of users are seeing those ads. It would appear that this is a win-win situation for everyone involved. Yet as Google grows and attempts to expand into untapped markets, it's going to want more and more of your information in order to target those ads even better and continue to generate large advertising profits. The need for more and more info brings me back to the focal point of this piece – how much is too much?

Like 90% of the connected world, I use Google for searching the internet. I also use Google to handle all my email accounts, compile and analyse website statistics, help me get around town, chat with friends, share photos and watch videos. Google knows exactly which shows I enjoy watching, which political issues I find important and my views on them and the contents of letters back home. They even know where I am right now, thanks to Google Latitude, and where I want to be, thanks to Google Maps for mobile. If Google were a stalker, it would be about time for me to file for a restraining order.

That's why it's interesting that Google seems to be gearing up to offer telephony services. Last week, they purchased a small start-up that specialised in services similar to the venerable Skype, Gizmo5. Along with Google

Voice, a service that allows users in the US to (among other things) manage their phone calls and make cheap international calls, many suspect that this could be part of a wider strategy to offer free telephone calls to participating users very soon. The system allows Google to make use of the extensive optical fibre networks it has invested in while users get free telephone calls. Yet this will probably involve letting Google into yet another part of your life: your private phone calls.

Although in reality what Google knows is distributed across servers in multiple locations, probably protected by complex encryption, it is still owned by a single entity that can legally be forced into handing all information about you to governments. The issue isn't really about how much Google can be trusted, it's about how much Google can be forced to reveal. I'm not going to judge you for googling NAMBLA (don't) after watching that South Park episode, but can the same thing be said about a law enforcement official? Google is at the forefront of the "cloud computing" wave. Their Chrome OS (scheduled for release in at the end of 2010) is designed to blur the lines between desktop and online applications, with ever more information being stored in the cloud. The question remains whether the flexibility afforded by keeping private information on someone else's servers can ever replace the privacy of one's own hard drive.



Cut through the crap, get it sorted on Twitter

Samuel Gibbs Technology Editor

It's Friday, time to ditch work and go party! But what if you've got something busted, some prick of a Telco is over charging you, or you've got to make a complaint? Traditionally you'd have to sit there on the phone for god-knows how many hours calling a premium rate number just to get through to some poor bastard in a call centre that can neither help you or help himself get out of that hellish excuse for a job. Well, I'm here to tell you that no more do you have to suffer through the rubbish to get the decent customer service that you deserve. Twitter is the way forward.

OK, you think I'm off my rocker, what has Twatter got to do with customer service? Well, if you didn't know already, everything you say on Twitter is public. Everyone can see it, it's searchable and it stays there for quite some time. Companies have gotten wind that people like to complain on Twitter and that their reputation often takes a beating in a very public and motivated environment. So their plan to combat all this bitching is to put customer service representatives on the microblogging service that respond to complaints and try and smooth over any disagreements you might have with them. The thing is that the Twitter customer service people have to get it right first time because if they don't, the company's public image gets a bashing as you berate them on Twitter. Therefore, they've normally got a lot more power than the poor sod you find on the end of the phone on the front line of the call centre. They bend over backwards to sort out your complaint and placate you as quickly as possible and in a personal manner.

In a recent experience with a Telco that will, for reasons of journalistic integrity, remain nameless, I found out that they were trying to overcharge

me by almost 25% for no apparent reason. I thought it would have just been a clerical error and so contacted customer services, only to be told that the cost of service had gone up without notice. When I pointed out that their website stated the price I expected to be charged, like every previous month for the last two years, I was told this was a 'new customers only' deal. After screaming down the phone at them, they told me there was nothing they could do.

Of course, the budding journalist in me decided I wasn't going to stand for this crap and I was going to complain in the most effective way I knew, online. First port of call was Twitter, which would be promptly followed by my personal blog and every tech blog I write for. I was going to drag their name through the mud for this outrage.

Moments after bitching about them on Twitter I was contacted by the customer services 'Twitter team' who asked for a few details so they could check it out. OK, I thought, fair enough, I'll hold fire on everything else and see what they can do for me. I send them my customer details and thirty minutes later I get a phone call. Long story short, they were very apologetic and sorted it out right there and then. Gone was the price increase and an offer of compensation should I feel out of pocket at the end of the day.

Now I don't have beef with any customer service representatives, I couldn't do their jobs, but I feel the personal level of service you used to get has gone. You shouldn't have to go to Twitter and publicly complain just to get decent service, but this kind of personal, fast and efficient service doesn't seem to exist in modern company strategy, it's too costly.

Moral of the story, got a complaint? Head to Twitter and get it sorted.

Weekly Wrap-up: A quick guide to the best of the rest you might have missed

Samuel Gibbs Technology Editor

Another week in Tech has come and gone but what have we got to show for it? Well, we've got the launch of the world's first driverless taxis at Heathrow. We've talked about the tiny little automated pods that transport you from the business car park into Terminal 5 in only five minutes before, but now you too can go have a play in them. Pity they're not in central London; maybe they would be a cheaper, safer alternative to the dodgy minicabs on the way home from the Union.

We've heard that console gaming makes you a natural-born UAV pilot, but now the US Air Force is taking their love of the PS3 to the next level

and by ordering another 2,200 PS3s to join the 300 or so they are using already. Instead of practising their skills in Modern Warfare 2, they've been using them for HD video processing and want to boost the power of their PS3 cluster.



Talking about the PS3, I don't know whether anyone's told the USAF but,

IBM is set to discontinue its current line of PowerPC-based Cell processors, the power house behind the PS3, amongst other things. What this means for the next generation PlayStation is unclear. Would Sony take the Cell chip in house? Never fear though, the current gen PS3 won't be affected.

Retail giant, Tesco, announced this week that it'll start selling Apple's golden child, the iPhone, on its MVNO Tesco Mobile. It's the fourth carrier to confirm that the iPhone will be gracing its network, although Tesco Mobile uses O2's network so don't think you'll get better 3G coverage. Tesco already has several relatively cheap unlimited everything plans with texts, calls and data all included. If their current price plans are mimicked on their iPhone

offerings, Tesco Mobile might be the way to go for the best value iPhone tariffs. Besides, now you can pick one up whilst you're getting your soap, toilet duck and bog roll. How glamorous.



Talking of iPhones, the humble rick-rolling iPhone worm evolved. Two new malicious variants of the worm have

emerged, one that steals your ING Direct banking details and one that turns your pocket pal into a botnet zombie. Brilliant! Apple's response? We told you it could happen, tough luck, don't jailbreak your iPhone. The worms spread via WiFi or cellular networks between jailbroken iPhones with SSH installed and default root passwords. A rookie mistake not changing your root password, but if you're not so *au fait* with the whole jailbreak process, you might not even know that every iPhone has a default root password that basically allows someone nefarious to do anything they like with your precious iPhone without your knowledge. So if you're rocking a jailbroken iPhone then download mobile Terminal and change your root password pronto!



Imperial Amnesty join Shell campaign

In a show of direct action after collecting student signatures, **Courtney Williams, Thorsten Stechert, Kelly Osborne and Marissa Lewis** of the Imperial Amnesty club confront Shell at the Imperial graduate careers fair.



Which are more important: human rights or oil rights? In the Niger Delta it seems that Shell and other oil companies have opted for the latter, generating for themselves billions of pounds yet seriously reducing the quality of life for the people of the Niger Delta. To combat this, Amnesty International are currently running a campaign to convince Shell to clean up its act.

Shell Oil, a multi-million pound UK-based company, is the region's biggest oil producer, in association with the Nigerian Government. However, they have left the area in a catastrophic state, and Amnesty International has exposed various ways in which Shell has violated the human rights of local people.

Nine million barrels'-worth of crude oil have poured out of pipelines in the Niger delta region, killing fish (a major source of food and income), polluting rivers and destroying land so that growing crops is impossible, and leaving seventy five percent of the rural population with no access to clean water. Shell and the Nigerian government have also refused to provide local people with basic information and consult communities about the work going on.

"If you want to go fishing, you have to paddle for about four hours through several rivers before you can get to where you can catch fish and the spill

is lesser... some of the fish we catch, when you open the stomach, it smells of crude oil" – A Bodo fisherman, victim of oil spills in 2008 and 2009 which have still not been cleaned up.

Amnesty wrote a report on their findings documented over the last ten

'a petition asking Shell to take responsibility for the damage they are doing in the Delta garnered an extremely positive response around campus.'

years, entitled "Petroleum, Pollution and Poverty in the Niger Delta". They intended to put pressure on the new CEO of Shell, Peter Voser, and shortly afterwards, Shell took part in an on-line dialogue about the report. Over 445 people took part in this dialogue, including representatives of Amnesty and Friends of the Earth (some of whom were based in Nigeria).

Amnesty is now challenging Shell's new CEO Peter Voser to change the situation and right some of the wrongs caused by the company. They want Shell and the Nigerian government to clean up the Niger Delta, be transparent in their actions and remedy the hu-

man rights abuses they have contributed to by providing compensation, rehabilitation, information and access to justice.

One way in which Amnesty does this is through raising public awareness; this includes campaigning, petitioning and reporting events. One of their new campaigns includes turning a Shell station into a "Hell station". This is what Imperial Amnesty did when they kicked off their campaign

to highlight the abuses of Shell in the Niger Delta. The local Shell garage was used and the photos of their exploits were put on Google Maps. Activists all over the world have been doing the same, and people are encouraged to post negative comments about Shell on the photos.

To raise awareness around campus Imperial Amnesty ran a stall in the JCR on Wednesday 28th October. Interested students were given the opportunity to write messages to Shell and leave fingerprints on an idyllic photograph of unspoilt land in Nigeria – a slightly more visual way to register protest over pollution of such areas. Despite fears of feedback to Shell, a well-known employer, a petition asking Shell to take responsibility for the damage they are doing in the Delta garnered an extremely positive response around campus.

After gathering 124 signatures over lunch for the petition, several members of Imperial Amnesty then made their way down to the careers fair to confront the Shell recruiters with the situation in Nigeria. With the petition and the fingerprint photo in hand they approached Shell's stall, fully expecting to be instantly brushed off with the oh-so familiar "no comment". Much to their surprise, one of the employees, who asked to remain anonymous, agreed to answer their questions.

Since Shell say they "are totally committed to a business strategy that al-

ways balances profits and principles." the first question, naturally, was to see whether employees outside public relations saw their company in a similar light. For a person drilled into recruiting graduates and thus trying to present his company in the best light possible, it was not surprising that after a short delay he confirmed that Shell was in fact an ethical company.

Surely in an ethical company criticism is met openly and problems or failures are addressed with the attention they deserve. Whilst the source claimed that internal communications dealing with this exist, the detail of them and whether they are accessible to anyone or on a "need-to-know" basis remains unknown.

Next, the negative impacts of Shell's operation in Nigeria were questioned. Having been to Nigeria as part of his work for Shell, the source was the ideal candidate to give a close-up perspective. He claimed that the numerous oil spills were mostly caused by sabotage and that leakages in general were no more severe than in any other region or at any other company. However Amnesty insists Shell has the responsibility to prevent leaks from occurring (whatever the source may be), and, failing to do so, to at the very least clean up the resulting spills.

When asked about the dangers of working in Nigeria, the source told the Amnesty members that Shell tries to avoid areas of political unrest.

This led to the question whether Shell had actually sown the seeds for its current distress, which was answered with "It depends how you assess the situation." The way that Amnesty assesses the situation is that the often blamed political turmoil, the violent attacks on Shell's property and kidnappings of Shell's employees were not inevitable. When Shell moved to Nigeria fifty years ago, the local populace was anything but militant, expecting an economic boom in the area. Yet little of the enormous revenues made with Nigerian oil seemed to reach the people; the average income, at \$2 a day, is amongst the very lowest in the world.

The interview concluded on a friendly note, as both the Amnesty members and their interviewee are hoping that "in time, everything will change for the better." Whether this is true remains to be seen. Meanwhile Amnesty is upping the pressure on Mr. Voser to put things right in the Niger Delta.



The Amnesty stall in the JCR, before the assault on the careers fair

Your Club or Society Here.

Description of your awesome trip or event here.

Want your club to be in *felix*? Send us a description of a trip, event, tour or social and everyone will know about it.

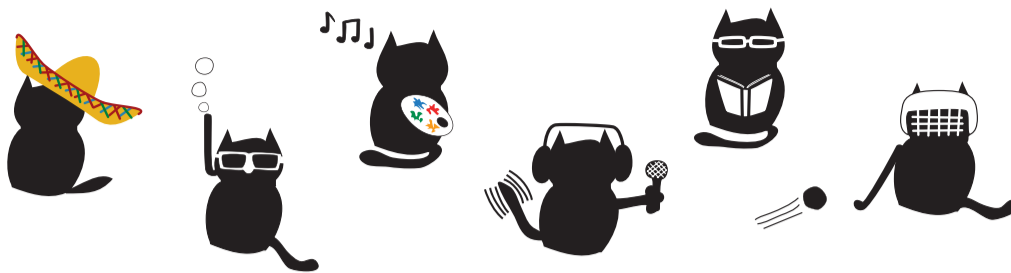
Email clubs.felix@imperial.ac.uk

What's on...

Clubs & Societies Calendar

Editors – Lily Topham & Rachel D'oliveiro

whatson.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Mon 30th Nov

Medsin Positively Red Week – Central Line Pub Crawl
 – 7pm start at Notting Hill Gate, fill up your collecting buckets all the way to Tottenham Court Road...
 – Afterparty at TigerTiger, Haymarket

ICSMSU Silent Disco
 – Tickets £5 from ICSMSU Office in SAF

Thurs 3rd Dec

Muslim Medics and Islamic Society
 – “The Etiquettes and Social Responsibilities of a Good Muslim Doctor”
 – 6pm, SAF G34 (free)
 – An insightful evening by Mufti ibn Adam.

Model UN – Frost/Nixon Film Night
 – 6pm, Pippard LT, Sherfield
 – Free for all, food provided!

Friends of MSF – Speaker Night
 – 6:30pm, Huxley Clore LT (free)
 – Joanna Knight and her colleague talk about their experiences of running clinics for Friends of MSF

Law Society
 – Negotiation Workshop with Allen & Overy
 – 7pm, Elec Eng 403B
 – Free for all!

Medsin Positively Red Week – Slave Auction!
 – 7pm Reynolds Bar, Charing Cross Campus

Terry Pratchett’s “Wyrd Sisters – The Play”
 – 7:30pm, UCH, Union
 – £5 for students, £7 for non-students

Fri 4th Dec

Medsin Positively Red Week – Krispy Kreme Sale
 – All day across the South Ken Campus

Terry Pratchett’s “Wyrd Sisters – The Play”
 – 7:30pm, UCH, Union
 – £5 for students, £7 for non-students



Tues 1st Dec

Medsin Positively Red Week – Human Red Ribbon!
 – Wear a red top on World Aids Day and join in our human red ribbon formation...

Medsin Positively Red Week – Red Ribbon Projection
 – 4pm, Queen’s Tower
 – See the Queen’s Tower lit up with the World AIDS Day Red Ribbon

Medsin Positively Red Week – Super Quiz
 – 7pm, dB’s, Union (free)
 – Swot up for a chance to win a prize for the top team in the HIV/AIDS quiz

LawSoc and Finance Society – How to get a job in the City
 – 7pm, Blackett LT1 (free)
 – Two LSE graduates currently working in the city reveal their secrets to success with applications

Weds 2nd Dec

Medsin Positively Red Week – Global Health Forum and Debate
 – “The Role of Religion in HIV transmission and prevention”
 – 6pm, SAF G34 (Free!)
 – Free Starbucks refreshments

Terry Pratchett’s “Wyrd Sisters – The Play”
 – 7:30pm, UCH, Union
 – £5 for students, £7 for non-students
 – Come along to DramSoc’s Autumn play – with witches, thumbscrews and the longest kiss in history...
 – Runs until Saturday 6th Dec

To Do....

- 1) Fly away....
- 2) Email whatson.felix@imperial.ac.uk (Club name & event, time, place, price, pics...) **by end of Tues 1st Dec.**



Sat 5th Dec

Terry Pratchett’s “Wyrd Sisters – The Play”
 – 7:30pm, UCH, Union
 – £5 for students, £7 for non-students



Sun 6th Dec

Musical Theatre Society – Freshers’ Revue
 – 7:30pm, UCH, Union
 – Free (with collection for charity)
 – Featuring a mixture of entertaining numbers from a variety of West End shows.

CAT-NIP

Text in to 07832670472

Email in at catnip.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Drop us a message at felixonline.co.uk



NEXT WEEK'S CATNIP QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU HATE MOST ABOUT MEDICS?!

What do you think
really happened to
the Rector?

Isn't it obvious? I think Agent Smith finally got to Mr. Anderson

Sitar Hero

His position was compromised...by the manspider! LOL

Anonymous

He's given up on rectorin' to live in the country and write a book of fairy tales for children...and talk to cows...

Anonymous

Your mum happened to him. She was so fat, she crushed him. The jelly-like remains are being sent to UCL to resolidify.

Your Dad

Drunken-mate photo of the week



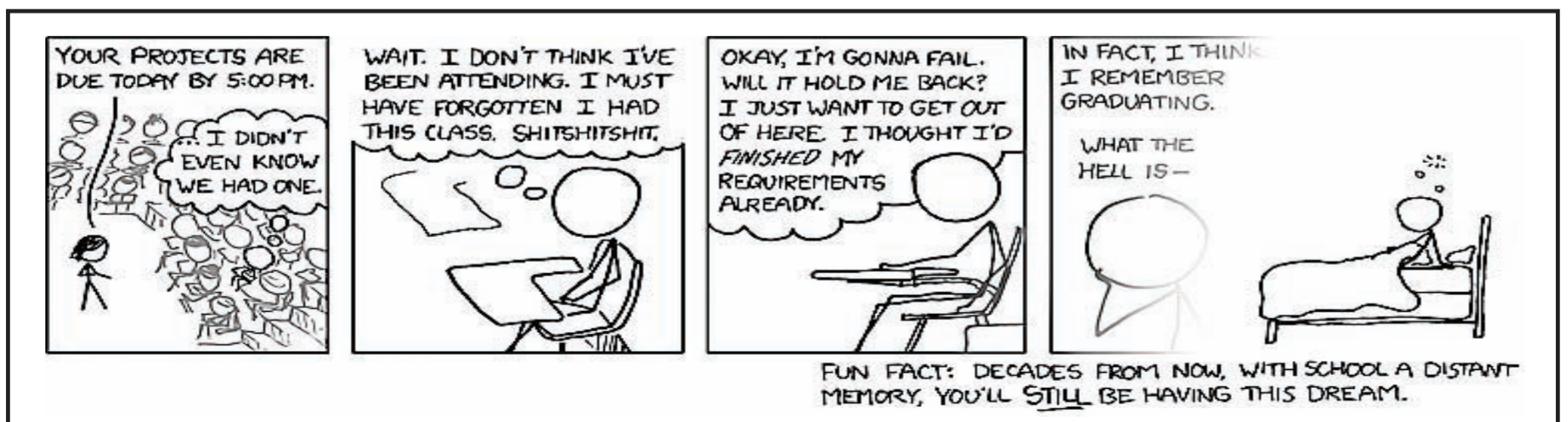
Got a picture of your mate being an absolute waste of oxygen? Well, get your camera out and email your drunken-mate photos to catnip.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The moral of this story is: don't get drunk and crash out when your mate's got a used condom and no bin. But hey, at least they used protection!

Senders must have permission to use submitted photos and accept full responsibility for them

**CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?
EMAIL TO**
catnip.felix@imperial.ac.uk
FACEBOOK
it on our 'Felix' fan page
TEXT US
on 07832670472
AND NOW ON
TWITTER!
just tag your tweets
with @felixcatnip

xkcd.com



Hangman

hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The Beginner's Guide to Tree Imitation

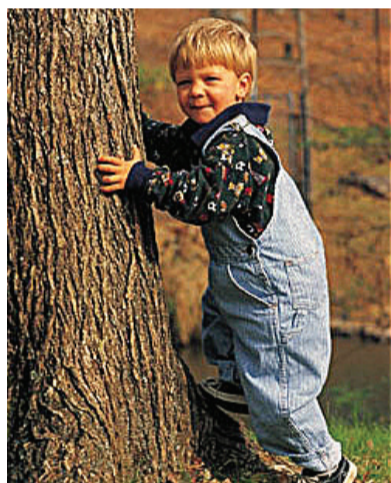
You may laugh at the title, but it is a serious sport, with serious consequences if treated irresponsibly

Anonymous Hangman Editor

You've seen them out there in the fields, just standing there, and thought to yourself, 'I could do that!'

WELL STOP! These brash and careless thoughts could wind up with you dead. Unless you have the professional training for such a dangerous sport, you should leave tree imitation well alone.

This child thought it would be funny to pretend to be a large Oak.



It wasn't so funny when he was dead!



However, if you think you've got the balls it takes to be a tree, then here are some steps that will see you on the way to becoming the master of disguise.

DISCLAIMER: HANGMAN TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY SERIOUS INJURIES OR DEATHS THAT MAY OCCUR FROM FOLLOWING THIS GUIDE. YOU ATTEMPT TREEMING AT YOUR OWN RISK

HISTORY: The sport of tree imitation, or 'treeming', was invented by Ronnie Beckstein in 1943 when he disguised himself as a Sycamore to escape the hounding German forces. Unfortunately, Ronnie was captured two months later when Goebbel's Dachshund pissed on his leg.



After the war, the sport took off in East Germany, spearheaded by Beckstein's son Raymond. Raymond founded the Standard Tree Imitating Code (STIC), which are the basic guidelines used by the International Treeming Association today. The ITA have been the sport's official governing body since 1954 and set the standard treeming regulations for the now professional and highly-regarded sport.

RULE 1: Don't treem in a heavily wooded area, you might blend in too well and become lost. Tragedy struck

the sport in 1982 when seven teams, including global reigning champions, the 'Arboreal Augsburgers', went missing in the Black Forest. The ITA, with worldwide government support, have started a large-scale deforestation program to ensure that the 'Great treeming disaster of '82' does not happen again.

RULE 2: Avoid large uninhabited and desolate areas. When the sport pre



miered at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, it caused mass panic throughout the Nation as most Australians had never seen a tree before. Treeming has consequently been banned in Australia, much to the dismay of Kylie Minogue, who was an avid Treemer. Many people

speculate that this was the reason for her moving to East Germany and that her song 'Locomotion' was released as a protest to the banning. She had to replace 'treeming' with 'locomotion' for legal purposes.

RULE 3: No Shrubbery imitation

In 1998, Christians protested against the sport, saying that it was actually invented by Jesus when he wore the crown of thorns and attempted to imitate a Gorse bush.

The ITA retorted with a statement saying 'Eye witness accounts from the bible say that the crown of thorns was placed upon Jesus' head by soliders and not himself.

If, however, it was the case that Jesus did in fact use the thorny foliage as a tactical guise to escape, he did so in a wreckless manner and thus failed miserably.

Jesus did not just die for our sins, he showed us the real danger of the extreme sport that is treeming'

The ITA consequently banned the imitation of shrubbery and thorny bushes in the sport.

Hangman jokes about many things, but says this to you with all seriousness: TREEM CAREFULLY!

NOOSE OF THE WORLD

UNION STAFF IN MELTDOWN

Last week, the Union decided that in order to make some money to fund the brothel being built on the first floor of the Union building, plastic figurines of all the Union Sabbs and staff should be sold to students. Ashley and Danny (they're important) told Hangman that the models were proving to be highly popular with the Science Fiction society.

Unfortunately, and indeed surprisingly, the rest of the student body were not particularly receptive to the models. Ashley Brown seemed highly confused when confronted with the issue; "But I come with interchangeable outfits and a pink fire engine!"

None of the Deputy Presidents or Union Staff were available to comment, it is suspected that two of them are critically ill having swallowed in-



Come on Barbie, let's go party (in dBs)

distinguishable plastic parts.

Having spent a total of £520,000 on the entire stock, the Union don't have any more funds to pay for heating, so half the models will be burned as fuel and once melted down, the plastic will be fashioned into a giant statue of Russell Brand ('cos he's too cool...bleurgh). The other half have been donated to the Chinese Army for target practice.

They returned the gesture with a ceremonial rifle with five bullets engaged.

Hangfan

We love hearing from the fans and have received some really warm feedback

"I am an up-standing member of society. I recycle, walk to university and generally do all that I can to reduce my carbon footprint. Your 'Guide to being green' was a reckless and harmful piece of writing (if you can call it that). The most irritating part of the article was the fact that you consider this to be amusing. OUR PLANET IS DYING!!! GROW UP!! I am not prone to being aggressive, but you pile of w***** are the reason our generation are seen as pathetic and the reason Roy resigned, I hope you're happy" Loves hangman so much they use it as toilet paper.



TWATTER



SexyOsama69

OMGZ Obie! Howz u knw wher my cave is LOL?



Barack_attack_l33thaxor

Google maps lol :p



SexyOsama69

LOL! Ur soliders cum in and r liek 'RA RA, put ur hands on ur hed,Ur arrested lol'



SUPERACEGORTHEROAR87

FFS! Does dat mean ur not playin COD tonight?

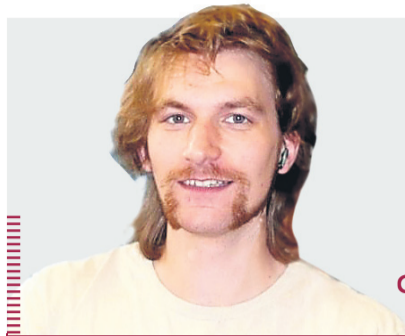


SexyOsama69

LOL. Soz Gor. Wel at least u can stay alive for mor dan 10 secs now! Osie I'm comin over USA for sum trial nw :D. Canz I crash @ urs? xxx

COFFEE BREAK

Coffee Break Editor Charlie Murdoch
coffee.felix@imperial.ac.uk



And to the Vomit Pit!

Charlie Murdoch Coffee Break Editor

Ah bollocks. I had a few complaints last week and I don't know what to do about it. I have been informed that my personal contribution to the paper last week was very much below standard, i.e. shit. I was confused as to why this could be the case, so after glassing the complainers I got them to confess. They informed that they were extremely disappointed to find that last week I choose not to have an angry rant directed at 5000 largely unknown persons. I can only offer my most sincere apologies; I just wasn't that angry last week. Actually that's a lie; I did spend most of last week throwing phones about, but that's not my fault. If the twats on the other end are going to continue to ask me inane questions that have no bearing on my problem then they are going to have a phone launched at them. Fortunately, the closest wall if often much more appealing to me and my phone is unusually strong- it's a Sony Ericsson for those who are interested.

Right. What would you say if I mentioned a Union vomit pit? Run with me on this. I was supposed to be 'green' this week, but I had a little think about it decided 'fuck that'. However, down the bar this week Jov (the ex-editor)

and I came up with an idea so great that we are going to Dragons' Den with it- I shit you not. Listen in boys and girls: the Union needs to dig a well on the right hand lawn in the quad. This well can then be ceremoniously named the 'Vomit Pit' and I think you can guess what it should be used for. If you've had the dreaded one too many, the vomit pit is there for you and it's not just laddish behaviour that can benefit. The bulimic and anorexic crew out there will benefit hugely too, they can now vomit and be just like everyone else! 'Ohh look at me I'm sooo drunk!'. No love, you just rammed two fingers down your throat and it's 10am. But the best part is that this pit acts as an anaerobic respirator, as enzymes break the vomit down energy is harnessed and the only wasted product is compost to be used by ESoc.

Humm, now I've re-read what I've just written it sounded considerably more plausible (and normal) in the bar, now it just sounds silly. Finally imagine you are on a packed train but in the morning, everyone is silent except a couple downstairs having a domestic. The whole bus can hear quite clearly and halfway through the journey, the male participant pipes up with the quote below. H-fucking-larious.

Stuff Imperial students like:

8. Science Fiction:

As much as it pains me to say this, apparently here at Imperial we love a good bit of Sci-Fi. We do have Europe's biggest Sci-Fi library. Unfortunately. But apparently we fucking love a good science fiction read.

I personally don't see why we need a whole big library for what is essentially literature and can be found in any other library in the land, but each to their own. However

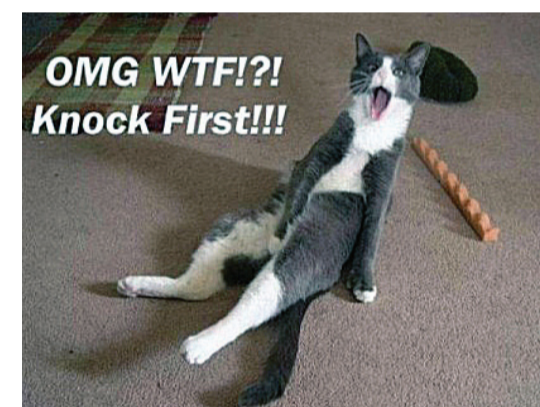
er over my years at Imperial I have noticed a similar tradition running through the whole of the Sci-Fi clientele, the longness of hair and often lack of shower.

Now this could be due to the never ending bench-pressing of huge novels, or because they are so keen to read that a shower comes pretty much necessary. Whatever the reason, there is no excuse to shag in the west wing basement toilets is there NHS specs boy? Yes we all heard you last year. Twat.



Sci-Fi, take note. Water = women

This week's best of lol catz



Quote of the Week

Bloke on the bus: "I know you don't understand. I don't expect you to understand. It's because you're a woman."

Wordoku 1,446

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				I		B	
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	F				T		
	H					C	L

Solution 1445

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O	M	B	W	E	A	I	R	Z
I	W	A	R	O	Z	E	B	M
R	B	W	A	Z	O	M	I	E
Z	O	M	B	I	E	W	A	R
A	I	E	M	W	R	B	Z	O
W	A	O	Z	M	I	R	E	B
M	Z	I	E	R	B	A	O	W
B	E	R	O	A	W	Z	M	I

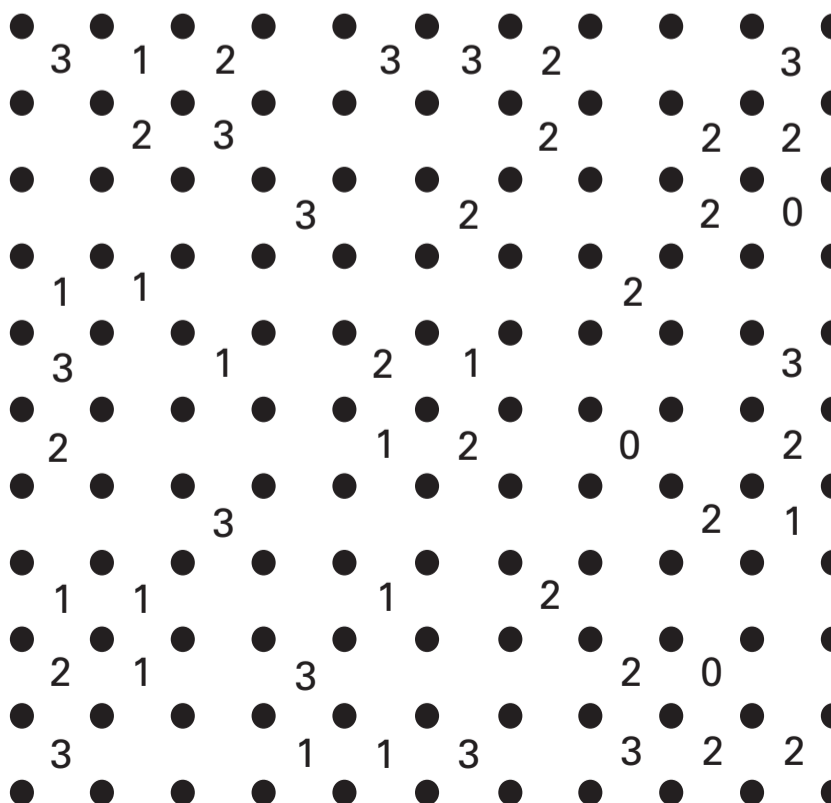
How to play:

Wordoku is identical to Sudoku; we've just replaced numbers with letters. Complete the puzzle and then send the whole grid to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk. You will not get credit for just the word alone. It's not an anagram.

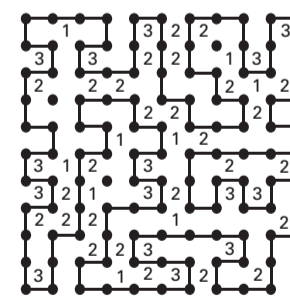
Well done to **The Tough Brets** who won last week's wordy game. The winning word was ZOMBIEWAR, as to what one is I have no clue, but I hoped you enjoyed it not the less. Tune in next week for more fun and games.

Scribble box

Slitherlink 1,446



Solution 1445



This weeks slitherlink is harder than normal... so have fun. Last week's winner was an old favorite, **Giramondo**. Nice to have you back lads. Rock on.

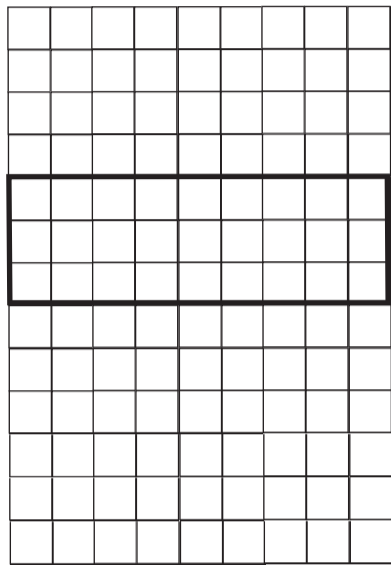
How to play:

It's quite simple, all numbers are in a cell and must be surrounded with a corresponding number of lines. Lines cannot split and there can only be one continuous line. Any cells with no numbers can have any number of lines. Look at the solution above for help.

coffee.felix@imperial.ac.uk

COFFEE BREAK

Intersection 1,446



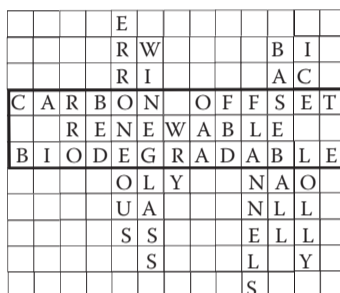
- Horizontal:**
- Apparatus for cooking meat (8)
 - Site of final English Civil War battle (9)
 - Cosmo cocktail ingredient (9)
- Vertical:**
- To expand on detail (9)
 - Scorpius, tick and spider (9)
 - Professional female performers (9)
 - Protective coating (7)
 - A Welsh university (11)

Scribble box



Oh hai guyz. Lets get more entries for this one this week- we only had two entries! Right, anyway the winner was **Your Mum**. Very mature lads, as far as I am aware that phrase should only be used in answer to the question, "so what you feel like doing tonight?". You can see how it works.

Solution 1445



How to play:

Solve the clues (given in order: top-to-bottom & left-to-right) and fit the answers into the grid. Only letters contributing to the horizontal answers (and blank spaces) may occupy the middle section. Not all columns contain a vertical answer. There are no empty rows or columns in the solution. Look at the solution below for help.

Send your solutions to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk

FUCWIT League Table

- Teams:**
- Harry Potter Trio 64 Points
 - The Tough Brets 64 Points
 - I Hate Medic Wankers 9 Points
- Individuals:**
- Matthew Colvin 62 Points
 - Ying Liang 27 Points
 - Bethan Matthews 24 Points

The Felix University/College-Wide Invitational Tournament League is new and improved, with prizes for both the winning team and the winning individual.

So you get points for doing the puzzles and at the end of the year, the winning team and the winning individual will win an iPod nano!

5 points for the 1st correct answers for all puzzles on these pages, 4 points for 2nd, 3 points for 3rd, 2 points for 4th and 1 point for 5th. Double points will be awarded for cryptic crossword answers.

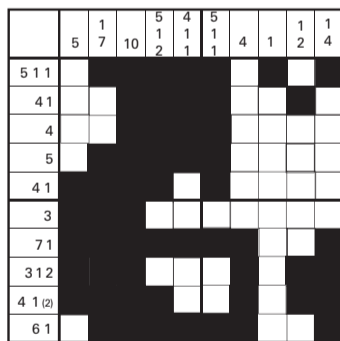
Now then FUCWITs, answers to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk. Go!

Nonogram 1,446

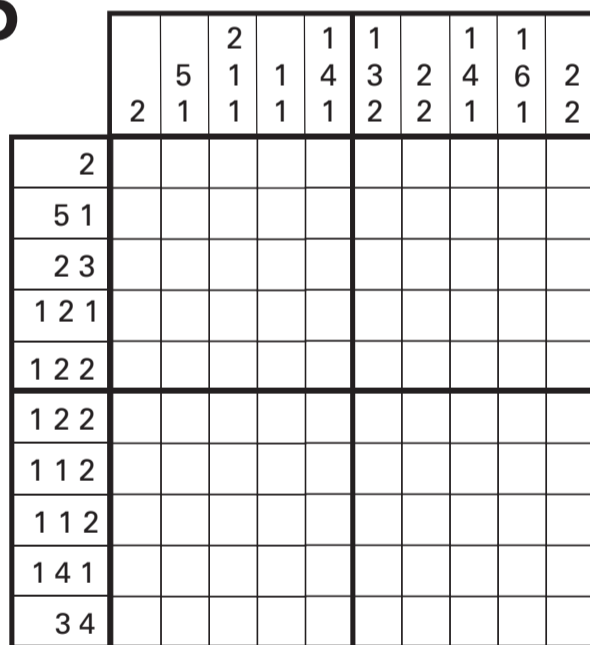
How to play:

The numbers represent the size and order of blocks in each column and row. There must be at least one space between each block. See last week's solution below for more help.

Solution 1445



I made a mistake last week: the penultimate row should have read "4 1 2" but it actually read "4 1". Ah well shit happens. Thanks to all those who pointed it out. We promise that this one will not be broken. Oh by the way, it was a third of the recycle symbol... it was green week!



Going Underground

Well done to **Matt Colvin** who managed to find PADDINGTON as the missing word. Again it was a double wammy as HILLINGDON was also accepted. However, the rules are first correct answer in!

Each letter in the alphabet is assigned a value, 1-26 (see table) and every word has a value equal to sum of the values of its letters. Scan and send the Underground station that is hidden each week to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	22	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	12	11	10	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	2	23	24	25	26

BANK = 28 2+1+14+11=28. Job done.

So which London tube station sums to 161?

161

felix Lovestruck



07726 799 424

Seen that special person? Could be *the one*? Want to see them again?

Text **Lovestruck** to get a free union lunch together!

"Dinosaur seeking lovelly other dinosaur to make lots of little dinosaurs. I want to ravish you in a moresome with a Russian, a Chinese girl and a... Hmmm don't know what the best adjective to describe Chloe is, you choose."

Cat Phone

"U r the long haired boy studying physics. Is ur name polly or was it molly? U sit infront of me. Mind sitting on me? For ur infomation my vector has a very large magnitude. care 2 lend me a hand normalising it?"

Honky tonk

"Hot harvey: we can't mistake your biology, the way that you talk, the way that you walk, you're there in our thoughts, we watch you after biology... We'll be your girls aloud ;-) xXxXx from the SAF Sirens."

Talking to boobs

"Dear intellectual PhD physicist I no what we did was wong, but it felt so wright! Please fall onto me again sometime soon."

2nd year biochemist

"I have the clap yes. I do. However that just shows that i'm an experenced man in the sack. And to be honest out of it, around it, on it. Ladies I

will show you a time so great you'll never shag another clap free man,"

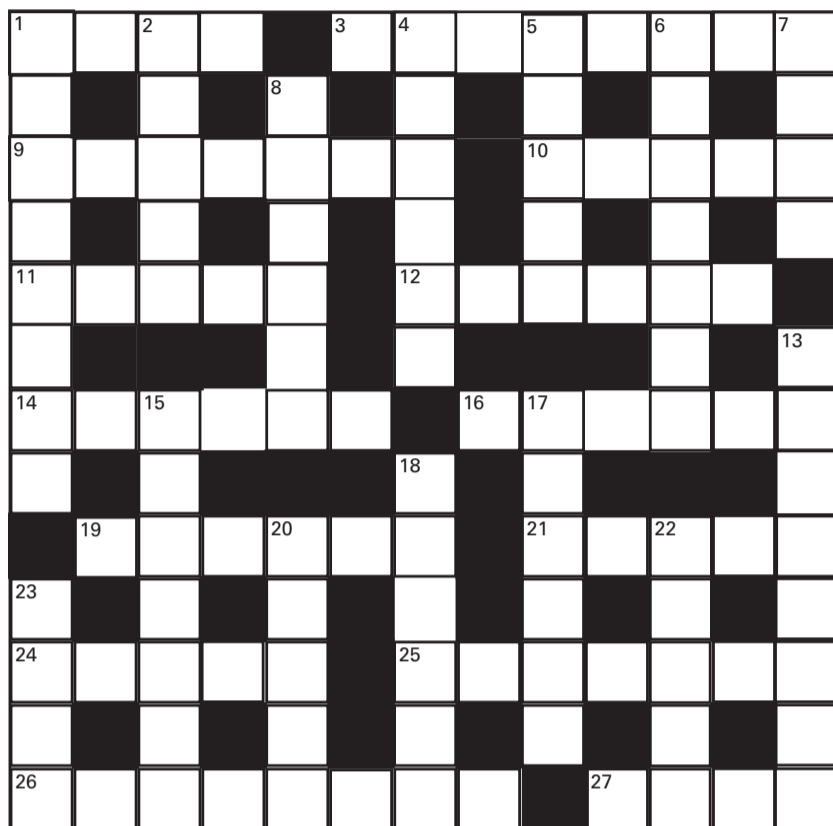
Applause

"Dear Woman. Do you have a gash? I'm not picky."

Need a shag

Paid £10 for this ad. Needless to say, we're going Dutch on our first date.

A quickie (crossword) 1,446



ACROSS

- 1 Sound of pellet dropping into water (4)
 3 Got rid of (like old banger?) (8)
 9 Sound of welly stepping in mud (7)
 10 Flower (wolf-like?) (5)
 11 Glacial ridge - Eater (anag.) (5)
 12 Begin journey - Systematically display (3,3)
 14 Not question (6)
 16 Japanese exclamation (military) (6)
 19 Sound of puddle wading (6)
 21 Sound of struck cymbal (5)
 24 Not dead (5)
 25 Gentlemanly literature - Oat rice (anag.) (7)
 26 Famous Apache warrior (8)
 27 Sound of F1 car -Pan in (4)
- 5 Parcel out (5)
 6 “___-___ hot-shot - how do you spell HIV? Are you positive?” - N.M.T. Buzzcocks? (3-4)
 7 Sound of microwave completion - Blemish (on one’s motor) (4)
 8 Part of record, or jacket (6)
 13 Mash riff (anag.) (4,4)
 15 More wet (in a prissy sort of way) (7)
 17 Fix (6)
 18 Lung-butter/Hockle/Loogie/Docker’s-omlette/Grem etc... (6)
 20 Chain of cinemas (5)
 22 Hispanic pal (5)
 23 Sound of an explosion (4)

DOWN

- 1 Kick bucket (4,4)
 2 Egg (5)
 4 As Jamie was to Zoe, Johnny was to Denise, Philip was to Fearne, and Richard was to Judy (2-4)

Solution 1445



Scribble box

PETER!!! You might be able to ask Nick Griffin questions, but... you cocked this one up. Sorry lads, I have now castrated Mr Logg and sent him back to teh North. However he has tried to redeem himself with this effort. Despite this **Alan Murrell** and **Phillippa Owens** still managed to win!

Crossword by **Peter Logg**

Sorrow-scopes; horoscopes, but with a tear of sadness

Look, we don't care if you find these too "far out" and "offensive". It's all legal and morally sound in our minds



Aquarius
 "I'll eat that computer if you down that pint right now" you say as you point to the nearest library terminal. Your mate downs the pint easily

and it looks like you're in the shit. You start chomping away the screen, smash it and the LCD crystals taste a bit like marmite. Shame you hate marmite. You spit the gunk onto the fit girl opposite, as library security tazer your fine ass.



Pisces
 Amongst the dingy lights and 'wicked' music of Tiger Tiger you somehow find yourself with a girl. You close in for a kiss,

problem is you're so fucked on drugs you literally eat her face off. You don't stop there though, your mouth has become a gurning machine, and while she thinks you're having a stroke, you're busy trying to stroke her. Fail.



Aries
 He's not going to sleep with you, quit the Facebook stalking and stop planning the murder of his current girlfriend. She's more

awesome than you and rides him like a pro. You need more experience. Maybe you can get some by becoming a necrophiliac. They won't say no. Practice makes perfect.



Taurus
 Working in the Union has dragged you to your lowest depths. You're ready to give in and throw yourself off the SAC

balcony leaving a bloody mess on Phil Power's desk below. You'll do it, but mid-fall you realise you're already dead inside, and will probably just scare poor old Phil as your torso throws weeks of paperwork across the office.



Gemini
 You sleep through lectures, procrastinate during lunch, insult your best friend's dead aunt, go home, wank over the busty

biologists you noticed passing SAF, do some work (wank), wank a bit more, relax (wank) while your roommate pops out for a smoke, assault the nearest medic, fall asleep, dream about said biologists, wake up and repeat. Wanker.



Cancer
 Donkeys better than horses? You're having a laugh. Unless it's a fit donkey, in which case I'm in for a ride too. Might as well make

a DVD and get some cash out of this, could get sponsored by the RSPCA too. Oh shit, PETA are after you, quick, hide in the nearest brothel. You like women, yes. No donkey lovers here.



Leo
 Oh, you're a website are you? Fuck me, you don't seem to be acting like one. An update a week? That's almost as frequent as a certain

newspaper on campus. All you are is a one-stop-shop for masturbating hacks as they ejaculate all over the underside of their desks at the thought of incorrectly filled-in Minibus hire forms. Oh, the sexy lapse in security. Oh, the humanity! SPLAT.



Virgo
 You're standing there, in the middle of the field, wet and muddy as fuck. As you see another goal fly past you, you start

to wonder why you even bothered turning up. The time your brain has processed this thought, they've scored 4 more goals. Fine, it's time to get out the razors you keep in your socks and turn them against your own wrists. I'll 114-nil YOU.



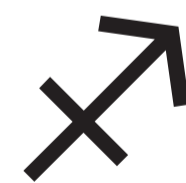
Libra
 You're happily sitting on the tube on your way home when a big fat Serbian bloke tries to speak to you. He's just plain harrasing

you, but in a weird way you're getting turned on. The train halts and he 'accidentally' gets thrown into your lap. He breaks your pelvis as well as your new iPhone. You get off at Oxford Circus to get your iPhone replaced ASAP.



Scorpio
 Stop breathing my air. Stop eating my wedges. Stop sitting on SAF seats like they're yours! You have about 7 other campuses you could be

at. All you do is claim you're too busy for anything, hang out with yourselves, then up with wankered in the Reynolds and hitting police officers. All together now: BLOODY MEDICS. I'll forgive you though. I'll forgive you though, cos you're lovely.



Sagittarius
 It's your birthday and you're drunk. Surprise, surprise. But what's this? You have half the hall chasing your arse down Exhibition Road

because you wished to be Usain Bolt when you blew out the candles. You breeze past Ethos and get hit by a Gee-Whiz. Check if the driver's still alive, the fucking loser. He's okay, but you're not. Death, makes a change. Best birthday ever.



Capricorn
 You're in the Union, and you've just finished off your thirteen pints of John Smith's, dirty fucker. You stumble out to the quad, vomit on

the nearest steward and the next thing you know, you've woken up on top of the Huxley building. Not exactly what you had in mind when you started sports night. Arrogant fresher. Pint?

Aunty McPickle is a bit nippy this week. No, literally.

Dear Aunty McPickle,

On a recent binge trip to Milan I decided to get my nipple pierced. It was going relatively ok until I felt a strange oozing sensation from the tip of the nipple and a white milky-rice-pudding like substance started running down my chest. I hoped it would stop after a couple of days but it hasn't.

I am now lactating and have to wear several layers to hide it. What do I do?

Joseph Sparrow



You'd better let some out to relieve the pressure, Joe, otherwise you'll look like this

Dear Joseph

Woah.

Must have been a right corker! Although males don't lactate under normal circumstances, when stimulated excessively (or in your case pierced) lactation can be initiated. Have you been playing with it too much? Or perhaps running current through it. It may just be a lot of pus which needs to be let out but either way you should deft get this looked at.

In the meantime, however, you could consider investing in a pair of nipple pads. Oh, and avoid strong magnets, as well as running shirtless into electric fences.

Aunty McPickle xxx

Dear Aunty Mc Pickle,

I have started having trouble getting aroused by my girlfriend in the normal bed setting.

A nagging desire for something more exciting has perpetuated itself: the physics showers. Do you think I can get away with it?

Stevie Hasselhoff

Dear Stevie,

I'm pretty sure this has been done before; at least there are rumours of it. I think you should maybe consider why your girlfriend in particular is not

arousing you anymore. Maybe it has less to do with the place but more to do with her face? In that case, you should consider getting her a boob job and a paper bag for Christmas. If you don't think this is a problem then experimenting is totally healthy.

However, getting caught out might earn you a rather peculiar rep. You could both try wearing the paper bags, but if they happen to come off when you're discovered, you'll earn an even weirder reputation.

Then again, it's not as if everyone that does physics is exactly "normal", even for Imperial standards.

Yours,
AuntyMcPickle xxx

Dear Aunty McPickle,

I recently had my boyfriend over for the weekend and we decided to have a steamy moment in the sauna. My mum had been asleep but apparently woke up and decided to walk into the bathroom fully starkers to take a shower!

We hid behind the wall but had to face the shower to avoid being seen. My boyfriend couldn't take his eyes off of her naked body and he seemed to have a much larger erection than he has with me. It was four whole inches!

Should I feel jealous?

Michelle Bigrod

Dear Michelle,

This sounds a bit embarrassing. At least your mum didn't see you two. I would probably try to forget about the whole episode. It must have been a very confusing situation for your boyfriend but maybe watch out for him checking her out or attempting footsy in the future. That would not be cool.

If you do happen to catch him flirting, cut his tiny cock off, either literally or figuratively - I'll leave that up to you. Don't feel too upset, though. He'll know that you'll look like her in twenty years anyway.

Hope you get through this,
Aunty McPickle xxx

RAG Charities Pt. 2: Great Ormond Street Hospital

You may have heard about our upcoming carol-singing events, but if you haven't, we're having two upcoming carol-singing events.

Our first is this Friday, the 4th of December at Green Park Station with Imperial College Chamber Choir. We'll be needing 5-7 collectors, and if you like, you can join in the singing!

Our main event on Monday, the 14th of December, however, will take place on the main stage at Trafalgar Square, right under the massive Christmas

Tree, with the Main Choir, and we'll be needing about 15 to 20 collectors.

These lovely yuletide occasions are for the benefit of The Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. Opened in 1852 in Bloomsbury, this hospital not only has the widest range of children's specialists out of any hospital in the country, but also conducts leading research in children's medicine.

It is notable for its high-profile supporters, which have included Queens Victoria and Elizabeth, Tony Blair and Victoria Beckham. In 1929, author JM

Barrie even donated the rights to his play and novel Peter Pan to the hospital, so that it receives royalties from productions of the play and sales of the novel.

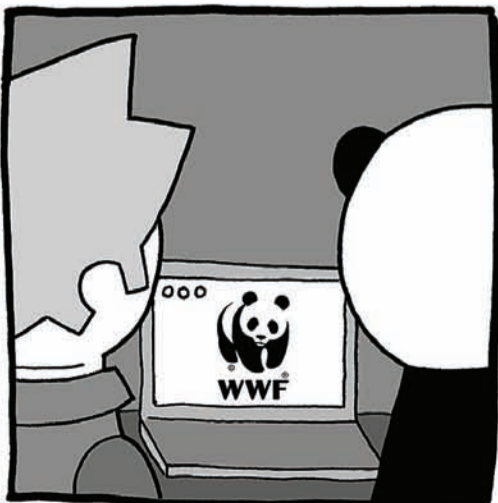
Nevertheless, the hospital continually needs to pay for accommodation, not only for the patients, but their parents, as well as new equipment and their extensive research into children's medicine.

So if you're interested in helping out such a worthy cause, don't hesitate to contact us at rag@imperial.ac.uk to join in with the Christmasness!



Some patients from the Great Ormond Street Hospital website (GOSH.org)

ANDY PANDA



ANDYPANDA.CO.UK

Cycling weather it out in South Wales

Iain Gillam Cycling

Arriving at the Queen's Tower minutes before the strict five o'clock deadline, I fully expected to be subjected to a barrage of abuse for not being on time. However it turns out that quite a few of us were running late. With the minibus packed and ready to go at the slightly later time of 5:30, the club trip to Afan forest, in the far flung corner of the UK that is South Wales, set off.

After exhausting all normal conversation a few hours in our thoughts turned to the weather or more to the point how bad it was. The radio might have mentioned something about the worst storm in the UK this year readying itself to hit south Wales on the Saturday. Luckily the storms hadn't worked up enough force to close the seven bridge and we arrived at our destination, Bryn Bettws lodge, in relatively good time (six hours after setting off in the rush hour traffic).

Saturday arrived in a mildly wet and windy manner, but nothing of the

storms that the news had been threatening the day before. After making the most of the included breakfast at the shockingly early time of 8:30 we set about preparing the bikes and commenting on (Toby's) kit choice before embarking on Afan's longest trail, w2. After warming up with a descent followed by a short climb, the general consensus seemed to be that riding all day in the slight drizzle wouldn't be a problem. However, only a short while later the rain gradually built up into a fully fledged storm, turning the trails into muddy rivers and making us question who had coined the laughable term "waterproof", as no item of clothing described as such seemed to fulfil its promise. Dave provided the mornings' entertainment by mysteriously leaping off his bike into a bush to inspect the local fauna. I personally found the rest of that downhill section challenging, it seems the side effects of viewing Dave launch into said bush impair the bikes' handling somewhat.

We had planned to stop halfway round w2 at the skyline centre in which

there is an excellent cafe. On this occasion, it was packed full of wet, muddy bikers desperately trying to find an excuse not to go back out into the howling gale and torrential rain. After fuelling up we continued on the trail; mercifully the weather was starting to improve, and just as we were about to finish the ride several hours later, it could even have been described as quite nice! The afternoon was filled with a challenging climb, littered with exhausted riders who hadn't quite managed to make it too the top (or for some people, had barely left the start!) All the hard effort spent in the ascension was rewarded by the final descent back to the lodge.

After fully exploring Port Talbot's night life (well, the one pub to be found there) Sunday dawned to the sound of yet more rain and very strange noises escaping from everyone's bikes. Shortly after driving to the skyline centre, so that James and I could be robbed by the bike shop in exchange for a few sets of brake pads, we headed to the Penhydd centre to ride the trail of the same name.

Luckily it had stopped raining, and we were able to enjoy the shorter Penhydd trail even fitting in a spot of light reading at the top. After arriving back at the trail centre car park we packed up the minibus and headed back to London at the rapid pace of about 62mph.



Cycling Club partaking in a some light reading in South Wales



FIXTURES & RESULTS

imperial college union

sport Imperial

in association with Sports Partnership

Saturday 21st November

Fencing

Tournament (BUCS)

Women's 1st 132 - 95 University of Bristol 1st
Women's 1st 127 - 96 Oxford University 1st
Women's 1st 135 - 97 University of Cambridge 1st
Women's 1st 135 - 65 Queen Mary 1st

Football (ULU)

Men's 1s 1 - 4 LSE 1s
Men's 2s 0 - 0 UCL 1s
Men's 4s 0 - 2 UCL 6s
Men's 5s 1 - 1 RUMS 2s
Men's 7s 2 - 0 RUMS 4s

Vase

Men's 6s 1 - 2 Royal Veterinary College 2s

Sunday 22nd November

Football (ULU)

Women's 1s 10 - 0 King's College Medicals 2s

Rugby (ULU)

Women's 1s 17 - 30 King's College Medicals 1s

Hockey (ULU Challenge Cup)

Women's 1s 5 - 3 RUMS 1s

Monday 23rd November

Netball (ULU)

Challenge Cup
Women's 1s 24 - 46 Imperial College Medicals 1s
Reserve Cup
Women's 2s 15 - 19 Imperial College Medicals 2s

Wednesday 25th November

Badminton

Men's 1st 4 - 4 University of Portsmouth 1st

Women's 1st 2 - 6 UCL 1st

Basketball

Men's 1st 46 - 44 King's College Medicals 1st

Fencing

Men's 2nd 135 - 95 Brunel University 1st
Men's 3rd 97 - 131 University of London 2nd
Women's 2nd 98 - 124 UCL 1st

Football

Men's 1st 3 - 2 St Mary's University College 4th
Men's 2nd 0 - 1 RUMS 1st
Men's 3rd 2 - 0 Imperial College Medicals 2nd
Women's 1st 0 - 5 Brunel University 2nd

ULU

Men's 5s 5 - 0 Royal Holloway 4s
Men's 6s 4 - 0 Royal Holloway 6s
Men's 7s 1 - 7 Imperial College Medicals 3s

Golf

Men's 1st 3 - 3 Brunel University 1st

Hockey

Men's 1st 2 - 1 University of Kent 1st
Men's 2nd 4 - 1 Canterbury Christ Church Uni 2nd
Men's 3rd 1 - 1 Brunel University 3rd
Men's 4th 3 - 2 University of Sussex 2nd
Women's 1st 12 - 0 University of Chichester 2nd
Women's 2nd 5 - 1 Bucks New University 1st

Lacrosse

Women's 1st 18 - 0 University of Essex 1st

Netball

Women's 1st 38 - 50 University of Hertfordshire 2nd
Women's 2nd 29 - 26 Brunel University 5th
Women's 3rd 30 - 31 Royal Holloway 3rd

Rugby

Men's 1st 15 - 15 RUMS 1st
Men's 2nd 17 - 19 University of Hertfordshire 1st
Women's 1st 0 - 73 UCL 1st

Squash

Men's 3rd vs University of Kent 2nd
Men's 4th 3 - 0 Buckinghamshire New University 1st
Women's 1st 4 - 0 University of Reading 1st

Tennis

Men's 1st 8 - 2 King's College 1st
Women's 1st 3 - 7 University of Portsmouth 1st

Thursday 26th November

Volleyball (ULU)

Challenge Cup
Mixed 1s vs UCL Mixed 1s

Saturday 28th November

Football (ULU)

Men's 1s vs King's College Medicals 1s
Men's 2s vs RUMS 1s
Men's 3s vs Imperial College Medicals 1s
Men's 5s vs Imperial College 4s
Men's 6s vs King's College 5s
Men's 7s vs Central School of Speech and Drama 1s

Volleyball (BUCS)

Men's 1st vs University of Essex 1st
Men's 1st vs University of Kent 1st
Women's 1st vs University of Portsmouth 1st
Women's 1st vs University of Sussex 1st

Sunday 29th November

Football (ULU)

Women's 1s vs UCL 2s

Hockey (ULU)

Challenge Cup
Men's 1s vs Royal Veterinary College 1s
Reserve Cup
Men's 2s vs UCL 3s
Women's 2s vs Royal School of Mines 1s

Lacrosse (ULU)

Mixed 1s vs King's College Mixed 1s

Monday 30th November

Badminton (ULU)

Mixed 1s vs King's College Medicals 1s

Basketball (ULU)

Women's 1s vs SOAS 1s
Challenge Cup
Men's 2s vs SOAS 1s

Netball (ULU)

Women's 1s vs St George's Medical School 1s
Women's 3s vs Queen Mary 3s
Women's 4s vs St George's Medical School 4s

Squash (ULU)

Challenge Cup
Men's 2s vs St Barts 1s
Reserve Cup
Men's 3s vs LSE 4s
Men's 4s vs UCL 2s

Water Polo (ULU)

Mixed 1s vs St Barts 1s

Wednesday 2nd December

Badminton

Men's 1st vs University of Hertfordshire 1st
Men's 2nd vs University of Surrey 1st
Women's 1st vs University of Hertfordshire 1st

Basketball

Men's 1st vs City University London 1st

Fencing

Men's 2nd vs UCL 2nd
Men's 3rd vs University of Hertfordshire Men's 1st
Women's 2nd vs Brunel 1st

Football

Men's 1st vs Brunel 4th
Men's 2nd vs University of Hertfordshire 3rd
Women's 1st vs University of Surrey 1st

ULU

Men's 5s vs UCL 5s
Men's 7s vs Goldsmiths 3s

Golf

Men's 1st vs University of Essex 1st

Hockey

Men's 1st vs University of Portsmouth 1st
Men's 2nd vs Imperial College Medicals 2nd
Men's 3rd vs Middlesex University 1st
Men's 4th vs University of Westminster 1st
Women's 1st vs St Mary's University College 1st
Women's 2nd vs Royal Holloway 2nd

Lacrosse

Men's 1st vs University of Kent 1st
Women's 1st vs UCL 1st

Netball

Women's 1st vs University of Greenwich 1st
Women's 2nd vs Thames Valley University 1st

Rugby

Men's 1st vs Bucks New University 1st
Men's 2nd vs King's College 1st
Men's 3rd vs University of Chichester Men's 2nd
Men's 4th vs University Campus Suffolk 1st
Women's 1st vs University of East London 1st

Squash

Men's 2nd vs King's College 1st
Men's 3rd vs Queen Mary 1st
Men's 4th vs Royal Holloway 2nd
Women's 1st vs University of Sussex 1st

Table Tennis

Men's 1st vs Middlesex University 1st

Tennis

Men's 2nd vs SOAS 1st
Women's 1st vs UCL 1st

A fine win for ICUAFC 2nd XI

Damian Phelan Football

OLIVER WYMAN

Imperial College Men's 2nd XI	3
London South Bank Uni 3rd XI	1

The 2nd XI travelled to Dulwich a week ago last Wednesday to take on South Bank 3s in a crunch BUCS cup 2nd round clash. Imperial arrived well before kick-off allowing for the usual long-winded pre-match team talk from Damian Phelan and a solid warm-up which included some banter between Mamzi and our Colombian referee.

The 2nds lined up in their now textbook 4-2-3-1 formation and as the match got underway immediately set about imposing their passing game; Mark Smith and Max Moesta controlling the tempo from their deep lying midfield positions. Marc Hinken and Max Kindred were majestic at centre back, dominating in the air and stroking the ball about with aplomb while Phil Meier and Justin Whitehouse proved formidable opponents for the South Bank wingers. They became frustrated at their lack of possession, and Imperial began to look threatening on the attack.

Some neat interplay between Mamzi Roshid and Damian Phelan sliced open the South Bank defence creating an opportunity for our graceful new fresher, Caspar Paxton, who

just pulled his shot wide of the post. Quickly another chance fell to Caspar from the same source, only for him to agonisingly strike his shot past the post again. The South Bank goal was living a charmed life as Sim Anandajeyarajah and Smithy stung the keeper's gloves and the pressure finally became too much as Moesta made a scything break down the right hand side before sliding a cracking ball into Sim who finished coolly, striking the ball cleanly across the face of the goal and into the bottom corner. The half time whistle blew soon after and the 2nds were pleased to have provided themselves with a platform from which to go on and kill the game.

However, 10 minutes into the 2nd half a key moment turned the game on its head. The South Bank captain attempted to make a substitution but the player leaving the field decided that he was too good to go off. He was not having it.

The captain responded with obscenities and Imperial were beginning losing their focus. Finally this bizarre episode ended as the substituted player finally trudged his way to the changing room. Moments later a long ball over the top outfoxed the 2nds centre backs and bang, a crisp half volley nestled into the corner of the goal, 1-1. A blot on an otherwise quality performance for the Imperial back five. The game turned scrappy, favouring South Bank,

who threw men forward in search of a winner. Imperial 2nds though are made of strong stuff this season, they regrouped and once again began to dominate possession, the introduction of fresher and debutant Jack Lowe providing some extra energy on the wing. The 2nds resolve paid off as, with 15 minutes remaining, Damian played a silky one-two with Sim on the edge of the box, glided past the centre half and slammed a powerful shot into the bottom corner. With the lead restored, confidence high and South Bank going absolutely gung-ho for an equaliser, Imperial felt there were more goals to be scored. Even from right back there was a threat, as Justin surged out of defence and picked out Damian steaming through the gaping hole in the South Bank back four who took one touch to set it away from the closing defender and struck it beautifully to once again find the bottom corner of the net and finish the game as a contest. There could have been even more if not for Damian's shameless pursuit of a hat-trick but otherwise the 2nds finished the game strongly to kill off the game 3-1. A fine win to guarantee progression to the 3rd round where LSE 3rds are waiting. A special mention for Justin who was awarded the man of the match awarded for his typically strong defensive display which was coupled on this occasion with some dazzling attacking play.

IC victorious in London Derby

Continued From Back Page

eventually Imperial made the most of a two-minute suspension and went ahead. Some unforced errors and hasty attempts to break through UCL's defence led to avoidable turnovers and sparked hope in our opponents, but the Eagles could rely on their solid defending to secure them a 1 goal advantage at half-time.

The second half demonstrated a definite lack of creativity, routine and luck in attack and with only 9 goals scored by Imperial in the entire match (Handball scores usually exceed 20 goals for each team); the thought of potentially losing this fixture did cross my mind.

Fortunately, our defending abilities exceed our attacking skills and with the goalkeeper on form, saving 4 penalties and earning himself the title of EHA man of the match, we were able to double our advantage just before the final whistle and take the 2 league points home.

All in all it was a mildly encouraging, enthusiastic display by the Imperial Eagles, which puts them in the top 3 of the league.

It is safe to say, however, that a team, which orders more rounds in a pub than they score goals in a game of Handball, has several issues to work on.

Fencing success in Cambridge

Indy Leclercq Sports Editor

Imperial Fencing Women's 1st team pulled off an impressive display of fencing last weekend to settle into the top spot of the Southern Premiership.

The girls travelled up to Cambridge to take part in a tournament-style affair, which saw them fence their first four matches of the season over two intense days.

Competing against Cambridge, Oxford, Bristol and UCL, the team was only composed of five people: Captain Clare Harding; ACC sports person of the year Hannah Bryars; ICFC president Emily Bottle and strong new arrivals Alice Mitchell and Outi Supponen. Lack of numbers notwithstanding, some very strong fencing coupled with a deft bit of multitasking led the 1sts to victory in all four matches.

Following last year's silverware, the Fencing girls once again show they are a major force to be reckoned with (and have put the pressure on the men's 1sts to perform in a couple of weeks' time in Oxford!).

On another note, a record number of fencing novices are going up to Warwick this weekend for a chance to cut their teeth at a big competition. Good luck guys!



Imperial College Football Club's 2nd XI sporting their t-shirts in support of the Kick Racism out of Football Campaign

Kick Racism Out

Imperial College Football 2nd XI used their BUCS cup tie against London South Bank 3s to promote a cause which is important to the football club as a whole, the Kick Racism Out of Football campaign. The team can be seen in the accompanying photograph sporting t-shirts in support of the the project.

These t-shirts were worn throughout the day and into the night and will continue to be worn by football club members to aid in spreading the Kick Racism Out message. The campaign aims to use football as a means of challenging discrimination and working for positive change in sport and in society as a whole. It is in its 16th year now and continues to be commended internationally by institutions such as the European Commission and the

British Council as a great example of how to use sport to promote equality.

Imperial College Football Club boasts an internationally flavoured membership representing all races and a variety of nations and we think it is important to stress that this blend has helped us to become a better club on and off the pitch. This is why we have decided to support the Kick Racism Out campaign and are proud to promote the message wherever we travel.

Organised by IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION ISOC

THE BIG DEBATE

CAN WE LIVE BETTER LIVES WITHOUT RELIGION?

1ST DECEMBER 2009 - 6:30PM

With the rise of neo-Atheism and liberal humanism, religions and religious ideas are constantly under attack. Christopher Hitchens in his best seller *God Is Not Great* said "RELIGIONS POISON EVERYTHING" Is he right? Or is he a product of our secular society, conditioned at pointing the finger at religion?

HAMZA ANDREAS TZORTZIS

International Public Speaker on Islam (iERA)

PETER CAVE

Philosophy Lecturer, Author & Chair of the British Humanist Association's Philosophers Group

Imperial College, SAF Building, Room G16 (LT1) South Kensington Campus, London SW7 2AZ

For non-Imperial students/guests please reserve your seat by emailing thebigreligiondebate@googlemail.com

Valiant effort by Immortals



Geoffrey Chow American Football	
Imperial Immortals	8
Anglia Ruskin Phantoms	28

Sunday saw the Imperial Immortals take to the road for their first ever away game, hosted by the Anglia Ruskin Phantoms. After a baptism of fire against a strong Portsmouth side to open the season, expectations were high for the Immortals to bounce

back and be competitive against the Phantoms.

On a blustery day in Chelmsford, the Immortals went behind early giving up a touchdown and two point conversion on the Phantoms' first series. However they bounced back after an explosive 52 yard kick return by Jake Murphy and a 14 yard run by full-back Alex Karvelas setting up an 11 yard touchdown run for Tino Millar on their next possession.

Despite some stout defensive work

from the Immortals, including a pair of sacks by Charlie Kennedy and Geoffrey Chow, the Phantoms scored on their next two possessions, opening up a 22-6 lead. The Immortals offense responded with a 30 yard drive, including a run of 20 yards by quarterback Edward Fisher, but they were unable to find the end-zone again before half-time.

After the break the Immortals controlled the 3rd quarter and strong defence and special teams work was

rewarded with a safety, when Quirin Grossman blocked a punt in the end zone to make the score 8-22. The offense put together drives of 49 yards and 66 yards, including a career long for running back Tino Millar of 35 yards, ably supported by Dan Groszek, Alex Karvelas and Daniel Jones who also contributed yardage.

Despite the intense pressure the Immortals put on the Phantoms, they were unable to put more points on the board and the Phantoms managed to

break one final run to end the game 8-28.

Despite the loss the team was buoyed by managing to put 265 yards of total offence and forcing 2 turnovers on a team with 6 seasons experience on them.

MVP honours were as follows:
Offensive - Tino Millar
Defensive - Quirin Grossman
Offensive Line - Frederico Sanches
Overall - Charles Kennedy

Eagles overcome UCL

Stefan Bauer Handball	
Imperial College Men's	9
University College London	7

"It was probably the worst Handball game I have ever had to see, let alone be involved in!"

A quote which, despite bearing negativity, is needed in order for the team to maintain a clear conscience.

After losing our league 2 debut to Warwick University 2 weeks ago, we were all set to play Loughborough last weekend.

They were a team we were able to beat last season, but that does not face the problem of having to rely on an influx of new Erasmus students each

year, which gives them the advantage of having greater consistency throughout the seasons.

Due to the recent restructuring of the league's divisions Loughborough were moved to a different group and have been replaced by UCL, who entered a Handball team for the first time in their history.

In spite of never having played them before, this match was going to be intense from the moment the teams met at the tube station (it was also the first time the UCL players met each other), since there was a lot of pride and prestige involved.

It took a while for the game to gain momentum (if there was any), but

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