

# FELIX



The Student Newspaper of Imperial College

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## Keep off the Grass

BY RACHEL WALTERS

Following another spate of cannabis raids on Imperial College halls, there is still confusion about the details of IC's drugs policy. Five more students are facing college disciplinary proceedings after being caught with marijuana in the past week.

Over the bank holiday weekend a number of students were found with cannabis seeds and marijuana plants in Southside. One student, found with a two-foot tall marijuana plant, several packets of cannabis seeds and a set of precision scales, vigorously denied that he was a dealer. Earlier in the weekend a drugs pusher was chased out of Southside by a sub-warden.

College security are continuing to press for a clarification of college policy on the issue. There appears to be a wide discrepancy in the way hall wardens are dealing with the problem. According to Terry Briley, deputy head of security, some wardens deal with offenders at residence tribunals, whilst other students face college disciplinary action. "Some wardens don't even tell us at all," he said.

Peter Mee, Imperial's registrar, admitted that "it is an

(Continued on back page)



Photo: Owain Bennallack

"Straight, go straight!" "Right?" "No! I said straight!" Imperial College Union sent a team of sabbaticals, security officers, Union staff and students to a gruelling raft race last weekend, writes Owain Bennallack. The one hundred mile journey along the River Wye, billed as the 'toughest endurance test in Britain', certainly lived up to expectations. With the lowest river conditions for fifteen years, the first day saw team seventeen having to carry and drag 'The Prince Consort' over large sections of river and eventually being forced to abandon ship after 28 miles. It was decided to withdraw for the second day to recuperate. Then, on Bank Holiday Monday, the raft set out again - with a slimmed down crew and reinforcements from the disbanded RSPCA team. Hitting the water at 6.00am, they battled valiantly to complete the route, passing Chepstow Castle and cheering crowds at midday. Despite this rude awakening to the need for training and fitness, everyone present was proud of their involvement and there are even plans for another outing! Dan Look, Deputy President, commented: "Obviously I am disappointed that we didn't complete the full hundred miles but I think everyone worked really hard to achieve the distance we did". The Prince Consort was partially sponsored by STA Travel and the Union Bookstore and hopes to raise around £1500 for various charities.

## NUS Rejects Graduate Tax

BY RACHEL WALTERS

The National Union of Students has rejected proposals to support funding based on student contributions. At the extraordinary general meeting in Derby last Tuesday, delegates voted instead to continue to call for grants to be increased to 1979 levels.

The NUS held a £300,000 conference earlier this year, leading to the formulation of

their document "Funding our Future". The policy review calculated that basic rates of income tax would have to be increased by at least 6.5p in the pound to fund the current expansion of higher education with grants at the 1979/80 levels. As an alternative, the document came out in favour of a graduate tax and maintenance income contingency loans. These would differ from the present student

loans system because repayment would be related to the students' future income. Graduate employers should contribute to funding through National Insurance contributions.

The conference put these proposals to debate. But despite support from NUS President Jim Murphy, the one thousand delegates voted to retain the original policy, calling for a return to full students grants.

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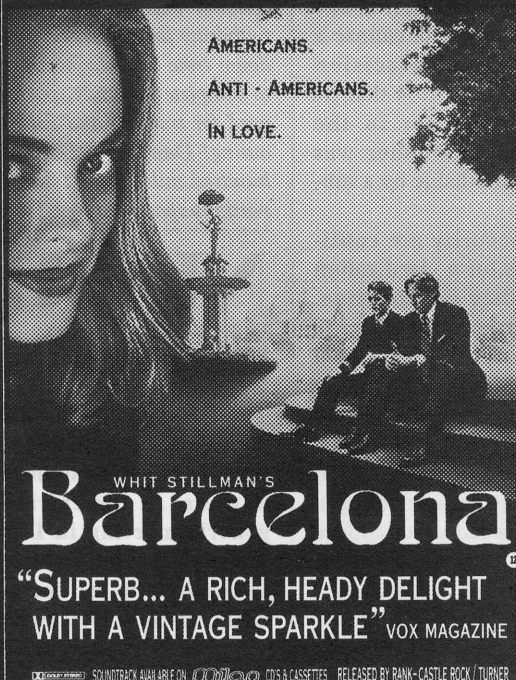
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# Leave this City

When Jack Kerouac wrote 'On the Road' he redefined a feeling that, despite the press spin at the time, is probably as old as man itself. We are wanderers: our vast spread across the planet is probably as much an indication of the need to move as of that for space to live and stand still in. And those weary levi'd travellers of America's fifties share much in common with the hordes of backpackers that shift across the planet like locusts, devouring culture and spending dollars.

Everyone is looking for the reason and sometimes the next mountain range can be enough to drag you on. Our language is riddled with signifiers of the importance of movement: the 'freeways', the myth of the frontier, the priceless 'passport'. But equally, by definition, travel can only be a temporary solution. When the travelling stops the living begins again and whether one returns home or emigrates, disappointment can only follow

the excitement of the road. Again, the bohemian leaving Prague or Bali is only a little removed from the silence in a family car driving back from Heathrow after two weeks in the South of Spain. Anyone who finds his happiness walking to the greener grass will never smile over the final pasture.

And so to this issue. We decided that, rather than attempt to provide an all-too-slight overview of travel options and ticket prices, we would present instead experiences. Individual 'postcards' that, we hope, might inspire some feeling of wanderlust in you or, better, to take a vague already present notion and spur it into action.

The selection of articles are not intended to be guides to the featured countries: rather they are a reflection of the feelings they inspired in those who went to them. As such, I hope they provide a brief insight into the post-travel blues. If it was

surprising how easy it was to get people to write about their favourite destinations, it was astonishing how many of them wanted to simply return to the same place again.

As for my own voyages, nothing prepared me for my modest escape last summer. Despite being born in Australia (emigrating at nine) my family, has in the main, led a land locked existence. In fact, I could never really understand the concept of languages at school. I knew that there were places where people spoke differently to us, but the strange language of Chaucer and electromagnet waves seemed far more down to earth.

It was only when my plane disgorged me at Charles de Gaulle that I realised there really were other lands and other peoples. They say that travel expands the mind; the vast diversity of human culture was instantly forced upon me and my world view changed. I ran about

the airport and the metro looking at words in French, amazed that they meant something to the people around me. And then, less obviously I met some French people and found them, cornily, not that different from myself.

An alien and unknown city, the helplessness of a divorcee from language, the solid reality of hitherto mythical places like the Louvre and the Seine – they in turn made the whole world seem real in some way. Behind every postcard now there is a real place, with a million intersecting life-lines crisscrossing via the mail and the aeroplane.

I know now that I must travel and see something of the world, but my greatest fear is of becoming the vacuous country-spotter who drinks McShakes from Peru to Portugal. I hate the idea of travel for its own sake: it seems so irrational, defeatist. But as I ponder trips I know too that that's my only reason for going.

Owain

## editorial

Well here we are, with only three more weeks until the end of the term and only two more issues of FELIX. Boo-hoo, I pretend to hear you cry! But wait, don't despair. Your favourite (your only) student newspaper still has a couple of old dogs shaking new tricks up its sleeves.

Firstly, next week we're taking a look at the ultimate challenge: the battle of the sexes. Two teams – the male team and the female team – will be waging war in a conflict to be won through erudition over emotion. Articles are still gratefully received, although we need everything by Monday latest.

Then finally, the last issue of term. (As usual no issue on Friday, final issue of term on the following Wednesday). This will be, hopefully, an extravaganza of some sort, provided not everyone has not gone for the summer! We are happy to receive articles on just about any subject, provided they get to the FELIX office by next Friday.

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### Around the World in Two Days

Jon Jordan, Mark Baker and Rebecca Walters



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## Venezuela

*"East took me high above the tree line through hairpin bends into disturbing barrenness"*

The night drive to Caracas from La Guaira national airport was a misleading one. Pitch black, no landmarks until we hit the hills surrounding the capital; these were smothered in thousands of tiny flickering lights and I found myself deceived, missing an imposing mountain range. The bewitching fairy lights cresting the landscape were actually densely packed brick built shoe box shacks that spill in their thousands across the outskirts of the capital.

It was sobering to see, in the cold light of day, shanty-towns sprawl under a sky-line of North American style sky-scrappers. All coloured by the insidious glow of state of the art western neon

advertising. The drastic contrasts, the constant noise and traffic and the crime body count at the end of each day

On a plane from Caracas to Merida, the ground comes up to meet me! (The highest Andean peak is at about 14000 ft). It seems a weird alternative to landing; whilst still in the clouds, the plane seemed to be barely clearing barren summits and frozen black lakes just below. (Breathtaking but bloody scary at the same time). From a random selection from the several mini-bus routes that serve the mountains, east took me high above the tree line through hairpin bends into disturbing barrenness, west into



lower fertile ground where waterfalls spilled under and over the road, feeding lush vegetation.

South, then into Canaima, an expansive National Park spanning into Brazil. My first view of the jungle was from a dugout canoe on the river weaving between some of the world's oldest rock formations; weird 'table top' sandstone mountains called 'tepui' rising above the vegetation. An almost perfect scenario but swimming in the river was slightly marred by every cheesy piranha movie I'd ever seen.

Isabel Castro

## Spain

I'd been to Spain before, as an Au Pair in Teruel near Valencia. There, I'd mopped floors six days a week for six months, learned Spanish words such as "tadpole" and "skipping" (useful for talking to a four and a seven-year-old) and spoke hardly a word of English the whole time.

Two years later, I went InterRailing around central Spain with my brother. We began in Madrid in 35 degree heat, staying with some friends on the outskirts of the city. After rowing around the Parque del Retiro and looking at huge numbers of paintings of St Stephen being shot full of arrows in the Prado, we journeyed

south to Toledo. The town is split into old and new by a river at the bottom of a steep valley. Greg and I, eager and fresh off the train, rushed past the other backpackers, down one side of the valley, across the 17th century bridge, up the other side, and halted in the town square to consult the guide book. Discovering that the Youth Hostel we had been aiming for was, in

fact, back by the railway station, we sped back down the valley, across the bridge, up the other side and into the Youth Hostel, which had no space left for men.

We ended up in a hostel just off the main square. Toledo was excellent, one of the important cities during the civil war, as the bullet-ridden Alcazar bore witness.

After Toledo we zoomed up to Aranjuez, supposedly city of strawberries and the royal train.

We saw neither, sunbathed, and moved on quickly to Avila. The hostel owner thought we were married and moved the two single beds together. I tried to subtly reveal the truth in

Spanish. Avila had enormous battlements, dramatically lit at night.

One evening we took a trip to nearby Salamanca, which I had visited before and knew to be a university town built in sandstone that gently radiated the day's heat at dusk. It was only a half hour train journey, but upon arrival we were miles from the town centre,

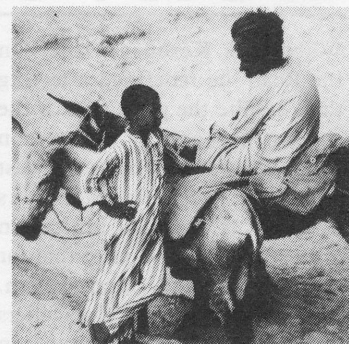


and we ended up sitting between some tower blocks, surrounded by little boys playing football and a cloud of wasps. Returning to the station, the train we had planned to catch didn't exist, and we had to make a two hour round trip to get back - on a train which managed to catch fire.

On then to another university town, Valladolid, and subsequently Burgos which was greener, leafier and more full of cathedrals than anywhere we had yet been. From here it was an overnight train to Valencia, and then by bus back to Teruel, which felt like going home. It was so different to be there as a visitor: I did no mopping and looked after no children. We met friends and swam in the reservoir. I didn't need to say tadpole or skipping, but it was just as hard to say goodbye.

Rebecca Mileham

## Egypt



Cairo is a dreadful, smelly, horrible place. Most people hate it, but then if you come on a day trip from Cyprus, you can hardly expect great cultural insight. Certainly don't go there if you have a romantic vision of pyramids, Tutankhamen, and local markets steeped in atmosphere fresh from the Arabian Nights. And don't ever go there the day everyone ritually slaughters goats to celebrate the end of Ramadan.

You stumble on the really cool bits by accident, like the early morning market at Imbaba, where hundreds of camels are shepherded by wizened old men in galabayas across the sprawling 1960's suspension bridge. Or the quite exceptional experience of about being up on a high roof overlooking the city when the call to prayer echoes round at sunset. I'm sure the sky wouldn't turn that shade of red were it not for the smog, but it looks pretty all the same.

The best way to really appreciate Egypt is by finding a local to interpret for you. That way you can get them to translate the television programmes: there is quite simply nothing funnier than Dynasty in Arabic.

When you do make it to the pyramids, you can spend hours trying to get that postcard photograph of the Sphinx, with Cheops behind, in the middle of the desert, rather than amid the urban sprawl. Having battled of dozens of hardened crooks forcing a bottle of Nefertiti's own Queen of the Desert lotus oil perfume upon you, the final hurdle is to part with another small fortune and go inside the great pyramid. Perhaps I was a little naive to expect it would be just like Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.

Rachel Walters



## Bali

Bali is bonus land: we got the view of rice paddies falling away into the valley as we ate our fresh fruit breakfast in the open air restaurant; the tame baby heron which stalked between the tables as we ordered our lunch on Monkey Forest Road, and the climate, so friendly to artists, lizards, orchids, frogs, ducks, hawkers, surfers and us.

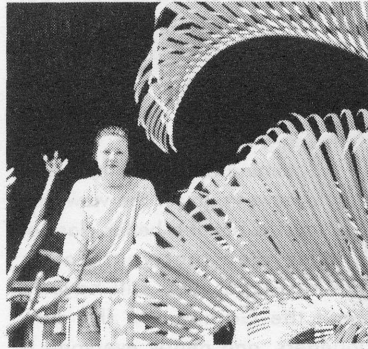
The Indonesian island of Bali floats in the southern Pacific, two hours from Singapore by plane, on the other side of the equator. We chose Air France and thought we'd picked well – the bag of in-flight goodies under the seats in front contained toffees and games cartridges. Later, realising the bags belonged to the children sitting in the seats, we guiltily replaced them, sans toffees.

*"We ate fish fresh from the lake and persuaded ourselves that seeing down from the top of the volcano would be worth the climb"*

Landing at Kuta beach at the south end of the island, we found a taxi and got stuck in a huge traffic jam along the seafront. It gave us a chance to watch the Australian surfers on one side of the road and the restaurants on the other, and wonder whether the rest of Bali was like this.

We made our escape to Denpasar, the capital town, the next day. Here the hawkers were incredible, making you feel guilty for not stopping, then guilty for not wanting to buy anything, then guilty for haggling, and finally guilty for paying what was probably far too much for something you didn't really want.

In Ubud, the artistic central region of Bali, we ate nasi goreng in one restaurant ranged down the side of a gorge and in another surrounding a pool covered in lotus. The galleries were full of vivid black-outlined green and red paintings of men and women working in the rice paddies cultivated on every sloping surface.



We met one elderly Spanish artist sitting in his gallery: something of a shock, as from the sign outside I had thought that the establishment was a memorial to someone long dead. He talked about his recent meeting with Michael Jackson in Singapore with peculiar excitement.

We took a bemo – local transport – north to Penelokan at the foot of Mount Batur, the remaining active volcano around a much larger crater now filled by a lake. We ate fish fresh from the lake and persuaded ourselves that seeing down from the top of the volcano would be worth the climb.

Next morning at 3.30am, Made, our local guide, arrived and we and the two Germans who were also making the ascent struggled to the foot of the mountain. The honeycomb rock was loose and very sharp, and Made, the shortest and lightest of the party, dragged me up the steep places. Two and a half hours of climbing found us at the top, watching the sunrise, eating eggs boiled in volcanic steam, and congratulating each other. We bought some Coke from a friend of Made's who had apparently run up the mountain behind us wearing flip flops.

On the way back to Kuta we drove along roads now fringed with pejong poles, long bamboos from which hung flowers and woven offerings. The dashboard of the bemo displayed pink flowers and a little tray of joss sticks. Kites flew in the distance: it was a day of celebration.

We left Bali knowing that we'd have to go back. My photographs are filled with rice paddies and sun which spills out every rainy English day that I open the album.

Rebecca Mileham

## South Africa

If you want a real adventure holiday why not try South Africa. I did and loved every bit of it. I stayed there for three weeks with a friend from College: if you intend to see all of it you definitely need more time. We hired a car in the first two weeks and drove a total distance of three thousand miles, much to the hire company's horror. The last week was spent on Safari in South Africa's famed Kruger National Park.

Our first stop in South Africa was Jan Smuts Airport and it didn't take long to find our bearings, sort out a car and a place to stay. The tourist industry in South Africa is a little immature but because of this all the tourist businesses are very friendly and helpful.

Johannesburg is not a city for the timid. It has the highest murder rate in the world but this didn't stop us checking out the night life. Caesar's Palace was our first sample of South African culture and we were very impressed. For the price of pizza in London, we got our entry tickets and unlimited free food. Everything seemed so cheap. One pound goes a long way and, despite the price of the air ticket, the holiday turned out to be a bit of a bargain. Now that apartheid has gone one would think that it would now be all fair share but it was noticeable that there was not one black in Caesar's Palace. A quick dash for the car stopped our wallets being pinched.

South Africa has still got a long way to go before it can claim it is a racially equal society. The general attitudes of both whites and blacks seemed like an apartheid still existed. For this reason we spent most of our time associating with the whites. It seemed that if you were British and supported Manchester United you had an instant friend. They get more FA coverage in South Africa than we get in England!

It didn't take long to realise Johannesburg didn't have everything so we set off down the N3 toward Durban. Over the eight hour drive the climate changed from a dry warm English summer's day to an extremely humid, hot sub-tropic type climate. Durban is a beautiful city and the beaches



are marvellous. We spent the next week and a half driving down the 'Garden Route'. This route takes you through many black independent states (now a part of South Africa) and finding camp sites near the beach was easy. The beaches were deserted and breathtakingly beautiful and we certainly were in paradise. The end of the first two weeks was drawing too close too quickly.

Drifters Adventure Holidays supplied us with entertainment for the last week. We started from Johannesburg and travelled through the Eastern Transvaal visiting a few historic landmarks. Our real adventure began at Kruger National Park. We spent our nights in rustic camps and the day was spent tracking the 'big five' either by foot or by Land Rover. We were lucky enough to see something very rare on our safari, a lion and lioness making love.

The role of the lazy lion in his habitat is simply to reproduce and even this takes some encouragement from the lioness. The feat takes three days consisting of a series of thirty second busts at twenty minute intervals. It seemed the lioness didn't like too much fun and the frustration on the lion was quickly began to show. Along with our amorous lions we saw several herds of elephants, rhinos, giraffes and hippos. A quick tour down an old unused gold mine ended the holiday off nicely.

If someone were to ask me were I wanted to spend my next holiday I would have to say South Africa. It is the most wonderful place on this planet. If you're looking for a holiday of a life time from sand to safari, white-water rivers to cheap food then South Africa is waiting with open arms.

Piers Daniell



## Cyprus

Cyprus, such a wonderful place. Birthplace of Aphrodite, wonderful sunshine and the warm Mediterranean. Well, to tell you the truth it is a bit of a downer. When I went to Cyprus it was April and the height of the troubles in the Lebanon. Cyprus is 130 miles from Beirut. Mad Arabs had decided to hijack a plane and it had landed at Larnaca Airport.

The whole island was buzzing with activity, not that I saw it. I was confined to Britain's largest military base, RAF Akrotiri. Aircraft

that never existed flew in and out of the compound. Whether the hostages made it out or the terrorists blew everything up I don't know.

Cyprus, as most people don't know, is now the disputed territory of Greece and Turkey. The North is meant to belong to the Turks and the South is meant to belong to the Greeks. But I don't think anyone understands what is going on.

April in Cyprus means the sea is freezing cold and there is snow in the mountains. Having a snowball fight in a Mediterranean country in April next to a cafe called "Smokey Joe's" is enough to

do your head in. Along with 99% of the planet Cyprus has storms. The electrical storms are cool but the rain storms are boring. You can nearly walk through the rain without getting wet, the droplets are massive but few and far between.

Summing up Cyprus is hard. I would have to go for the view that the tourists are the better class of English man (not your Torremolinos type), you still have to beat the Germans to the sun-loungers, and nearly everyone is friendly (realising hassles the island has had).

Don't forget that Cyprus is of good military value placed close to all our favourite countries. There are radar bases, air force bases,



and loads of other stuff you or I don't know about. If the Americans once used Britain as a large aircraft carrier then Europe uses Cyprus as one.

And hey, if you don't get much sun you can nearly always count on a good war.

Frank Poole

## Germany

It seems obvious to me that I should write about holidaying in Germany, as this is the only country whose language I have studied, albeit to a pathetic D at GCSE level. Unfortunately this meant that the only phrase I could recall was "When does the next train to Koln leave?" and as I was travelling by car, I did not even get to use this carefully memorised query.

However, accompanied by a good 'German-for-tourists' handbook, it is possible to bluff your way through and if you fail then

normally the Germans are distressingly good at English. In fact, with the exception of restaurant waiters, it seems that the whole country can speak English, and will try to do so as soon as they realise you are not a native.

Most people will find that German food is very acceptable, even delicious at times, but this does not apply to me, as I am a vegetarian. Attempting to get a decent meal without meat in Germany is akin to trying to find a virgin in King's Cross.



then the salad contained tiny chopped up bits of some dead animal. In the end I survived on bread and cheese, two foods which – even in Germany – do not usually contain meat.

Turning from food to drink, in this area Germany excels as it is a nation of Beer drinkers and holds some of the biggest beer festivals in Europe. These are great fun to attend and, unexpectedly, are big family events. They are not confined to strange 'real ale' addicts or soccer hooligans.

If you are offered a piece of the Berlin wall, politely decline, as one graffitied chunk of concrete looks much like another.

A final word of warning for any trendy would-be travellers; Doc Martins are not appreciated in Germany. They may be cool over here, but you will be regarded as a Nazi-loving Fascist if you wear them, as they hold too many bad memories.

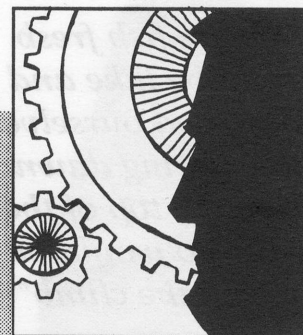
Mark Baker

## Going Nowhere

People say that travel expands the mind... I disagree. I have not been away for four, maybe five years now. There are, of course, many excuses I could throw around to explain this; lack of money, lack of time (I spent my free time earning money), even sheer laziness. But the real reason is that I haven't really wanted to go. I wouldn't exactly say that I haven't travelled, but all of the journeying I have done was through the realm of the mind. There is so much to discover within myself before I even think about travelling physically.

Any journey through life is a journey through the self, a trip of discovery. If you meet anyone who claims to know themselves, they are lying; those few who actually do know themselves have no need to boast about it. So I have been making a journey, long and wondrous, and it has been through the depths of my self.

And the places I've been! What can compare with that feeling of total despair, sitting in tears by a turgid river knowing, knowing that life can never get any better. The total euphoria of waking up one morning and feeling life itself. The complexities and intrigues of friendship and hatred, and the insane purity of love and obsession. Who can ever



claim that I have not travelled, when the night of the greatest loss in my life was followed by the morning of the greatest clarity?

It is the endless variety of feelings such as these, of emotional experiences and mental discoveries, that I find exciting. I can revel in changes of

the mind simply for what they are. Even the blackest of depressions was worth having, simply for the joy of actually being able to feel that way.

So I have travelled, and perhaps further and more dangerously than most. No-one can claim that I have failed to expand my mind on my travels, for they have by definition been mind expanding. Sometime maybe I will go and visit other places, see the sights, but I'm not in a great hurry. I still have so far to go right here.

MA



## Thailand



Bangkok caters for all types of holiday makers, from the avid sightseer to the serious clubber who just wants to have some fun. The Night Market on Silom Road sells everything you could need. Remember though – you get what you pay for. Then there is the well known Pat Pong: the go-go bars and clubs welcome all tourist and ex-pats for friendly entertainment.

For the serious clubber, you can find the young, beautiful and fashionable at Soi 4, Silom Road, just along from Pat Pong. This is the place to hang out, is seriously trendy and you'll find the strangest mix of people. Deeper is another

popular small club, the music is hardcore house and trance and the most popular venues occur on the weekends with international DJs.

Shopping is another great thing to do. Thailand is very cheap so it is possible to over shop and have too much to bring back home. The best time is at the weekends at Chatuchak Market. It is great for the usual tourist goods found in the Far East, handicrafts, antiques, and clothes. Next on the list will probably be MBK (Ma Baan Krong), a Thai style cheezy shopping mall. Locals shop here for fashion imports and so it caters for rockers, rappers and the usual clubbers.

For sightseers the main attraction in Bangkok is the Grand Palace; stunning architecture everywhere you look, and every item seems to be laid with gold leaf. There is a strict dress code in the palace so no shorts or miniskirts, otherwise you may end up in a long queue for a pair of ill fitting jumpsuit trousers. Another popular tourist attraction is a river trip on the river Ton, however going during midday is not the

most agreeable time.

Travelling around Bangkok: Bangkok has a continuous rush hour throughout the day so be prepared for a long slow journey. There are taxis which have air conditioning, *tut tuts* which allow the passengers to experience the full force of Bangkok's pollution and bad drivers and then there are the buses which should be avoided.

To fully relax, a short period at one of Thailand's other resorts is a very good idea. Koh Samui has great beaches with loads of night life with that island feel and is just civilised enough for convenience. Phuket island features hotels galore for the wealthier tourist and a bizarre vegetarian festival in November which involves hypnotic body piercing of the extremely faithful. Also consider Pattaya: many international travel agents promote sex tours to this small beach town which is 2 hours from Bangkok. Krabi has cheap bungalows or the exclusive 5 star Dusit Hotel. And lastly, Koh Phangnangan is the place to find the hippy in you.

**Wah and Wei Lee**

## China

Travelling by train through the Southern part of China you look out of the window, past the tracks strewn with rubbish cast out by the passengers and see the rural China you were expecting; there really are coolie hatted workers tending lush green paddy fields, remote villages linked by mud tracks, oxen being used to work the land. But then the train turns a corner and a stark, ugly industrial plant appears on the horizon, looking incongruous amidst the apparent idyll. China is full of industry; you get the sense it is a real country, independent, not needing to trade with the rest of the world. Barges ply the rivers loaded to within an inch of flooding, your 'express' train will stop to enable mile-long goods trains to pass.

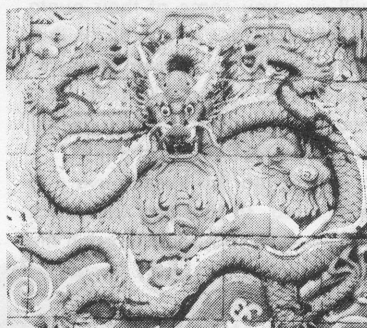
Wandering around the back streets of cities you see small

cottages piled high with cardboard boxes containing plastic toys, the boxes stamped 'Made in China' and realise that this is where they come from. Industry extends down to the person in the street; the notion that everything is made in large factories entitled 'The Number Thirteen People's Plastic Football Factory' or similar is a fallacy. Women cycle past with baskets overflowing with high-tech electrical components; the shopping streets in towns have shops

*"You get the sense it is a real country, independent, not needing to trade with the rest of the world"*

selling nuts and bolts, machine shop equipment and electrical components adjacent to department stores and bakeries. Free enterprise is rife in China – the image of the workers wearing blue Chairman Mao suits and all toiling for large government organised schemes is also dated.

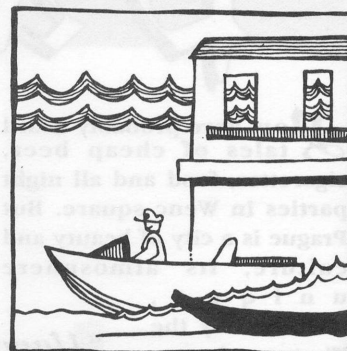
Tourism is a fairly new concept – don't expect an easy ride



unless you're willing to depart with a large amount of cash in commission fees to the official tourist services. It is a matter of policy for non-Chinese to be charged more for train tickets, entry charges and the like. In the smaller cities the foreigner is still a novelty, and as such is considered fair game for surrounding and staring at; also the treatment you receive from officialdom often seems hostile. A thick skin is useful to avoid these irritations ruining your trip, but the sheer fascination of observing the last great bureaucratic communist country is something not to be missed before Coca-Cola consumerism takes over...

**Tim Bavister**

## Venice



Venice is one of those cities that everyone has heard of. It has been the setting for many films, perhaps most notably for the gondola chase scene in Moonraker, in which James Bond (aka Roger Moore) powers a high-speed gondola through the back-waters of Venice, only to change into an inflatable-car thingie and drive away to safety. However, you won't see this happening these days, as the wakes from such fast boats have begun to erode the walls of many of the buildings, and a more pedestrian speed limit has been imposed.

Venice is undoubtedly the most unlikely city ever constructed, and is incredible to walk through, as almost every building is a work of art. You can never quite get used to the sheer improbability of it all, with boats serenely gliding from street to street. The only down-side to the whole occasion is the number of tourists, but this must be expected from such a magnificent city.

Prices are high for refreshments, and temperatures are often hot, so I personally recommend a large packed lunch and lots of bottled water to keep yourself going. Taking a quick dip to refresh yourself will not be looked upon kindly by the locals.

You can either wander aimlessly through Venice, or take one of a number of guided tours to help you make the best of your stay. Most visitors do not actually stay in Venice, but at a nearby camp or hotel as I did, and catch a bus and ferry to the city. The ferry itself is something of an antique, but does provide excellent views (and photo-opportunities) when leaving the city near sunset. In short, Venice is a feast for the eyes.

**Mark Baker**



# PRAGUE, beautiful Prague: Jazz, Pilsner and Sauerkraut

You have probably heard tales of cheap beer, cigarettes, food and all night parties in Wenc square. But Prague is a city of beauty and culture, its atmosphere unique, unsullied by the Western ethos.

A twenty three hour coach journey with just one stop (twenty minute break! Zweizehn Minuten Pause! barks the driver) does strange things to the mind. Sleeping fitfully through France, stopping in an unidentifiable country (we now think it was Luxembourg) and pensively

## Ecuador

I recently worked on a four month expedition to Ecuador in South America. The country crosses the equator and that is what gives it its name. We raised most of the money for the expedition from grant-giving bodies such as The Imperial College Exploration Board and The Royal Geographic Society, as well as through personal contributions.

The capital city is Quito. It lies along a valley, surrounded by mountains. The houses extend up the mountain slopes. In one town that I visited there was a house on the top of a hill, with farmland all around it stretching down the hill. Ploughing is done using oxen and may be on slopes that are at forty-five degrees to the horizontal. Quito is the second highest capital city in the world at about 2400m above sea level. We were there from the end of September to the end of January this year.

Most days the sunshine was hot and bright, and it usually rained in the early afternoon at about two or three pm local time. There were many bars and discos with chart music or salsa and even a hippy pub called "Pobre diablo" (The Poor Devil) with candles and relaxing blue walls where you could drink some great cocktails.

Generally only South

watching the sun rise in Germany, our arrival in Prague was sensed in a state of intense ennui and painful clarity. There was a tense silence as we drifted past the crumbling concrete factories into the dilapidated bus station, each passenger fearing they had made a terrible mistake but unable to face the stupendous deflation of admitting it. We left the coach, got our currency (you cannot buy Kronas in England so take pounds) and flopped onto a patch of grass by a tiny food van. We had arrived.

We had, however, seen only

the worst of what the city had to offer. Things looked up when we found a fantastic campsite, a small place run by a friendly young man who gave us a discount and had fruit trees and cats. (Camp Dana Troyska 1) It was a mile or so out of the centre, but Prague's public transport system is excellent, costing 6Kcs (~13p) to go anywhere at any time on bus, tram or underground. Camping is the best option as hostels are over crowded and have strange rules.

I don't remember our first trip to the centre, except our stupid

attempts to pay the tram driver. (You are supposed to buy tickets in advance and punch them in one of the pleasantly mechanical devices on board). It was something of a revelation though. The streets resemble, I'm told, Paris,

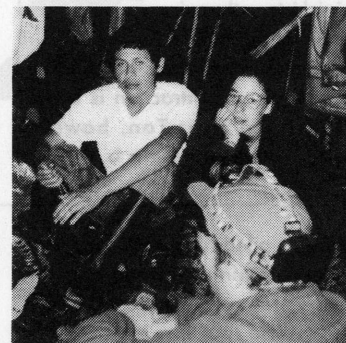
with artistically patterned cobbles, few cars, no T shirt shops, large plazas and handsome old buildings juxtaposed with ambitious new projects. Unpretentious cafes and bars spill onto the streets and the whole place has an optimistic air - refurbishment is everywhere and there is a wonderful lack of advertisements and tacky outlets. Time for a little of the Czech Republic's history:

Czechoslovakia was formed shortly after the first World War by gluing together three smaller states, and was under Russian communist control by 1945. It then drifted along an inorexible path of corruption leading to the installation of a tin pot dictator. However, the country did not fare as badly as it might have, receiving useful Russian attention in the capital (such as the subway) and little interference elsewhere. Being by definition a Bohemian lot, Prague's population, especially the young, eventually made a bid for independence.

They held an all out strike and vigil in Wenceslaus Square for days until the capital was paralysed. Vaclav Havel, a political prisoner and playwright, was installed as president and the communist rule was overthrown incredibly peacefully in what is now known as the Velvet Revolution. It separated back into Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The capital today is in a fine position, with a liberal and wise government, a good infrastructure, an artistic attitude and a happy populace. The change so far has been encouraging, a careful balance between pleasure and tackyness, between growth and burgeoning expansion.

*"Prague is a city of beauty and culture...its atmosphere is unique"*



usually obvious that you are a foreigner. There are jumpers, ponchos, shirts, hammocks and bags and other *artesanias*, few of which the locals wear or use.

We had jobs before we went. You can find out which jobs you should have for a trip from the college health centre or British Airways travel bureaux.

Money went further in the south of the country where prices were half that of Quito and there are fewer foreigners. You could get a meal for about £2 in Quito and £1 in the south.

Best memory/souvenir: There are too many good memories such as learning to salsa, swimming in a tropical river on Christmas Day and discovering Quito's laundrette; a large room full of women and about fifty sinks!

Jenny

## Hitching in France

Hitchhiking is dangerous, make no mistake! Before you even consider it find a partner and make the following three mental checks (1) you're both insane, (2) you have no responsibilities (and neither of you are in the process of some major relationship crisis), and (3) you can swing a good right hook!

Right, once you've decide where you're going, pack a backpack full of clean underwear, get a map and go! At least, that's what I did. And try to stay in your pair, it's safer. We didn't. I started out from Paris, with one week in hand and the aim to go south to La Rochelle and then back north to the famous

island abbey of Mont Saint Michel, before returning to Paris for my flight home. Tip: For long hitches get to a motorway. Misjudging the size of the city by its scale on the map can be a bummer when you have to walk across it to get to the scenic bit by the river. But it does heighten the delight of managing to stop a long black Merc which offers you a lift all the way down the Loire valley, sprinkled with beautiful old chateaux's tucked in amongst the trees on a sunny afternoon. Why not stop off and visit one? Because it's late afternoon, and hitching in the dark is a bit tricky! Still, I did.

It took a while to understand that the people waving at me were trying to signal that the back seats weren't in fact empty, there were just some very small people sitting in them. But eventually a 22 year-old air-traffic controller stopped, and my luck was in again! I developed a strange kind of trust when travelling a long distance with people I met while hitching; it's not anything profound, but it did rekindle some faith in humanity. One moment you could find yourself abandoned in the middle of nowhere, having just realised you dropped your camera on your last hitch (yes, with all those precious photos!) feeling truly stupid, when it begins to rain! And the next enjoying the native hospitality. Hitching takes a care-



free spirit, guts and a sense of adventure, not to mention a fundamental belief in the generosity of the local populace. I managed to complete my route with a day to spare - I like to think that was good planning... But choose your country wisely!

David Cohen

Anyway, enough of the politics, what is there to do in Prague?

1 Eat. There are many restaurants and even the best are affordable. Czechs take their main meal at lunch times and some restaurants are a little reluctant to serve large evening meals. Tasty three course set menus can be had for around 66 Kcs, as we discovered when we asked the waiter for three menus. Prague has a few McDonalds, but if you go in them I'll never talk to you again. Fast snacks are available from vans dotted around - Hamburgers

are made of ham and served with Sauerkraut and ketchup. They are delicious, and cost just 18 Kcs (~35p). Pareck is a huge sausage served with chunks of bread and mustard and is even cheaper.

2 Drink. Prague had the best lager in the world, Budvar, being the home of Pilsner (invented in Piltzen). The beer comes in two types, light and dark. Both are excellent, and are often served with

shots of a sweet hazelnut liqueur called Becherovka. For diehards, Guinness is available in the Highlander Jazz Club, Narodni 28. Prague has several beerhouses.

You sit on long wooden tables with the locals. The beer is then brought by waiters who calculate your bill by tallying them on a beer mat then multiplying it by a random number. All drinks are very cheap.

*"Wander around the street markets reading Kafka and listen to buskers"*

3 Idle. This is an honourable tradition. Wander around the street markets, sit in cafes reading Kafka (Czech's most famous author), listen to buskers.

4 Culture. The place is steeped in it. It has several old opera houses, a huge and fantastic castle, Cubist villas and many churches and museums.

5 Nightlife. There is plenty going on after dark, centred on Wenceslaus Square and Narodni. Prague has a strong Jazz tradition and many night clubs and discos have sprung up. The best places we found were Highlander Blue Note, Narodni 28 for jazz and blues and Bunkr and Lodeka 2, a large underground dance venue.

Bad experiences were fairly few. Taxi drivers are to be avoided, they are incredibly expensive and unnecessary. The state campsite is not up to much. Avoid the supermarket, it is a depressing experience. Soft drugs are in short supply and oh yes, don't get caught crossing a tram bridge when a tram is coming.

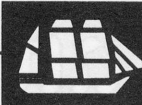
Jeremy Thomson





### +Scientific expeditions

WANDERLUST: 1831 TO 1994



### +Hot+Sticky

DARWIN VS IC IN GHANA



### +A traveller's tale

TANZANIAN CORAL COUNTER



Every traveller must consider the same questions. Where should I go, and why? How should I travel? How will I eat and live? In this week's *S-files* we take the theme of travel and look at three scientific expeditions, in 1831, in 1957 and in 1994.

In 1831, Charles Darwin, then little more than a beetle collector, was engaged as a ship's naturalist on the *Beagle* which was on its way to map the desolate coast of South America. He didn't see England again for five years, and in the time he was away, he collected plants, animals and also fossils, writing in his journal: "a fine group of fossil bones tell their story of former times with almost a living tongue".

In 1957, Imperial's Natural History Society gained funding from the Exploration Board for the first time to make an expedition to a region of tropical rainforest in Ghana, West Africa. They studied the changes in food crops caused when forest was felled, and the report about this trip, along with others to Greece (1959), Iran (1960), Ethiopia (1962), Uganda (1965), Greenland (1966) and many other places, are in the Haldane library (General Books 910.4).

Below, find out what Darwin ate, where he slept and what he thought about it all as he sailed towards the Galapagos Islands. See how the IC team felt about West Africa, and what they did there. And on the right, hear first-hand about one IC student who, last year, went diving off a tiny Tanzanian island to help save the coral reef.

In comparison with the exotic locations in Africa, Asia and India visited by many Imperial expeditions, two reports look slightly different. They are from the teams which visited Cornwall. It just seems to prove the point made in the introduction to *Ghana 1957*: "Exploration indicates doing something new, and exploration in the biological sense is possible anywhere in the world – even in one's back garden".



*S-files*

#### Typical menu:

"I have feasted on Tamarinds and a profusion of oranges. for dinner I had Barrow Cooter for fish and sweet potatoes for vegetables. quite tropical and correct"

(Diary, 18 Jan 1832)

#### Accommodation:

"I experienced the most ludicrous difficulty in getting into my hammock; my great fault of jockeyship was in trying to put my legs in first."

(Diary, 4 Dec 1831)

#### The work:

"It is a new and pleasant thing for me to be conscious that naturalising is doing my duty."

(Diary, 29 Feb 1832)

#### The weather:

"During the night it is like sleeping in a warm bath"

(Diary, 20 Feb 1832)

#### Typical menu:

Mutton and corned beef, Yam chips, potatoes and cold pie, fruit salad. "The water supply was stored rainwater, and this was an excellent excuse for drinking lager while sparing the water"

(Report, p24)

#### Accommodation:

"The bungalow had a large dining room and a bathroom with a flushing toilet. At the back was a long hut where the Boys and their families could live."

(Report, p19)

#### The weather:

"Some found the climate hot and sticky, and others thought it warm and pleasant. We realised before we left England that pith helmets were no longer in vogue, although most people advised us to wear hats to stop our hair falling out."

(Report, p43)



*S-files* spoke to Tammy Davison of Biology II who spent 10 weeks in Tanzania last summer:



#### > Why did you go to Tanzania?

I volunteered as a diver collecting data for a research project on the island of Chole, off the Tanzanian coast. In that area, there are problems with people coming down to the sea and "dynamite fishing" – blowing the fish up so that they float to the surface. Also the reefs are being destroyed by people paid to collect coral and sell it for trinkets.

#### > What is being done?

The project I worked on is organised by *Frontier*, who have also done conservation projects in rain forests in Vietnam, game parks in Uganda and the Rufiji Delta near Chole. They only go in when the government of the area invites them. *Frontier* is trying to turn the area into a multi-user marine park which the locals, the tourists and the conservationists will all be happy with. So they're teaching sustainable fishing and doing research projects about the area.

#### > How did you help?

Our job was to dive around the reefs in pairs, and one of us would count the number and type of fish – there were about 60 species – while the other one did a Benthic survey, looking at the surface of the reef and seeing whether it was rock, coral, sand or sea grass. We had plastic slates and pencils to write it all down.

#### > What did you eat?

Generally what the locals ate: rice, fish and kidney beans, although we did have the luxury of a bottle of soy sauce. There was lots of fresh fruit, bananas and green oranges. We took it in turns to get up, start the fire, and cook breakfast, which was Ugi – sort of maize porridge with sugar.

#### > What sort of place did you live in?

Chole is a really idyllic island, and we lived in long open huts made of mangrove poles and woven palm leaves. We slept on the floor, and our individual spaces were marked out with mosquito nets hanging from the ceiling. We dug our own toilets – a pit six feet square and ten feet deep with mangrove poles across it. Then you squat – it was surrounded by a fence, though!

#### > What was the atmosphere like?

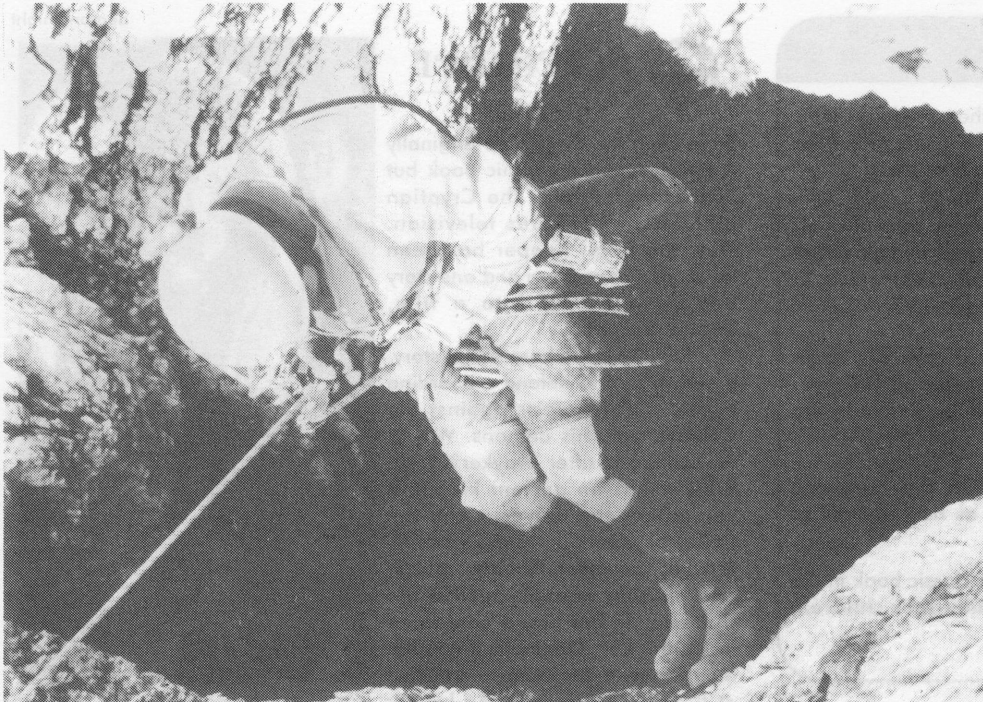
Absolutely superb. Nobody knew anyone else before they went but it was excellent. There's a real community aspect to Chole and the locals accepted us being there. There's a hotel being built on the island now, and tourism is developing. Eventually I think people who visit places like Kenya will also hear about Chole.

#### > Was the project part of your degree?

It's certainly helped with my degree – not directly, but I was in Tanzania learning how to sample and collect data, while half of the people on my course were on a marine ecology field trip in Cornwall.

**Frontier are at 77, Leonard Street, London (Old St Tube)**





Guts: Defying the laws of gravity with just your rope to hold you up.

## Exploration

### Caving Adventures in Slovenia

Keys: Plateau, Bivouac, Plugs

In their last lecture of the year members will talk about the IC Caving Club's recent expeditions to Slovenia. The Caving Club has a long history of expeditions including places as far afield as Peru, Morocco and the Himalayas.

Last Summer a group of undergraduates and postgraduates spent six weeks exploring and mapping previously unknown potholes in a remote high altitude plateau of the Julian Alps (North West Slovenia).

Due to the difficulty in reaching the plateau it was necessary to live on the mountain top in a bivouac where there were no rivers and the only source of water was from snow plugs. Three new cave systems were discovered and a further two were extended significantly. The talk will include photographs of these new caves.

In February four members of the expedition left their caving equipment and put on their winter mountaineering gear in order to visit the plateau while under deep snow in order to search for holes blowing through the snow which are a clue to as yet unknown cave systems.

What they found was much better than they had expected and will be the key to this year's Summer expedition back to the plateau.

The talk is on Thursday, 8 June at 12.30pm in the Biology W2/W3 lecture theatre. Admission is free and all are welcome.

## Ents

### Run-down of this week's ents

Keys: Music, Dancing, Madness

Doesn't time fly when you're having fun? Here we are two thirds into the final term and the Ents office is brimming with enthusiasm and excitement just as if it was Freshers. Of course, this isn't strictly true – even the Events crew have exams, so the office is bereft of all life and I struggle on gamely with only my Dannii Minogue posters for company. But we're still laying on the best value for money events in London...

#### Friday – Indie Sounds

It's here – an escape from all that 'Faceless Techno Bollocks' as the T-shirt says. A chance to shake your head and stomp your feet to the finest indie sounds of the past 20 years at 'Pop Tarts'. Stuffed with Britpop, US guitar sounds, New Wave and Retro-Indie. Free before 9pm, £1 after and bar open until 1am.

#### Monday – Monday Madness

Our usual beer promotion – a chance to chill out in the quad. The perfect summer night in the city.

#### Wednesday – Club Spanque

Short but sweet... A brief visit to the unreality of 'Club Spanque'. In three more weeks I can give it a new name! From 8pm until 11.30pm.

#### Thursday – Cocktail Night

Balmy sunny evenings, the chink of ice in a long glass... The iCU Cocktail Night, you can't beat it. Cocktails from £1.70, the perfect way to celebrate the end of your exams, or just the fact that it's Thursday.

#### Friday – Music, Dancing, Bar Extension

For those of you who've missed your repetitive beats, a night of (and I'm quoting here) 'Mind expanding deep house grooves, hypnotic trance, happy hardcore and banging' techno' with guest DJs and live music from Wave Method. So for the best sounds, join our 'Mantra'. Free before 9pm, £1 after.

And that's almost it, except to remind you that it's only a fortnight until the 'Midsummer Nights Carnival'. Tickets are starting to sell fast, so buy now or miss out – you've been warned!

## DramSoc

### A Midsummer Night's Dream

Keys: Shakespeare, Sixties

Intensive preparations have begun for this term's DramSoc production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Written over three decades ago this classic play (by that aging star Billy Shakespeare) will be rereleased in late June with a new improved Sixties sound track and will be performed exclusively for the students of Imperial College.

Set in Athens (a record studio), our four lovers rebel against their parental commands and escape to the woods (a nightclub).

Classic Shakespeare, classic rock 'n roll we will be seeing for the first time a newly discovered band from Imperial, 'The Fairies'.

'A week of talent and Rock' –  
The New Musical Express  
'Billy's best, and the best of the Sixties' –  
Melody Maker





## THE MENU



In **rotation** this week, Biochem 1 hot honchos, *Michael Calais* and *Ben Kemp*, play with assorted bits of plastic, and even manage to say something nice about a couple of them.



In what can only be described as a scary week for all concerned, *Magpie* dares to enter the crypt in pursuit of the **demon knight** whilst *Jenny Ho* endures **richie rich**, a Macauley Culkin 'vehicle' (stop those hearse jokes now!).



*Vik* winds back the years with **the police** – live and *tintin* reviews the new albums from **yo la tengo** and **latimer**. *Dave*, never one to stay home, gets his ears blown out by the **psyclone rangers**.



In the revenge of the indie kids, *Vik* treats this borrowed column with an astonishing lack of care as he clubs out at **automatic**.



*Tintin* opens the door on another irregular classic book in the excellent company of Salman Rushdie's **midnight's children**; the mother of all Booker prize winners.



## screamer

Tales from the Crypt was originally a fifties' American comic book but in the late eighties the Cryptian ethos turned towards television. Now the Crypt Keeper has been awakened once more and one story has been turned into a film, **demon knight**.

Brayker is the hero of the story, a man forced to defend a boarding house and its guests against the Collector and his demons. Why is the Collector after Brayker? Well, Brayker has an ancient key, that can unlock the universe and the Collector wants it – simple really. Brayker, however, is only mortal and his sole weapon against the Collector is the blood contained inside this key. Originally it was the blood from a carpenter – crucified at Calvary, but each dying keeper replenishes the key before passing it on to the next chosen one.

Fortunately *Demon Knight* does not become an *Alien*esque killing demon scenario or a Friday the 13th. It's a film full of excellent ideas. However close attention needs to be paid to avoid confusion in some scenes, as you may start asking yourself, how could that happen?

Collector *Billy Zane* is charismatic throughout the film, a fact that allows his character to seduce all the boarding house guests in the attempt to retrieve the key. His character is very much along the lines of *Beetlejuice* (comically frustrated) and the Joker (the devil with a big smile), which proves to be effective.

*Demon Knight* is not particularly scary; there is less shock and more special effects



gore, perhaps in an attempt to make some people feel a tiny bit nauseous. Whatever nausea soon passes though, and being spoon fed small doses of black comedy also helps. *Demon Knight* is high on the impressive list.

**richie rich** (*Macauley Culkin*) is the richest kid in the world; the sole heir to a \$70 billion fortune. Not only does he have his own personal baseball coach, but he also has a roller coaster in his backyard and his aerobics instructor is *Claudia Schiffer*.

But *Lawrence Van Dough* is the villain of the film. He wants to eliminate the Rich family so that he can take over *Rich Industries*. Mysteriously, *Richie's* parents go missing leaving *Richie* in charge. To defeat *Van Dough*, he seeks the help of a group of city kids who befriend him.

As a *Macauley Culkin* film, *Richie Rich* is predictable. It's very much in the same vein as his other films with plenty of slapstick humour and *Macauley Culkin* attempting to save the day. However it also has vomit-inducingly sentimental undertones with the moral of the story being that true friendship should be valued more than money.

Undoubtedly *Richie Rich* is by far inferior to *Home Alone* and *Uncle Buck*, the main problem being that *Culkin's* cuteness is rapidly diminishing. But as the idea of being the richest kid in the world is every child's dream, it will probably be readily lapped up by the pre-pre-pubescent audience. Adults, on the other hand will find it a silly but harmless film, which is mildly amusing in places and just about bearable. ⑤



richie rich



## rotation: meanies

The proprietor rubs his grubby hands together as another pair of likely lads make off with the record industry's single flotsam. Just wait til they return, hearts and dreams broken. But alas, it seems that this week's rotationees, *Michael Calais* and *Ben Kemp* (*Biochem 1*) are far too cynical already. A career in music journalism awaits...

**the cardigans** – *carnival* single of the week; a song crafted from everything that makes you feel good inside; an instantly memorable chorus, string laden melodies with swathes of Hammond organ.

**high llamas** – *checking in ...* If anyone had ever published an a-z on how to sound exactly like *elo* whilst giving it a revolutionary new country twist, the group got it out the library and kept it until it was long overdue.

**kingmaker** – *the best possible..* Particularly bad indeed. In fact this isn't even as good as the guys next door tuning their guitars and practising bongos.

**joy division** – *love will tear us apart* This is godlike genius, probably the most important single of the week. Unfortunately this group turned into new order after *ian curtis* hung himself.

**out of my hair** – *mister jones* This is what you get for changing your name from *simon* to *comfort*: a *kate bush*-*tori amos* pastiche with sprawling pianos and no redeeming features.

**fsol** – *far-out son of lung and ...* They would have us believe that music like this will be the soundtrack to a time when your souls are jacked into the internet at birth and everything is learnt from stereograms. In reality *fsol* will probably retire to make bleepy sounds for cheap sci-fi comedy shows.

**jesus and mary chain** – *i hate rock and roll* Why do they despise what they so desperately desire?

**chemical bros** – *leave home* Fine stadium acid-house. It's got a good beat and you can dance to it ... if you're drunk. Beyond the tune you'll find the deeper meaning of two sad individuals locked into a studio with no company but a *bbc* micro.

**pulp** – *common people* Worryingly like *wire* at first, this song climaxes as only *Jarvis* can. The nylon net curtains twitch as we gaze after the strange spectacle of *pulp* mincing down the kings road. Or *ultravox* with innuendo.





## old coppers and yanks

It's exam season and I need an escape – something to steer my sieve-like mind away from the de rigeur stress – R – us look that accompanies this time of year. Oh, what's this? It's the early '80s and the **police** are live! in america. Sting is disarmingly free of pretension, Stuart Copeland is not writing film scores and Andy Summers is as anonymous and extremely old as usual. I can take in the profound social and political commentary that is 'de do do do, de da da da' and while away my time pondering its significance. I can chuckle at the pseudo-reggaisms of 'roxanne' (but enjoy it all the same) and cast a nostalgic ear back to the perennial classics of 'don't stand so close to me', 'so lonely', 'message in a bottle' and best of all, 'every breath you take'. Hey, this isn't bad – they knew how to get a crowd going and in those days the only stress I had came from worrying whether Optimus Prime was going to recover from his near fatal clash with Megatron. Maybe they should reform so that I can be forever sentimental. Then again, why should they when Sting can write manifestly inferior tosh and earn copiously greater quantities of cash? Like exams, some injustices never go away. (6)

Situated in the armpit of Camden Town's trendy anatomy, the Laurel Tree pub is a haven for those in the know. Owain assured me that "that's where Blur hang-out", so I was rife with excitement! After a 15 minute brainstorm trying to remember what the street was called, we arrive. But Blur? Blah! Upstairs at the Laurel Tree is a room the size of yer average double-bedroom. Still it was where the **psyclone rangers** make their debut London appearance.

My ears were feeling quite cathedral thanks to the supports, but that wasn't a problem; the rangers decided to go one notch higher. Not a band for the faint hearted. Jonathan Valania (lead guy) conceded they were not a hip grunge band from Texas (actually Allentown, Pennsylvania?), and then kicked into 'feel nice', their first single released back in 1993. The set also includes tributes to; Dick Dale – "Dick Dale, Dick Dale, Dick Dale, Dick Dale!", bassist P.R. Behler's Father (for his tips on British girls, chocolate and plastic gloves), and a quick word from their sponsors, Honeycombs breakfast cereal, who have been replaced by Kellogs in the UK.

Far from making some huge statement about modern society, the Psyclone Rangers are simply out to do what they want. Like Valania said, "one day you wake up and realise you don't want a Merc and a condo in the suburbs, then it's time to say 'f\*k it!' and just go for what you really want".

There seems to be some confusion on this one; is *electr-o-pura* **yo la tengo**'s seventh or eighth album? Not one for the faint hearted I'm sure you'll agree. What is certain though, is that Yo La Tengo have been around for a long, long time with little of the recognition that some would suggest has been their due.

But it is slowly changing, particularly after the warming,

storming tsunami of an album that was 1993's 'painful'. Now 'electr-o-pura' sees a louder band getting scuzzalled in form and function.

Ira Kaplan's voice still drones, Georgia Hubley occasionally takes vocal control with shy confidence, but the group's driving force remains their love of some good guitar reverberation and semi-inane odd-ball attitude that provides us with a running commentary of the album on the sleeve notes. And as far as they may seem to head into Sonic Youth country, Yo La Tengo never end up alienating or attempting to spook their audience with art school angst.

As they write about their current single, 'tom courtenay' – "a group is like a jig-saw puzzle, everything must fit into the groove". 'Electr-o-pura' has no missing pieces. (9)



yo la tengo



## indie dance, mail size?

Imagine slamming away on a heaving dancefloor the size of a postage stamp. Not impressed? Okay, imagine slamming away on a heaving dancefloor the size of a postage stamp to the likes of Blur, Rage Against the Machine, Green Day, Oasis, Portishead and many more of your favourite indie/dance/alternative faves. Maybe? Okay, okay, if you're going to be fussy – imagine slamming away on a heaving dancefloor the size of a postage stamp to the likes of Blur, Rage Against the Machine, Green Day, Oasis, Portishead and many more of your favourite indie/dance/alternative faves for £1.50 (with a copy of FELIX and some student ID), supping beers that cost you £1 a bottle all night. Aha, now we're talking! Check out **automatic** at the Gass Club, Whitcomb Street (opposite Maccy Dees, Leicester Square) on a Wednesday night from 9.30 p.m. to 3.30 a.m. and don't get up for college the next morning...

And if that isn't enough partying for you, why not try **club x** at the Astoria, Tottenham Court Road. You can still slam but on a dancefloor more the size of a rather big envelope than a postage stamp and, yes, you still get your selection of swinging tunes, but this time on two floors. It costs a bit more (a hefty £6 with a flyer that you can get by writing to P.O. Box 3757, NW6 3NA) but the novelty this time is that it runs once a month on a Saturday evening from 11 p.m. till 6 a.m.

That's right, it's a once in a monthtime experience that means you won't get up for college for the whole of the following week... (5)

Even more chaos is created by **latimer**; a band who have chosen to call their album, *lp title*. Maybe it's supposed to be something to do with simplicity but more likely it's the desire to force that breed of infidel dogs, music journalists, into forced errors. Whatever, Latimer come screaming from the best traditions of the heartland of American psychobilly-and-spit rock.

At their most reprobate they're reminiscent of the ten gallon swagger of the Supersuckers and they have toured with the awesome Rev Horton Heat. Yet they also display some surprisingly melodic leanings, as most particularly realised on the elegantly named 'chicken the goon'.

Still you shouldn't expect an easy ride on 'lp title'. It's oily, wily, pig-headed and not always a pleasure to know. (7) (5)



## portend

Within its own retrospect there's always going to be a question marked hanging over **midnight's children**. Which, in a literacy sense is extremely strange as it come highly recommended. Winner of the Booker Prize in the year it was first published, 1981, 'Midnight's Children' has since won the 25th anniversary award as the best Booker Prize Winner. Yet the question mark remains, Salman Rushdie?

But leaving that aside, at least for this short column, 'Midnight's Children' is a book of rare insight and depth. Loosely autobiographical in respect to growing up in Bombay and then Karachi, 'Midnight's Children' is in actuality far broader – the history of an entire subcontinent wrapped up in the brief span of four hundred and sixty three pages.

And yet the amazing thing is that it works on both these two levels, macro and micro, as they, in turn, work together and apart. The currents of an independent India, breaking into Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the labyrinthian roots of its politics, shape a family just as the members of that family shape countries by their actions, thoughts and most bizarrely, physique.

It would be wrong to limit the work to the East though. 'Midnight's Children' has as much relevance to western ideas of citizenship and state as to the green chutney munching fraternity of the Bombay middle-class. It's also a dazzling read. (5)



EVENTS

REGULARS

MASS MEDIA

FILM

MUSIC

ARTS CINEMATIC  
VISUAL

# FELIX

FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY

Barbecue 6pm In the Quad. All Welcome. Pop Tarts 8pm Britpop, US Guitar Bands & Retro-Indie (it says here). Until 2am, bar to 1am. £1 after 9pm.

Monday Madness 6pm Beer promotions at Da Vinci's.

Have a go at Animation At the RCA. 2pm. With Leonardo Soc. Check notice board. Club Spanque 8-11.30pm Free. UB. R.

Labour Club 12.30pm SL upper. Islamic Society 1pm Friday Prayers. SG. ICU Rag 1.10pm Rag Meeting. EL. Aerobics Class 5.30pm Advanced Step level IV. SG. Free Minibus Service 11.30pm-2am from the Union.

Gliding Club 8.15am Lasham Airfield. Come to Thurs meeting if it is your first time. Roller Blade Soc 10.45am. Ramp skating at Brixton Skate Park. SL. Roller Blade Soc 2pm Skating and Hockey in Hyde Park/Kensington Gdns. SL.

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Paul Merton's Life of Comedy 8.30pm BBC1. The Critic 9pm Bravo. Clever satirical cartoon, excellent by all coconuts.

Rab C. Nesbitt 9pm BBC2. The smell of Reeves & Mortimer 9.30pm BBC2. Late Jazz 12pm BBC2.

Star Trek 10.50am BBC2. The original series. The world of Lee Evans 9pm. C4. The baby faced bandy legged neurotic madman's first series.

Johnnie Walker 2pm R1. Featuring a live session from Dodgy. Radio Active 7pm R2. Regular comedy slot, this week is Angus Deaton's Big Break. Goodfellas 10pm C4. Classic gangster movie - don't miss. May start late.

Immortal Beloved 8pm ICU Cinema. Barcelona 8pm ICU Cinema.

Teenage Fanclub 10.50am BBC2. The original series. The world of Lee Evans 9pm. C4. The baby faced bandy legged neurotic madman's first series.

Fun-Da-Mental 10.50am BBC2. The original series. The world of Lee Evans 9pm. C4. The baby faced bandy legged neurotic madman's first series.

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# Guide

THURSDAY NEXT FRIDAY

Cocktail Night 5-11pm Bargain cocktails from £1.70. Weekly specials. Da Vinci's. R.

Mantra Live music from Wave Method, Guest DJs On A House Trip. £1 after 9pm. 1am bar.

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# FELIX Bound Editions

Remember Gassan Karian's deceptions? Recall each computer theft in glorious detail? Could you forget the election night photo? Will you ever understand Frater Fiam's column? Girlfriend snapped at a Dirty Disco?

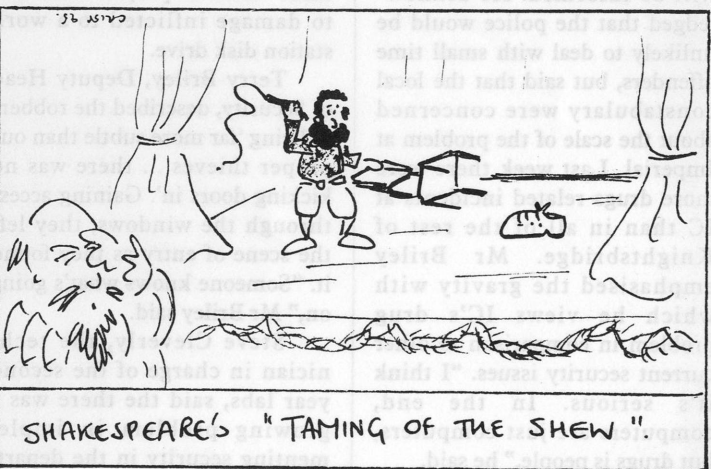
Relive these and all your other favourite 94/95 moments with your own personal Bound Edition. Every issue of the year stitched into an attractive hardbound cover and embossed with your own name in gold leaf. The perfect way to remember the last great year at Imperial College.

The price will be around £35 pounds depending on the total number of orders we receive. Supplies are limited so it's a first come, first serve situation.

Call 48072 or come to the FELIX office, northwest Beit Quad and ask for Owain for more details.



## RADIO FOR THE DEAF





# Contract Conflicts

BY THE NEWS TEAM

Loweth Limited have vigorously refuted suggestions, previously reported in *FELIX* 1029, that they had 'lost' their contract with Imperial College. The company, whose contract expires at the end of July, insist that in early April they themselves made the decision to pull out of IC, before the contract came up for review at the end of this academic year.

Ron Jeeves, IC Operations Manager, has acknowledged that Loweth told him that they did not want to renew the contract, and that they claimed 'Imperial College is an impossible place to work.' But senior estate managers stand by his allegation that workmanship was of an unacceptable standard. "All of these problems have come about because of their inability to get the quality right," Jeeves said.

Loweth point to a recent IC audit of their work which found a 92% satisfactory rating. They further assert that the question of

the quality of their work was only brought up after Loweth's decision to leave IC became known, and that the letter from College confirming Loweth's departure does not even mention quality. In response, Mr Jeeves said that the quarterly Imperial College quality audit showed a 10% failure rate in November, rising to 15% in February, while an internal audit in March showed that out of twelve jobs assessed, four were deemed to have been unsatisfactory.

He insisted that Loweth were informed of problems with the quality of their work and showed *FELIX* minutes of a meeting held at the beginning of March. The minutes record that 'the quality audit has revealed an increase in the rate of failures which has risen to 15%'. The meeting was attended by three Loweth representatives. "We made a commitment to quality control - we never actually achieved that with Loweth", Ron Jeeves said.

Loweth also cite political and personal conflicts. Earlier this year Ron Jeeves is alleged to have attempted to have the Chairman of Loweth brought out of an important meeting to discuss a problem at Imperial. The IC Operations Manager is then alleged to have described the company as 'crap' and suggested that he would like to 'wring the neck' of the Chairman, Mr Stuart Redcliffe.

The 113 year old company does not rule out the possibility of working with IC in the future, with their Managing Director saying that they 'would love to be involved' in future developments. They are anxious to repair what they see as the 'slight on our reputation', with Stuart Redcliffe insisting his company 'believes in values' and is 'nothing like as bad as we've been painted'.

At the same time, Nick Black, IC's Estates Manager, defended Ron Jeeves' record. "We should have hired someone like Ron 10 years ago," he said.

*('Grass' continues from page one)*

issue that college should perhaps deal with more coherently than they have done." He and senior college tutors will attend a seminar organised by the CVCP this month on the role of university disciplinaries. "In the light of this discussion, we will consider whether we need to make any changes to college policy," he said.

Mr Briley called for a clampdown on college policy, so that if any student is found in possession of drugs, the police will be informed. He acknowledged that the police would be unlikely to deal with small time offenders, but said that the local constabulary were concerned about the scale of the problem at Imperial. Last week there were more drugs related incidents at IC than in all of the rest of Knightsbridge. Mr Briley emphasised the gravity with which he views IC's drug problem in comparison to other current security issues. "I think it's serious. In the end, computers are just computers, but drugs are people," he said.

# Physics Filched

BY RACHEL WALTERS

The Huxley building has been burgled twice in the past week. Last Thursday night, thieves broke into the Physics Department through a window on the third floor, stealing four memory chips from the second year teaching laboratories. They went through several rooms, damaging eight computers during the raid. Two first year students have lost three weeks of project work due to damage inflicted to a work station disk drive.

Terry Briley, Deputy Head of Security, described the robbers as being 'far more subtle than our proper thieves ... there was no kicking doors in'. Gaining access through the windows, they left the scene of entry as they found it. "Someone knows what's going on," Mr Briley said.

Steve Cleverly, the technician in charge of the second year labs, said there was a growing problem in implementing security in the depart-

ment. "It's a trade off between keeping things locked up and giving students access," he said.

Meanwhile in a separate incident, staff are confused as to how two Macintosh Classic computers went missing from a locked room sometime between Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday lunchtime.

The Physics Department is continuing to review its security policy. "They're making the place like Fort Knox," one security guard commented. The Computing Department side of the Huxley building has been free from thefts since the installation of infra-red detectors earlier this month, but the Physics Department is not equipped with the sensors.

The man arrested on Exhibition Road in April for thefts from the Huxley building over the Easter holiday was charged and released on bail last Friday. That evening, he was re-arrested, having been caught breaking into a car.

# News In Brief

## Beyond Wye College

The loose federal structure of the University of London looks set to become even more dispersed. Malaysia College, a new London University college based at Kuala Lumpur, will be privately sponsored and have a student population of over 5000.

A recent report by the projects planning committee suggests that fees will be around 80% of those charged in London, with the additional benefits of greatly reduced travel costs. Imperial has a large number of Malaysian students regularly making the pilgrimage each term to the United Kingdom.

Malaysia College would be required to adhere to the standards set by the University of London. The ULU building, in Malet Street, is not expected to consider an expansion of facilities if the proposal is implemented.

**Top Spot for Chemical Guide**  
John Emsley, science writer-in-residence at the Department of Chemistry, Imperial College, has won the Rhone-Poulenc prize for science books. Mr Emsley collected £10,000 for 'The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide' and is the seventh winner of the prize.

**Pubs and Clubs**  
Young adults go to clubs and pubs to socialise, not get drunk. That's the findings of a new study by researchers at Newcastle University. The loss of traditional job structures and consequent trend against early marriage has led to a culture where going out may continue until the 20's or 30's. Thus, social life has turned into the modern equivalent of the community. Project leader Robert Holland told the THES that: "people assume it's a problem to be contained rather than an a positive opportunity."

**Mascots Inviolate**  
The two remaining violate mascots of the City & Guilds College Union became inviolate on Thursday. Any attempt to obtain the mascots will now be regarded as theft and will be dealt with by the police.