



Grade B material? Felix asks students

Felix interviews an influential government advisor and surveys the student body to find out what they think of cannabis' reclassification. See pages 3, 4 & 5, and 8

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Professor Nutt on cannabis



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News

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Another twist in The Saga of The Writing-up Student

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

Earlier this term Felix reported on the apparent success of former writing-up student, Matthew Yong, in his battle for Council Tax exemption against Camden Council. Mr Yong was requested to attend court on 20th March, but literally before entering, Camden Council withdrew the summons. A few weeks later he was issued with an official Summons Withdrawal Notice, which Felix even printed a copy of in issue 1,401.

Mr Yong was set to sell his story to this paper, but he was stopped in his tracks when Camden Council took a U-turn on their decision. After writing to his council for confirmation that a line could be drawn under the ordeal, he received a letter on 6th May stating: "I regret that the Council stands by its decision not to award you full exemption between 4 July 2007 and 5 January 2008."

According to Camden Council, Mr Yong owes them £804.52 despite being



Little Timmy can't work out what the hell is going on either...

issued with the Summons Withdrawal Notice.

Felix contacted Camden Council in an attempt to determine what the hell is going on, but this author was met with cries of "Data Protection Act."

Mr Yong says that he doesn't have

time to keep dealing with the Council. He has written to the NUS (National Union of Students), the NPC (National Postgraduate Committee) and the Union seeking funding to help him pay for any further legal costs.

The trial continues...

Graduates from elite universities four times more likely to be in the highest pay bracket

Afonso Campos

A survey conducted by the Institute of Education at the University of London has led to the official and fairly unsurprising conclusion that graduates from the top universities in the country earn significantly more than those hailing from former polytechnics and lesser-ranked institutions.

According to an Education Guardian story, graduates from places such as LSE, Oxford, Imperial, Cambridge, UCL, St Andrews, Durham and Edinburgh have been found to be four times

likelier to earn more than all other university leavers. About 1 in 5 of these graduates earn at least £90,000 a year, compared to 1 in 20 from ex-polys. This is very likely to be linked to the fact that graduate recruiters tend to be amongst the highest paying employers and they happen to recruit almost exclusively from top ranked institutions. The universities previously mentioned have a very high proportion of students entering graduate employment at places like investment banks, management consultancies and companies such as Proctor and Gamble, GlaxoSmith-

Kline, etc.

According to the survey, roughly 1 in 3 students who left these universities in the mid '90s own the house they live in, compared to 1 in 5 for graduates from other universities and just over 1 in 10 for non-graduates.

These findings are likely to bring comfort and distress to Imperial students. Comfort to those who are already certain that they will sell their soul to the city when they graduate and distress to those who will sacrifice a large pay-packet for a career in science.

Students evacuated from SAF after bomb scare



A myriad of police officers arrived outside the Sir Alexander Fleming building on Wednesday afternoon when security guards stumbled upon a suspicious bag. Four police cars turned up according to one onlooker, and the entire building had to be evacuated for approximately 30 minutes to secure the area. Thankfully, the offending item was no more than a suspicious bag. Although the incident proved to be a false alarm, police officers reassured the security guards that they "did the right thing."

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STREET LOIOTS



OFTEN WEEK

Smokers: Class B won't change us

Felix surveys student body: 1 in 5 IC students smoke cannabis, 57% feel the reclassification is a bad idea

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

The government's recent reversal to reclassify cannabis as a class B drug will have minimal to no effect on existing users' smoking habits; that's according to a survey carried out by Felix this week. When asked: "Will the government's reclassification of cannabis from a class C to a class B drug change your smoking habits?" 25 out of 26 IC cannabis smokers answered "No" and that they will continue as usual.

Felix conducted the survey this week following the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith's recent decision to strengthen laws on cannabis use, despite a government commissioned report recommending: "Cannabis should remain a Class C drug." The report, which was published in April and written by the Advisory Council on Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), should never have been commissioned in the first place according to committee member Professor David Nutt. The influential ACMD member told Felix in an exclusive interview: "I do not think that the review was necessary ... But if asked to review, we have to review."

Jacqui Smith authorised production of the report last July, in a bid to reverse Tony Blair's downgrading of cannabis to a Class C drug in 2004. The downgrading was intended to cut police time spent enforcing cannabis laws. Since then, worries about the effects cannabis has on users' mental health have caused the Home Secretary to call for the drug's reclassification. In particular, Ms Smith is concerned that a much stronger variety of the drug, namely skunk, is dominating the cannabis market.

Seemingly, the government was set on reclassifying the drug and in May of



1 in 5, or 18% of Imperial students smoke cannabis, compared to a national average of 27% for people aged between 18 and 24 years old

this year, when the ACMD published its review stating: "Cannabis more closely equates with other Class C substances," Ms Smith chose to ignore the advice. Cannabis is now set to return to Class B status in early 2009.

Earlier this week, Felix surveyed 143 members of the student body to find out how the reclassification would affect current cannabis users; whether students think the reclassification is a good idea; and whether cannabis should be illegal.

The 26 smokers were almost unanimous in their comments, with 98% stating that they would continue using cannabis in 2009, raising serious doubts about the effectiveness of the government's latest policy. Recent comments from the Association of

Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have also undermined the government's intentions. The ACPO said it will continue to police personal cannabis use with the same tactics employed since the drug was downgraded. "Should the decision be taken to reclassify cannabis to Class B," an ACPO spokesperson stated in early May, "ACPO believes [police should] retain flexibility in dealing with instances of possession on the street, including the discretion to issue warnings," rather than to arrest.

The student body was split on cannabis' status, with a slight majority favouring the drug's legalisation. 57% of students surveyed felt that the reclassification is a bad idea, whilst 54% felt that cannabis shouldn't be illegal at all. Many referenced the Netherlands' more relaxed stance on cannabis use, believing the UK should follow suit. "All drugs should be legal," commented one liberal student, "it's my body and I should be allowed to do what I want to do it."

Yet, for every argument against cannabis' reclassification, there were almost as many opposing views. "It wasn't enforced properly as a C drug," asserted one anti-cannabis student. "If it's going to be illegal, then do it properly." Whereas another put it simply: "drugs are bad, mm'kay."

According to the survey, approximately 1 in 5 (18%) Imperial students smoke cannabis. This comes in lower than the national average of 27% for 18 to 24 year olds, found in 2004. If these students are caught with cannabis on College property, Imperial will resort to its 'Zero Tolerance' policy on drugs use. Students face eviction if found taking drugs into halls, and in more severe cases they can be forced to leave university.

Nationally, they currently face up to two years in prison for possession, however, after 2009 the maximum jail sentence will increase to five years. That's if the police force actually embraces the government's changes; in reality, they could simply face a ticking-off and be sent on their intoxicated way.

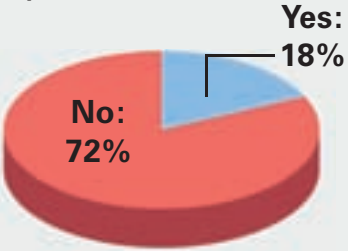
For the full interview with the Advisory Council on Misuse of Drugs committee member, Professor David Nutt, turn to page 4. For comment on the reclassification of cannabis, turn to page 8



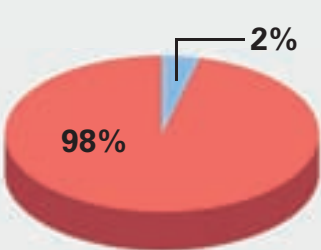
Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, who went against advice from the ACMD. In early 2009, Cannabis will once again be a Class B drug

Our survey says...

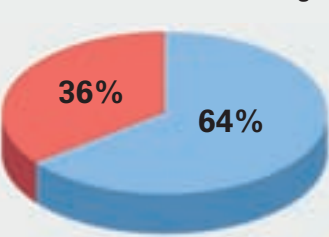
Do you smoke cannabis?



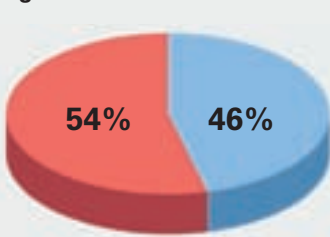
Will your smoking habits change with the reclassification of cannabis to a Class B drug?*



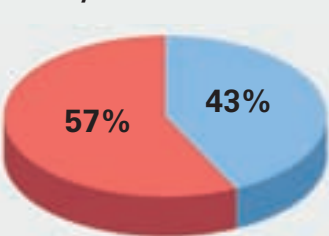
Did you know cannabis is being reclassified to a Class B drug?



Do you think it should be illegal to smoke cannabis?



Do you think it is a good idea to reclassify cannabis as Class B?



Felix surveyed 143 people in the Junior Common Room, the Union and the Sir Alexander Fleming Building dining area during two lunchtimes.

*26 cannabis smokers were asked this question

Our students say...

"There's better stuff to do with police time than arrest cannabis users, like stopping people get stabbed!"

"Any drug use is most definitely wrong."

"The entire classification system is flawed: many surveys say it's less dangerous than alcohol."

"With the reclassification to Class B, there's more incentive for dealers to use crazy ingredients in cannabis and thus it will be more damaging to society."

"There's definitely no harm in making it illegal, but if it is legalised, I'm not so sure."

"It should be illegal along with alcohol because they're both a detriment to society."

"People need to be told not to smoke cannabis; they don't need to be put in jail though."

"I think it's become a Class B drug again not because of its health risks, but because of its prolificacy."

"Prohibition doesn't work. It didn't work with alcohol. You're just putting cannabis in the control of gangs if you make it illegal."

"It's useful in a medical context, but I don't think it should be on the streets where you don't know what you're getting."

"It's a blanket change to deal with those smoking skunk."

"In Holland, it impresses no one if you smoke a spliff. Once you reach an age, you should be responsible for your own actions."

"Drugs are bad, mm'kay."



Politics

Politics Editors – Li-Teck Lau and Kadhim Shubber

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Cannabis review: “not necessary”

Chair of the Technical Committee of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs and Professor of psycho-pharmacology **David Nutt** speaks to **James Goldsack**, sharing his views on the reclassification

In July 2007, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith called for a review of the classification of cannabis, at the time a Class C substance, in part because of public concern but also due to the increased use of a stronger form of cannabis, skunk.

The review, undertaken by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), was published last month and recommended that cannabis remain Class C. In the face of this recommendation, Jacqui Smith has decided to push for a reclassification, moving the drug up to B.

Shortly after this decision was made, I met with Professor David Nutt, a psycho-pharmacologist at Bristol University and Chair of the Technical Committee of the ACMD, to find out more about the decision, drug culture and the classification system.

What is your position on the ACMD?

I am one of 3 psychiatrists on the Council and I think I have been a member of the Council for about 8 years now. I am a psycho-pharmacologist and my main research is into addiction and anxiety disorders. As I know about drugs and the brain I am the chair of what is called the Technical Committee that does the technical assessment of drugs and tries to understand their risks and harms. The Technical Committee comprises some technical experts from the Council, all with a scientific or technical background. The Committee did not do a separate analysis of cannabis this time. It did before for an important paper published in the Lancet journal last year which was the output of many years assessment by the Technical Committee on the harms of drugs.

Were you a member

when cannabis was declassified? At that time were you for the declassification?

Yes that is right. I cannot speak for the council but I can tell you this: the first decision was unanimous, in 2004 there was 1 dissenter and in 2008 there were 3 dissenters. The Council is 31 people so you can see the proportion. Yes, I believe cannabis should be Class C, always have and have always agreed with the council.

Why was there a review into the classification of cannabis and was it necessary?

Well, the beginning of the report refers to a letter from the Home Secretary saying why she wants it reviewed. The key issue, what people worry about, as far as I understand is that cannabis is now mostly skunk, and skunk is different from resin. However, is it possible that skunk is more dangerous than resin? Is it going to cause more problems in the long term? That is why people are more anxious because the concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) has gone up probably 2 to 3 fold on average of what people are purchasing in the past 15 years. We don't know if that changes how much people take, whether they get more THC in their blood or not. The main concern is that stronger skunk might be leading to more problems. There is a slightly odd thing about cannabidiol (CBD). It may be a red herring but CBD is another constituent of resin which is not present in skunk. Some people think that it is anti-psychotic so the theory is when you take forms of cannabis other than skunk, the THC and CBD work against each other. It's just a theory, there's no strong evidence. So some people think that is why skunk is more likely to make you psychotic. However, this time I do not think the review was necessary; the evidence of new harm isn't based upon very much.

Based upon the evidence you have seen, what is the public's view?

It was somewhat disingenuous of the home secretary to say that the majority of the public surveyed by the ACMD were in favour of class B as she did not say 80% wanted 2 year or less penalties with 27% wanting no penalty!



Chair of the Technical Committee of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, Professor David Nutt

There's a mismatch and I think this is a really important point – the public don't want to penalise people for using cannabis but they do want to warn and scare people off it. I actually think, to

“Cannabis is a health issue, not a legal issue”

be honest, that the government don't actually know what they are going to do about punishments. They seem to want Class “B” as a scare tactic but it is ridiculous that people could face being in prison for 5 years for possession of a single joint. What would be the point? Prison is hugely expensive and I don't think the majority of the parents who are against cannabis actually want their kids locked up. Probably about a half of the younger population have used it. Many people use it regularly and they argue, why should it be illegal anyway?

Cannabis is a health issue, not a legal issue.

Is there any reason to scare people off cannabis more than other Class C drugs?

You will have to ask the Home Secretary! I presume there is a feeling

that some people are harmed; some drop out of university, some become psychotic, a few might become schizophrenic. There are harms associated with cannabis use, that's true. The question is whether they're sufficient to make it Class B. We didn't think so because although the harms are well recognised, they're relatively rare. So you risk criminalising a lot of people more severely to protect a few who might come to harm. As well as that, I don't think there's any evidence to show that the popularity of a drug depends upon the class. Ecstasy is Class A yet lots of people use it. The question is, why

“[The reclassification] appears to have been a political decision”

doesn't class change people's attitudes? One of the arguments we have always been pursuing is that if the anomalies of classification are taken out, maybe people would take notice. That is what we are trying to push towards, a proper evidence-based classification.

So should the classification criteria or methodology be changed? Or is it just that some drugs are in the wrong category?

That is what is in the Lancet paper. Clearly, a lot of drugs are anomalously classified; Ecstasy, LSD and mushrooms for example. These should certainly be less than A. Maybe C, B or C, depends. But definitely there are some drugs which are Class A but shouldn't be. That I think undermines the whole classification system. Class A should be Heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, other strong opiates.

The Times reported that before the report came out, Jacqui Smith was prepared to override the Council's decision if necessary. Was it a surprise that Recommendation 3 was rejected?

We elect the government to do what they think is best for the country but as we all know quite often they get things wrong! There is a peculiar ground swell of political opinion which is very old fashioned in respect to drugs. They seem to feel that punishment and interdiction – the very hard line approach – is actually going to somehow solve the problem which of course it never has done and probably never will do. People will get caught in the cross fire of that. It's actually quite a naive position. The Home Secretary did accept 20 of the 21 recommendations but what we need to know is whether she is going to deliver on them or not.

Many of the other recommendations appear to support cannabis



being a Class C drug.

I agree, and think that just emphasises the fact that this appears to have been a political decision.

Since cannabis was declassified, has there been a change in drug culture?

Use has gone down; there has been a long term fall in use. You could say it has gone down because of the declassification, people thinking it is not as good. I wonder if it is partly education. Also maybe skunk is less pleasant to take. Maybe it is because less people smoke, it's harder to take cannabis without smoking so reduction in smoking could mean a reduction in cannabis use. Cocaine use is increasing. I don't think there is necessarily a link but it is a possibility. Fashion is probably the biggest influence on drug use. Maybe people want to be different from their siblings. If your brother smokes dope

“Arguing that stopping cannabis use will prevent schizophrenia is quite wrong”

and you want to be different, you take coke. To some extent cannabis use may be becoming “uncool”.

Do you think there is a place in society for alcohol, tobacco and other, illegal drugs?

Drugs are drugs and they ought to be treated fairly as far as possible instead of the peculiar position we are in today. Tobacco is a very interesting example; tobacco use has fallen quite a lot, driven by public dislike for smoking and the smoking ban in buildings. I think if you want to stop drugs being used it helps to make them unfashionable. There are other ways, e.g. taxation, and one of the problems with illegal drugs, as you know, is you don't have access to such proven methods of control. Most countries in the world have accepted

that taking drugs is a personal choice and that we should not penalise people for drug use but dealers should be punished for selling drugs. I am quite interested in the Dutch model where cannabis is available in coffee shops legally in a controlled fashion in a safe environment. I think it's a very interesting idea and I don't know why other countries haven't explored it as a way of protecting kids who want to try cannabis from street dealers of other harder drugs. That type of approach might have some benefits.

Can you see it working for other drugs?

It potentially could. It is an interesting approach that should be explored as an option.

Recommendation 7 advises schools to develop policies relating to substance abuse. Do you see this including universities?

When we talk about that we talk about education establishments including universities. I think they should have explicit policies on all drugs and that should include alcohol. Alcohol probably does more damage to students' progression than cannabis. They should be educating kids but also encouraging them to seek help if they get into problems. I think kicking people out is, particularly at schools, a hugely dangerous thing to do. Once kids are kicked out of school what else have they got to do BUT take drugs? I think it's disproportionate to exclude people from university for taking drugs. If you applied it fairly, then you'd exclude most people. Even this government now has a policy of harm minimisation so that's what education establishments should try to do, to make sure that whatever they do doesn't cause more harm than the drugs. That's absolutely the first rule.

If you could start from scratch with alcohol and tobacco, would they be illegal and if so, which class would you put them in?

There's no question. Alcohol is similar to GHB, currently class C. But in the Lancet paper, alcohol comes up with a lot of other class B drugs. Tobacco is probably C because it doesn't actually cause damage through intoxication

like alcohol, the main costs are health costs to the people who smoke it and it is addictive.

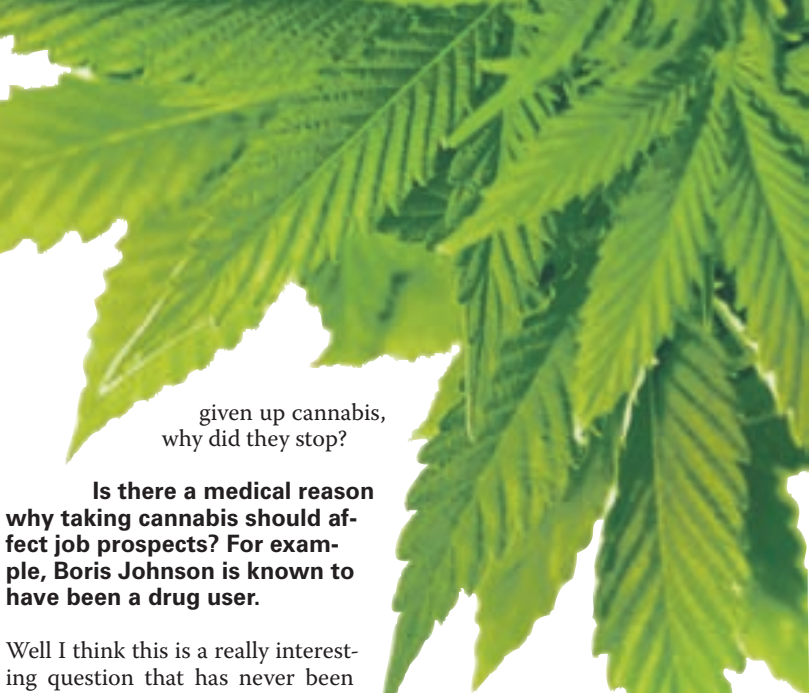
In the report, cannabis is said to be less physically harmful than tobacco. What are the reasons for this?

It is actually quite complex. The main reason is lifetime consumption of cannabis is much less than tobacco consumption. So people generally smoke between 3 and 6 joints a day as opposed to up to 40 to 60 cigarettes a day so there is actually less consumption. But harm per inhalation is harder to know: I wouldn't have thought there's much in it frankly, they're all toxic substances that are burnt. Actually, cannabis burns at a lower temperature so probably slightly less toxic per unit inhalation.

“Based on the medical evidence, [cannabis] should definitely be class C”

Are there any psychological or biological reasons for the prevalence of cannabis in certain age groups?

That's an interesting question. We don't really know why people stop using cannabis in their 30s. It's one of the research questions that needs addressing now. Why do some kids use cannabis? I think many want an alternative to alcohol, they don't want to be out of their head, they want to be mellow. In many ways it's a very sensible choice. You have slightly more control over your life than if blind drunk. Why do people give up? I would like to know. I don't know if the law has much of an impact. I think some people get paranoid when they smoke more. Maybe you can ask your readers who have



Is there a medical reason why taking cannabis should affect job prospects? For example, Boris Johnson is known to have been a drug user.

Well I think this is a really interesting question that has never been discussed in relation to drugs. It's been discussed in relation to alcohol; should reformed alcoholics be allowed to take public office? Boris does seem to have used a range of drugs possibly including Class A ones. Jacqui Smith and many other cabinet and shadow cabinet ministers have smoked cannabis. That's why I think this whole business of penalties is ridiculous. If for instance, the current Home Secretary had been caught in possession of a joint when a student and then got a criminal record, she almost certainly wouldn't now be Home Secretary. As she's potentially quite a good Home Secretary this would have been a waste of talent. It's quite pointless to lose your opportunity to fulfil your talents for such a minor transgression. I think drug use – including alcohol – generally doesn't impinge on people's functioning if they're not dependent or mis-using the drug currently.

Are there long term physical effects on the brain from cannabis use?

It does change the brain but it doesn't appear to damage the brain. That's true of any addiction, addictions change the brain in the sense that you behave differently. In general drugs don't physically kill brain cells but they do change the chemistry of the brain. Everything you do changes your brain, this conversation has changed your brain. There is no evidence of irreversible changes with cannabis. With methamphetamines, alcohol and cocaine, there may be long term changes after dependence which means you can argue that addiction lasts forever. But whether you really get addicted to cannabis in the same way as to alcohol or heroin is actually quite an interesting question. I'm not sure you do. We don't know whether aging “dope heads” still crave cannabis. There is withdrawal and physical dependence, no question about that but cannabis doesn't seem to control people's lives in the same way as heroin and alcohol.

The report states that “to prevent one case of schizophrenia in men aged 20 to 24, about 5,000 men would have to be prevented from ever smoking cannabis”. How strong is the link between cannabis use and schizophrenia?

There is a link but it's weak. I think there must be some genetic sensitivity. Anyone can get psychotic just like anyone can get drunk but schizophrenia is different. We suggested in the report that the enzyme COMT might be a common cause because COMT is weakly linked to schizophrenia and weakly linked to cannabis psychosis. The

weakness of the link of cannabis and schizophrenia is why the move to class B is not proportional to the harm of cannabis. The impact on schizophrenia of stopping everyone smoking cannabis would be relatively trivial. We shouldn't be inappropriately penalising cannabis users - even locking them up - to stop other people getting schizophrenia, which is of course what some hard liners suggest. Arguing that stopping cannabis use will stop people getting schizophrenia is quite wrong.

According to a study by Frisher and Crome, there has been a decrease in schizophrenia in the past 10 years. However, the Telegraph reported that mental health hospital admissions due to cannabis have risen by 65% in the past 5 years. How true is this evaluation?

Schizophrenia is slowly disappearing. Cannabis really doesn't cause schizophrenia but it can make schizophrenia worse. If you've got schizophrenia and smoke cannabis, you are going to stay psychotic. So it doesn't help if you are schizophrenic and I think that's what the issue of cannabis and schizophrenia is about, if you're schizophrenic and go and get stoned then you get admitted to hospital because you become more psychotic. So it's not about causing schizophrenia, it's about making it harder to treat. We don't know if there is a reverse causal link, there is some evidence that schizophrenics like cannabis. It may be helpful to them, perhaps moderating the voices and other psychotic symptoms. We don't have enough evidence.

Marjorie Wallace of Sane was quoted as saying: “Urgent action is needed to prevent an epidemic of drug induced psychosis”. Is this an over exaggeration?

There is no evidence of anything changing. They are all just facets of the same fear. It is possible that next year suddenly the evidence will change. But right now there is no good evidence to support what she said.

Throughout the report the similarity in severity of effects between cannabis and Class C drugs was drawn out. Based on purely medical and scientific evidence, should cannabis be a Class C drug?

It should, yes. Based on the medical evidence it should definitely be Class C.



Despite Recommendation 3, the government chose to reclassify cannabis as a Class B drug

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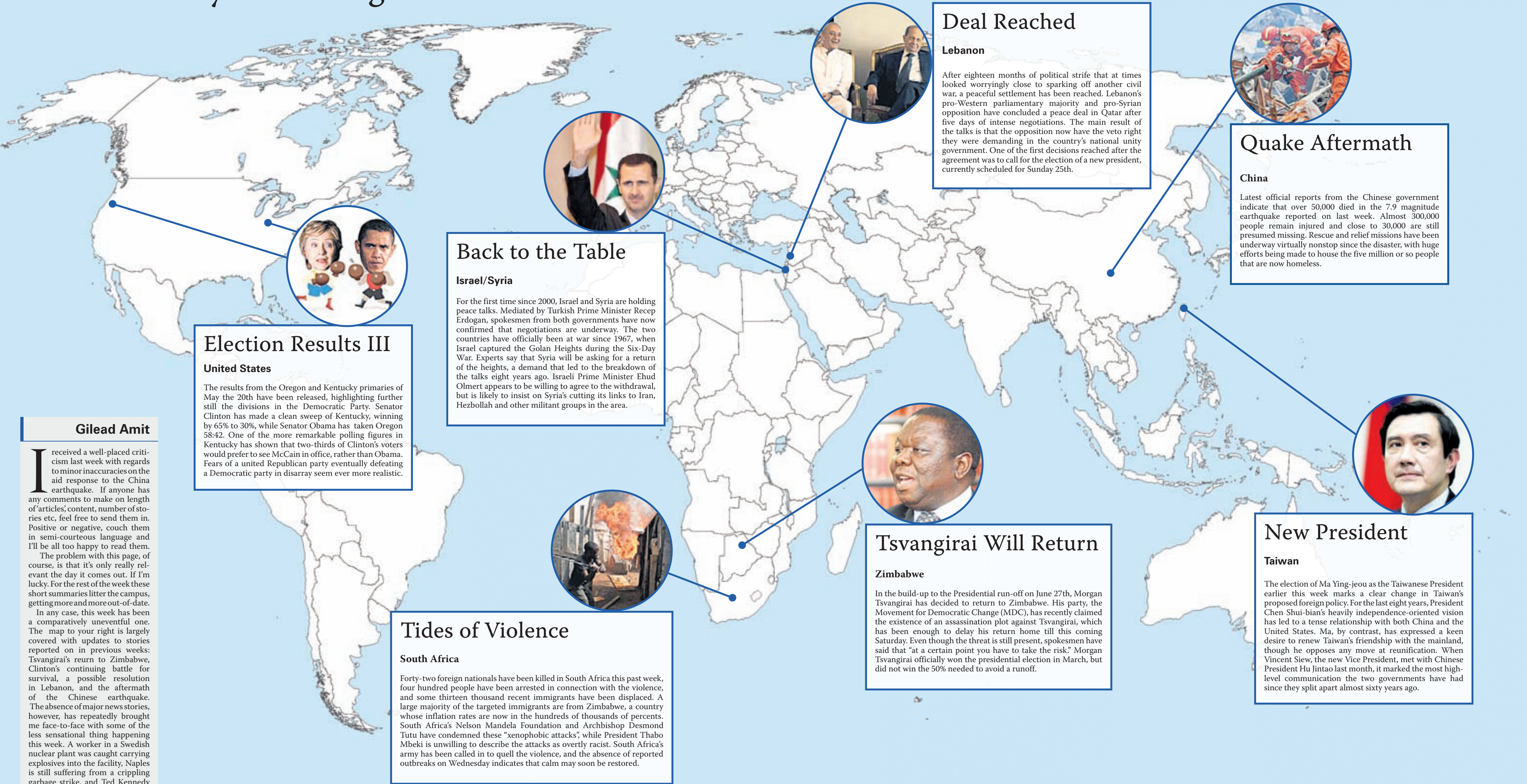
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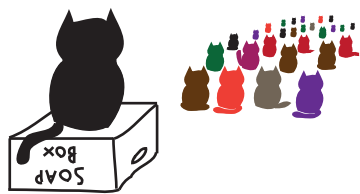
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International

Headlines from around the globe

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On the reclassification of cannabis

Some of Felix's finest give their views on the government's decision to regrade cannabis as a Class B drug



Andrew Turley

The politician's right to choose

Two weeks ago, the long-awaited report on cannabis from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) finally appeared. After nine months of careful deliberation, the expert panel, from a wide range of professional backgrounds, and boasting an impressive array of degrees and distinctions, concluded that cannabis should not be reclassified as a Class B drug – relatively good news for anyone 'puffing the magic dragon' on a regular basis.

How did the government respond? The same day, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith announced that – wait for it – cannabis would be reclassified as a Class B drug – bogus news for those users (who presumably felt they were experiencing some sort of 'bad trip') and on the face of it rather distressing too for anyone concerned about the role of independent advice in government decision-making. But predictably, there's more to the story than that.

The media was quick to clarify the public's concern, lamenting the flagrant disregard for expert analysis. The more vociferous outlets (you know who they are) criticised the government for commissioning an independent report to gain legitimacy for a controversial area of policy, and then choosing to disregard it when the whole scheme spectacularly backfired and the report contained the categorically 'wrong' answer.

Which is a pretty fair assessment of what happened, but it isn't necessarily a problem. It's no bad thing that the government isn't blindly obey-

ing the edicts of experts, but is instead making its own decisions. That is, after all, the politician's defining prerogative: to consider the advice and weigh it against the myriad other factors before moving one way or the other. Ours would be a sorry state of democracy if our chosen leaders simply passed all the tricky decisions onto groups of unelected and unaccountable experts. Such groups undoubtedly provide valuable analysis, but they shouldn't be allowed to run the country.

But whether the recommendations were indeed carefully considered is debatable. Was the government genuinely informed by the process? If it wants to overrule the experts, it's obliged to provide adequate justification, evidence that it thought about what was said.

The Home Secretary has stressed she was happy to acquiesce to the vast majority of the report's suggestions, accepting 20 of its 21 recommendations. But there is little there binding the government to specific, meaningful action. The usual calls for more research, inquiries and monitoring, as well as campaigns aimed at raising awareness, all feature highly. But the one recommendation with clear and direct implications, the recommendation to leave the classification unchanged, was the one rejected. The rest were mere window-dressing.

The report also allowed the government a curious degree of flexibility on the specific issue of classification, hinting at a worrying level of negotiation. The Council was required "to consider only [the harmfulness of cannabis] to individuals and society" and not "to take into account matters such as the message that is conveyed to the public, or the consequences for policing priorities". It is surprising, therefore, that despite mentioning both these factors the Home Secretary's main justification was the rise in the availability of skunk and the suspected link between cannabis use and mental illness. Both these considerations fell within the remit of the report.

But this talk about skunk and the dangers of its purported potency begs another question: if skunk is a distinct form of cannabis, which does indeed pose a significantly higher danger to society, why is it not classified separately?

The answer is because the classification simply doesn't relate to actual usage. It's a smoke-screen obscuring more pressing problems, specifically the critical state Britain's drug laws are in.

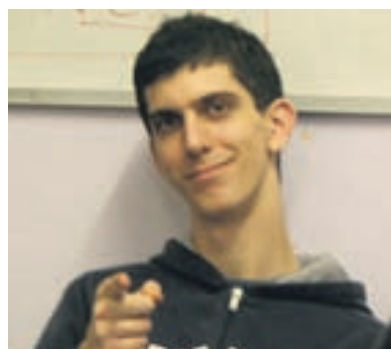
The system of classification which forms the basis of the Misuse of Drugs Act has for some time been considered woefully inadequate. The March 2007 report of the RSA Commission on Illegal

Drugs, Communities and Public Policy stated that Britain's current drug laws are "not fit for purpose" and that decisions are "driven by moral panic" rather than evaluations of the potential for harm.

The reclassification puts cannabis with drugs such as amphetamines and barbiturates, and from 2009 users will risk up to five years imprisonment. But this will matter little if policing and sentencing practices don't change, and early indications suggest they won't. First time offenders will escape with a warning. Those caught a second time will receive an on-the-spot, £80 fine. Only those caught a third time will be arrested and face the possibility of a jail sentence. This is not a grand departure from how the laws governing cannabis are currently interpreted. At present, as a Class C drug possession of cannabis is not an arrest offence and most incidences result in nothing more than a warning and the confiscation of the drug, although police can take stronger action against repeat offenders if public order is at risk or children are deemed vulnerable.

The reclassification of cannabis, therefore, has allowed the government to appear tough on drugs without having to genuinely engage with the difficult and divisive issue of recreational cannabis use. Whilst the government fiddles with drug labels according to superficial party fashions, the crippling flaws in the legislation remain. We shouldn't worry that the government rejected the ACMD's recommendations, but that the recommendations were destined to miss the point from the outset.

// The system of classification has for some time been considered woefully inadequate //



Kadhim Shubber

Rule of the ignorant

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) exists to advise the government on illegal drugs. Specifically, its mandate requires it to consider whether the use of certain drugs constitutes a social problem. So I ask you, readers, why does this body exist if government ministers, including the Prime Minister, are going to ignore its well-informed opinion?

In a report recently published by the ACMD, which specifically considered cannabis, the conclusion was made that cannabis should not be classified as a Class B drug. Look to pages 4 and 5 of Felix, Professor David Nutt, Chair of the Technical Committee of ACMD states unequivocally, "based on medical evidence, cannabis should definitely be Class C": he further says that believing interdiction will solve the problem is actually quite a naïve position. These statements largely sum up the view of the ACMD in its report.

Who is on the ACMD? 6 Professors, focused in the general field of pharmacology, 8 Doctors, a Reverend, a Judge, the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and several other high-ranking police officers. I apologise for boring you with that long list, but the point is that this body is made up of people who have first-hand knowledge about drug safety, enforcement and the effects of drugs in society; in short, they know a lot more about this issue than Jacqui Smith or Gordon Brown.

What, therefore, could motivate the government to ignore the reasonable and intelligent recommendation of the ACMD, considering that they're the ones who asked for the report to be made? Of course I am not suggesting that government should be controlled by unaccountable experts (although I should hope you are not naïve enough to think that government policy originates from ministers), though that is not the issue in this case. The government has chosen to ignore the advice

of experts because there is another factor that the council did not take into consideration, both because it would be illegal for them to do so, and also because it is right for them to ignore it. This factor is the public image of government. Jacqui Smith told the House of Commons that she had to take public perceptions into consideration.

It's not a case of the government making a difficult decision, rather, Jacqui Smith has decided to listen to the portion of society that has reactionary, uninformed views of drugs and who do not come into regular contact with drugs, instead of scientists, policemen and legal experts whose views are fully informed and well thought out. The all-important question of why she did this comes with a simple answer of numbers, and by numbers I mean votes and by votes I mean the next general election. Labour is already being thrashed in the polls, the last thing they want to do is allow the Conservatives to appear tough on drugs uncontested. In short

Jacqui Smith is sending a message to voters that Labour is tough on crime, though the only thing most people hear is "I'm doing what's best for my political career, not what's best for the people of this country".

If you read the report, which I'm certain nobody in this university will, you will find that the Council are keen to do away with the technicalities of the drug classification system and consistently advise that cannabis should be dealt with as a health issue rather than a criminal issue. The evidence shows that the changes since the declassification have been positive, with a reduction in use while fears about 'skunk' are ummm... just fears. Instead of making a decision that will benefit the health of the nation and reduce the damage that cannabis does to society, this Labour government has done the opposite and ensured that we all take a collective step backwards away from an effective policy on drugs in this country.



Jaimie Henry

Welcome to Purgatory, next stop Hell

I enjoy ranting, but normally I don't feel the need to publish it. In this case, however, I make an exception.

In spite of the fact that the photo to my left makes me look despicably smug and that I am slowly, but undeniably, losing my hair, I have a girlfriend. She (rather selfishly, I might add) decided to get an education at Oxford University. I now have the gross misfortune to need to travel there. I don't have anything against Oxford or my girlfriend (for the most part) but having to get the train ranks in enjoyment somewhere between smallpox and drowning in your own excrement.

If I may, esteemed readers, I should like to construct a ridiculously over-elaborate metaphor to explain my last experience on the trains. Most trains to Oxford look, sound and feel as if they were put together by a one-legged, no-handed man, who has lost several amateur arse-kicking contests. He has, however, come back for that one final attempt at the "bigtime" before retiring. In a completely unpredictable twist, he has had to remortgage his house to pay for his grandchildren's education as his son and daughter in law were killed in a tragically comic accident involving Didcot Parkway station and some Brie. Due to an ill-advised option from the buffet cart on the free train journeys he gets (in an insulting reminder of the lack of any real pension) to the competition, he has suffered a poorly-timed bout of explosive diarrhoea. As you can imagine, the rubbery cheese they put in those sandwiches doesn't make for particularly abrasive faeces, and

so slipping on his remaining leg, his face implodes for some reason I cannot back up with conventional medical science. Finally, in a last act of revenge, he uses what he has left of his distempered, mutilated body to bludgeon the remainder of the train together and sends it off to the depot.

Having now sold you on the idea of train travel, I'm giving you some first-hand advice on how to make your journey bearable.

1) Take a deckchair and some duct tape.

As we all know, you will be unlikely to find a seat anywhere. Your seat reservation means about as much as sensible transport policies do to Boris Johnson. Apparently, according to the conditions of travel (and this is actually true), your ticket entitles you to get from A to B; it doesn't guarantee you a seat, the ability to move, or even the availability of oxygen. If you can manage to find a seat, use your deckchair instead. The train seats are for some reason designed so that you cannot sit in any non-sciatica-inducing position, whereas any slight movement on the "cushion" will tear you a new set of haemorrhoids. Hence the duct tape – either tape them back in or strap yourself to the roof and pray to whatever or whoever you want that there are no low bridges.

2) Don't play the Generation Game.

If you are waiting to use the toilet facilities on the train to avoid paying the 20p at the station, I sincerely suggest paying as an astute investment. Thanks to the Disability Discrimination Act, all trains now have these ridiculous

gameshow toilets. Featuring some kind of star trek door is all very well and good, but not when the buttons mean bugger all. I discovered it's not enough to close the door; apparently you need to be acquainted with bomb disposal to press the correct combination of buttons to lock the damn thing. If you don't, then you and everything you are doing are revealed as the sorry, naked prize of the next unsuspecting passenger wanting to use the toilet a la the cuddly toy on the generation game. This can create unprecedented levels of awkwardness, but if you can watch this happen to someone else it's a nice way of forgetting what a crap place you have found yourself in.

3) The train staff are your enemy.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that I felt like I was being treated as a terrorist in an American internment camp. When the world's most incompetent oaf had attempted to lie to us about how we would shortly be on our way several times, he made the decision to leave his microphone on. We were then treated every 3 minutes to large bursts of ear-piercing white noise which I assume was interference and not an attempt to get us to confess to spurious national security charges, but they could have quite easily been confused. My fellow passengers and I tried to make light of the situation with some bemused eye contact. Although it was comforting to know that I wasn't the only one on the path to complete insanity I nonetheless felt ripped off at having to actually pay for sleep deprivation. Out of interest, I'd love to know what kind of assessment centres these

people attend for these jobs; somewhere along the line lying and inducing mental health issues in passengers became measureable skills.

The buffet and its consequences have already been alluded to, but suffice to say that if you try to associate the terms "train buffet" and "food hygiene," the universe will implode.

4) Be ruthless.

Sell your fellow passengers down the river. The atmosphere on a train is always tense, helped along by the gentle but frequent reminder of impending death and the necessity of watching for any "suspicious bags or behaviour." Seeing as the train-operating companies are attempting to create a police state, why not use this to your advantage and try reporting that guy in the seat opposite you to the guard? Before you know it, he will be removed without warning and may be destroyed, leaving you to return your legs to a semi-natural position.

5) If you value your digestive tract, I reiterate that the buffet cart is a bad choice.

To conclude, I highly recommend train travel if you enjoy unexplained delays, poor service and intestinal dysfunction. Otherwise, walk to your destination, even if it is the other end of the country; it will still be far less painful. I don't expect, nor really want, anything to change though. A little part of me lights up inside when I see that everyone can adopt that famed stiff upper lip, as it would be a shame for people to actually complain. That would be crazy, because someone might try and fix it, and we can't have that.

// Most trains to Oxford feel as if they were put together by a one-legged, no-handed man, who has lost several amateur arse-kicking contests //



A. Geek

Welcome to Purgatory, next stop Hell 2

I came close to assaulting someone this week. I'm not a violent person, as the wife-beaters say, but I actually managed to lose it sufficiently on the Tube during the rush hour to shout at a woman as she flailed around on the edge of a Victoria Line train. If you were there, wearing a trenchcoat and acting like a tosser, just be glad your ridiculous hairstyle made it home intact.

I'm not bringing that up because I think violence is great fun, or a facet of manliness, though it might well turn out to be. I'm bringing it up because I was actually a little disgusted with myself that I managed to shout Captain Inept down as she fought desperately to delay me in every way she could. Yes, she was hanging onto the top of the train so as not to step off the train while others were leaving. Yes, I was having thoughts of genocide. Yes, there was some pisskidney trying to barge into the train at the same time, despite the obvious trouble I was having with the hair-wearing freak. But nothing can make it any less weird – I shouted at someone in public.

Reflection and confession can go screw themselves on an island holiday in the Med, however, because as much as I'd love to go on about how it made me think about the role of anger in modern society, my day trip only progressed to get worse as I journeyed along the District Line towards the ominously-tennis-less Wimbledon station. I'd been standing up for all of thirty seconds when four suits barged in, inserting all manner of leather-clad objects into my back and talking loudly



Way out... Mind the door doesn't hit your arse, trenchcoat woman

on their mobiles phones in broad Scottish accents. What was worse was that, as the journey went on, I was increasingly under the impression that the people they were phoning were actually on the same carriage.

At this point, I came to the realisation that we're taking the knife-crime thing in the wrong direction. Having knife barriers and the like is a total waste of time – instead, have knife dispensers. Just give everyone on the Tube a knife around the time of rush hour, and you solve most problems. First of all, you've got a level playing field right off the bat. If Old Man War Veteran has a flick knife as well then everyone's on the same page when it comes to confron-

tations. It also means I can slit throats with gay abandon without feeling too bad that I was attacking essentially defenceless members of the public.

Best of all, though, is that it removes the culture of knives altogether. Instead of being something cool, they're really ordinary. As soon as the middle-aged pricks are whipping out whetstones on the Northern Line services each evening, it'll become really boring and suddenly the London Lite sudoku will seem edgy, and rule-breaking.

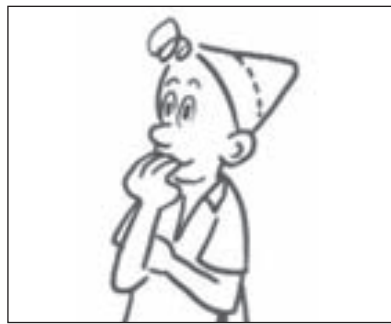
Reverse psychology – the approach of kings and the king of approaches?

This might mean that I'm a violent person at heart after all, or it might just mean that I get extremely angry

about things like this. The wanderers, the meanderers, the uppity, five-o'clock pillocks who clog up every right of way they can – I'm not sure that gang violence is borne out of frustration incurred on public transport, but it wouldn't surprise me if sometimes those armed youths weep for the children of tomorrow and the stressful morning commutes they may have to endure. I like that idea. It makes them less intimidating when they're drunkenly swaying around Seven Sisters at three in the morning.

Anyway, that's basically my manifesto for 2012. Recruiting campaigners now – CVs on a digestive biscuit to the usual address.

// Nothing can make it any less weird – I shouted at someone in public //



Gilead Amit

Apologies, but I feel a rant coming on...

I'm finding it hard to get started this week. The noise you can't hear in the background is the rabid chanting of thousands of fans in a Moscow stadium waiting for the final of the UEFA Champion's League to begin. By the time you read this, you'll know what the result is. What's more, you'll probably care. Well, I suppose you're entitled to. For my part, the only reason I'm sitting within earshot is because I've got nowhere else to write.

Ah, ITV have courteously informed me that there are ten minutes till kick-off. Well, let's see if I can get this done by the time the endless succession of beer adverts finish.

Oh look, a half-naked lady was in that one. Surprise surprise.

It's beginning to occur to me that this is coming across as a touch snobbish. I'm sorry about that, this is just my ill-tempered reaction to the increasingly pathetic quality of the television adverts my eardrums are being pierced by. I'm not an elitist. Well, I suppose I am, but not when it comes to football or any related activity. If my elit-

ism exists at all, it's when it comes to thought.

Don't get me wrong; I have no objection to people voicing opinions I disagree with, or even to people voicing stupid opinions I disagree with. The only thing I ask for is that people keep them away from me. Is that too much to ask?

Some people develop allergies to pollen, others to various animals, foods or chemicals. I'm allergic to most cats, the heat, and, for some inexplicable reason, nickel. In addition to that, I'm allergic to stupidity.

I feel a strong inclination to vomit when I get in close proximity to fuzzy thinking, incoherent rambling and the mind-warping ignorance that some people believe passes for valid opinion. As a result, of course, I'm mildly allergic to myself.

The biggest curse for people with my condition is the omnipresent YouTube. Like everyone else with a computer and time to kill, I spend a great deal too much time on that infernal website. No matter how hard I force myself to only look at the videos, however, I



This article contains frustration of an adult nature

occasionally find myself glancing at the comments section underneath.

These experiences inevitably result in the same questions flashing through my mind. Where do these people come from? In what filth-infested slime do these cretins that people the web make their home? Where are they all? Is

there a baboon colony somewhere that has been granted internet privileges? If anything in the world is likely to bring me out in hives, it is the sheer, unadulterated, moronic idiocy that displays itself in the dank recesses of the Net.

Anonymity is, of course, the greatest disinhibitor. As a result, the internet is a fertile breeding ground for bigotry and general insanity. A few choice moments on the right websites can bring you face-to-url with some of the greatest charlatans, freaks and idiots that are out there.

The offers to send money to West African generals, the endless stream of (fairly insulting) e-mails implying the inadequacy of my manhood, the conspiracy theorists, the more disconcerting brand of political zealot; all these are to be found in the world's largest arena. Usually, I can laugh it off. Occasionally, though, something tips me over the edge. And it's a long way to fall.

Still, as I make a superhuman effort to cool myself down, I admit that I have no objection to these evolutionary throwbacks eking out their miserable existence wherever they do. They can spout their unspeakable bilge to anyone they know who has the ability to understand English. But please, please, for God's sake, keep it away from me.



Oh, one day to be able to rant like Angry Geek

// I have no objection to people voicing stupid opinions ... The only thing I ask for is that people keep them away from me. Is that too much to ask? //

Letters to Felix

Bias and Boris bashing

Sir,

Between Jaimie Henry's, "A Geek"'s and Matthew Kaufeler's assessments of Boris Johnson's election in their articles in the last issue of Felix, I think one could possibly raise a question of bias in the Imperial student paper, especially as their attacks on the London Mayor were all entirely gratuitous considering the unrelated points of their respective articles. However, I am less bothered by the liberal leanings of a university paper (who'd have thought?) and far more concerned by the suggestion presented by both Mr. Kaufeler and Mr. Henry that anyone who voted for Mr. Johnson did so because they thought him a joker and a legend.

This view is not just myopic, but rather offensive to the majority of people who voted for Johnson for serious reasons; A few may have voted for Mr. Johnson because they were concerned with the crippling taxes his predecessor

charged the people of London (it is not impressive to achieve a lot if one simply overcharges everyone and then operates in a wasteful manner – see: Metronet). There were some who voted for Mr. Johnson because they would like to see the police have the ability to deal with crime in a more effective manner. Some perfectly reasonable people were slightly concerned about having a Mayor who siphoned off public funds to his friends' "special projects" (also known as "holidays") and used vast amounts of tax money to retain unnecessary staff. And, of course, some actually admired Boris. This scholarship-winning, Oxford-educated "idiot" has on many an occasion displayed an honesty that is virtually non-existent in the political world. He has shown a willingness not to toe the party line over his own beliefs when it would be much simpler to be a hack. It is a foolish mistake to confuse quirkiness with a lack of intelligence, to mix up personal disarray with professional inability.

If the friends of Mr. Kaufeler and Mr. Henry only voted for Boris because they liked "Have I got News For You",

then I would suggest that they find more enlightened conservative acquaintances for debate.

Abioye A Oyetunji

Jaimie Henry responds,

Whilst I generally don't feel that I have to defend the views I write for a University newspaper column, there are some points that Abioye A Oyetunji raised that, rather unfortunately, grossly misrepresent the message I was writing.

Regarding the apparent one-sided attack by Felix on Boris, perhaps you should consider why the articles had been written by numerous independent contributors, who no doubt have very different ideals. Claims of bias would only be true if Felix had declined to publish any anti-Ken articles (and indeed, considering the TjL photocard debacle that has been extensively covered in the past, this can hardly be the case). Seeing as Felix probably received no anti-Ken articles [Correct – Editor], one can only assume that the reason why the paper appeared anti-Boris was because many students held genuine concerns

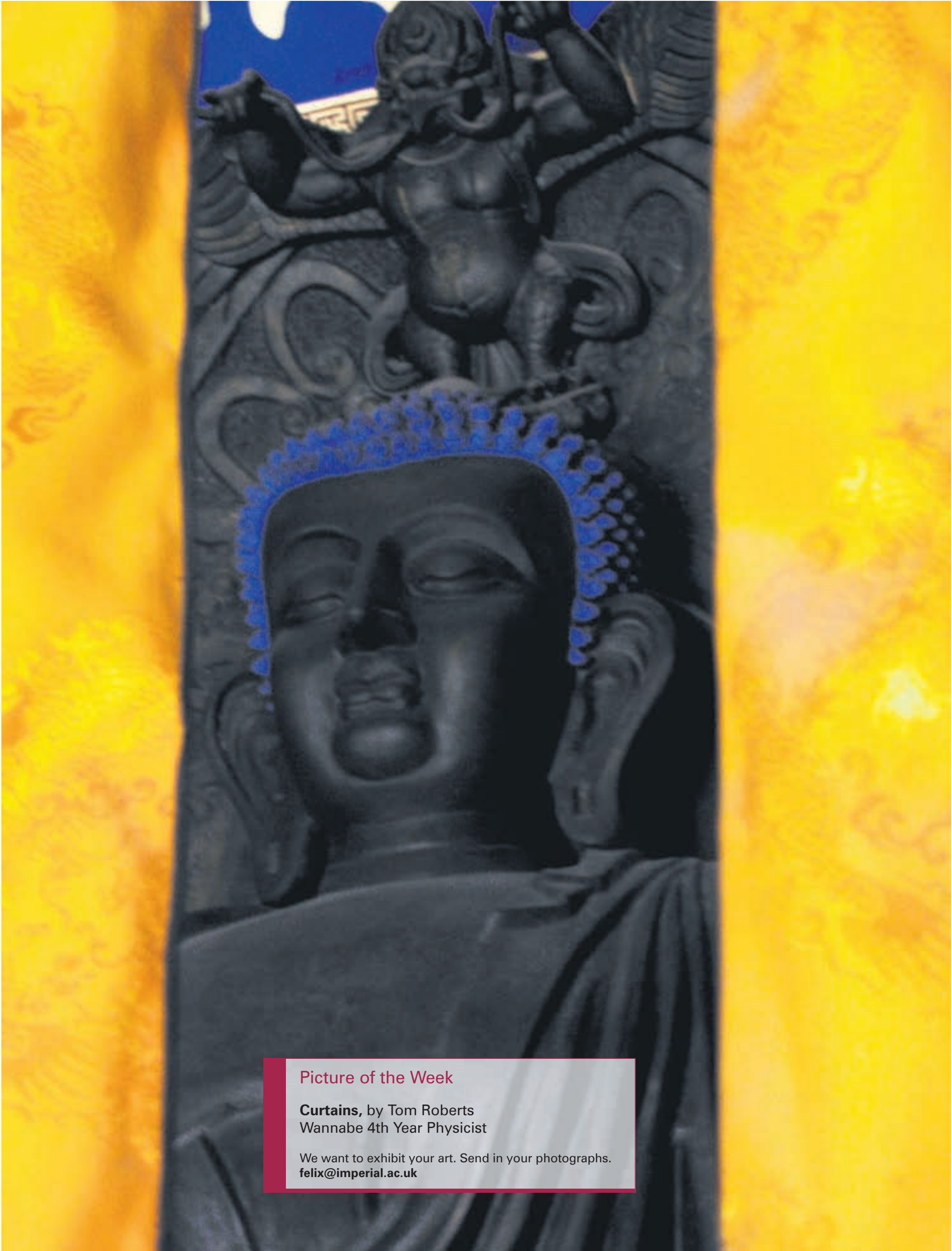
regarding his ability as Mayor.

I do not have a problem with people voting for Boris. I thought I had made it blithely obvious that I am ecstatic that democracy is working in the general sense that people are getting out and voting. And of course Boris will have numerous supporters who truly support his ideals. My worry is that many voters are becoming blind to what they are really voting for. Whilst this is less important for someone who could almost be competent, such as Boris, it is nothing less than horrifying when it spreads to extremist parties such as the BNP, as I outlined in my article. I am not wishing to be too partisan here; if you felt that Ken was wasteful and voted against him, then this is good. If you think Boris will cut crime and you believe his manifesto, then even better. If you chose Boris as a buffoon and a bit of a laugh, then you don't deserve your vote, because you run the risk of doing the same for extremists.

But seeing as you did raise political issues, I will address some of them briefly. Boris' policies, as yet, seem worthless. The RMT say that his "no alcohol" rule on public transport will

not be enforced by their members for their own safety; moreover it has been illegal to be intoxicated on the Underground for years. Generally people who are drunk and abusive tend to already be drunk and abusive before they get on the tube; any drinking they do on the tube is comparatively insignificant. As for the police, it is doubtful if Boris has the power to overturn the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and remove Stop and Account forms, especially when racial tensions between police and ethnic minority communities are on a knife edge. I can see plenty of empty promises on the horizon, so I probably shouldn't need to say that Boris has been proven to have lied to his own party leader and has been involved in some very questionable activities (including attempting to assist a known thug in assaulting an investigative journalist). Noble qualities in a "serious," albeit "quirky" politician, I'm sure.

By the way, I do not select my friends on the basis of their political ideals, however well informed they may be. This is mainly because I don't want to turn into Harry Enfield's "Tory Boy."



Picture of the Week

Curtains, by Tom Roberts
Wannabe 4th Year Physicist

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

WANTED: INVENTOR

Prize: \$200,000

You are an Arab Student
You have an idea for a great invention
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for education, science and community development



Business

Business Editor – Afonso Campos

business.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Afonso Campos
Business Editor

There hasn't been a column in a relatively long time. Sorry about that, devoted readers. Today, I shall give you something a little different. Instead of incessant rambles about how crap you are at making your money work for you, or how much of a hippie you are, I shall try to give a small insight into how I think about the markets every month. It's not a magical formula – it might not work for you; in fact it most probably won't, but it might give you a whisk of inspiration if you will. It isn't analysis of the past, however, that makes money for someone; it's the prediction of the future. The idea here is that you make a sort of educated guess where you try to understand where in the market are there more gaps in knowledge. The way I see it, if you are able to gather more information than anyone else on a very specific topic, you are single-handedly contributing to the 'perfect knowledge' that markets supposedly have. That in itself is epic. Knowing that you have almost single-handedly outsmarted a bunch of other people is a monumental feeling. Rant over.

For weeks the subject of commodities has been newsworthy and has featured in both finance and non-finance publications alike. The increase in the price of food has a great impact in the budget of families whose resources are stretched the most to begin with. At the same time, the stock market and the US dollar have been recovering from losses from early on in the year, removing some polish from the metals, especially gold. In the field of fuels, oil has remained at very high levels, leading to some investment professionals speculating \$200 barrels in the medium term. I am still pretty bullish in the commodities market. However, new investments will be treated with caution given the crazy ride they've been having, gaining almost 30% per month to date with ridiculous amounts of volatility. It's good if you can stomach it and don't care about your Sharpe ratio, otherwise you might want to hide in a corner and look at it pass you by. Do you have enough balls for months of 12% gains even if it means a month of 6% loss? While quantitative inertia is looking pretty dandy, the volatility, like I said, is killer.

If I were you, I'd be looking (I am) at gold, silver and sugar. The easiest way for you to go about buying these sexy commodities is through any instruments that have these as their underlying vehicle. You'd be foolish to look anywhere else but futures, really. The idea of buying and keeping massive bars of gold, like some still do in the East, is heavily outdated. Why not go all exotic and make what I believe to be a killer trade? I would buy gold and hedge your risk with a long USD position. Don't trust everything I say. You want to be a good trader? Quit your crappy degree, do something quantitative, subscribe to The Economist, put your money on the line and learn to not feel the pain when it all goes to shit.

An ageing population issue

What happens to the economy when states cannot take care of those that need it

Afonso Campos

The ageing population is a highly complex issue posing monumental challenges not only to the United Kingdom, but most European territories as well. Alongside the increase in the number of the elderly, is a juxtaposed near-stagnation of teenagers and children. Projections scarily show that in the very near future, this age-band will actually suffer a decrease. Two things are absolutely essential; on one hand, it is vital to unify all possible efforts to invert this trend, while on the other, facing this new demographic reality and solving the consequences that with it follow is no less of a need.

There are countless factors that drive an ageing population, that is, an ever-increasing number of old people facing an ever-decreasing number of youths. First and foremost, advances in science and medicine in the past few decades have provided the world with an increase in life expectancy at birth. According to some of the most recent data, this is currently at 78.5 years. Radical changes in the population's lifestyle are also a major contributor to this. The most evident, however, was the change in the status of the woman, for whom being a housewife is no longer the only option or motherhood the only domain; women are fully integrated in the workforce. This almost 'forces' the woman to conciliate her professional activity with maternity, leading her to have children much later.

Regarding principal consequences of this change, the most obvious of all is a visible decrease in the active population. Another, a result of the latter, is a possible collapse of social security in its current form-factor. From this it follows that there must be a significant change in this paradigm. This proves much harder to do than to say, given that in current moulds, governmental spending on geriatric health care is mind-bogglingly high. A diminishing quality of life of the elderly



The increase in life expectancy has led to several logistical problems for governments

also means that, legitimately and rightly so, the active population must take care of this age band. After reaching a certain age, some people desperately require constant and permanent care and homes for the elderly are many times the only option and optimal solution. Ideally and utopianly, everyone should have access to truly dignified homes with the conditions necessary for the provision of help on all

levels, including medical and social.

The great majority of these homes are of a private nature and are not accessible to all those that may need them. Thus, the only 'solution' remaining is that of public retirement homes. In fact, the term 'solution' is nowhere near to the most adequate word for the scenario, given that these homes are invariably bursting at the seams and thus without any vacancies whatsoever. The official government response that we are used to seeing and hearing around us through individuals and institutions, is that it is very possible to increase instantaneous vacancies. Even in this case, the supposed solution is not minimally useful or helpful to those who need a solution the most as this method of vacancy creation comes in the form of a 'voluntary donation required'. In actuality however, this donation is anything but optional or 'voluntary'. It is somewhat understandable, but far from acceptable. It is also understandable that if possible, the elderly or their families will do what they can, within their constraints and possibilities, to put forward the roughly £10,000 to £15,000 as they consider this preferable to the otherwise long wait they would have to endure.

The government currently participates

with roughly £370 per OAP, when their spending can at many times be roughly twice this almost pathetic amount. This is not an acceptable practice on the government's part given that it is neither just nor egalitarian. If a retirement home is of a public nature, it must offer access conditions that are the same for all that may require them. The role of the

government must be on one hand, to assure the existence of necessary vacancies through a change in the policies of contribution to homes on the behalf of those that need it, and on the other, to incentivate the creation of new homes through state-private partnerships.

In a country the claims to be one of the most developed in the world, it is not acceptable that a low form of bribery may exist, especially in public institutions.

The government is able to play many roles in this arena; firstly, it must assure the coverage of costs incurred by the homes, and after this, create an incentive plan for new homes. It must also change its own participation plan, in which the real costs of the retirement

home and the economic and fiscal situation of its users are taken into account.



A high proportion of the elderly tend to end up alone and unhealthy

President's Update

NUS Referendum

Last Monday Union Council accepted a proposal to hold a new referendum on NUS membership. This will give the student body of Imperial College the chance to debate the merits of continued affiliation to the National Union of Students. Imperial joined this organisation in 2006 for the first time since the late 1970's and this exercise will provide students with the opportunity to re-evaluate our membership of the National Union of Students. The debate itself will not take place on the Union page but I would like to communicate some basic information about the process itself. A provisional voting timetable is given below and the returning officer will be Ally Cott who can be contacted at dpcs@imperial.ac.uk.

Someone has already volunteered to lead the pro-disaffiliation campaign but in the interests of promoting a fair and thorough debate I would like to request that any student who is interested in running the anti-disaffiliation campaign to contact the Returning Officer as this position is still vacant.

Timetable (provisional)

Voting Opens 0.00am
Tuesday 17th June 2008

Voting Closes 23.59pm
Monday 23rd June 2008

Colours 2008

Please get your nominations in before Tuesday. A lot of students have done a lot of excellent work this year to make life at Imperial better for thousands of their peers and now is our opportunity to formally acknowledge this. If you feel that anyone you know has in your opinion gone that extra mile to support Union activities then the Colours Committee is keen to hear about them.

What are Colours?

Colours are a type of award that Imperial College Union can give to anybody to recognise the service, contribution and dedication of someone to the Union.

There are five types of Colours that are broadly separated into two groups. The first three Colours, which are Half Colours, Full Colours and Outstanding Service Awards, are awarded in recognition of one year's service to the Union. The other two Colours, which are Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships, are awarded in recognition of many year's service to the Union.

Who can be nominated for Colours?

Anybody can be nominated for these awards, except the Union Sabbatical Officers and the Felix Editor.

Who can nominate someone for Colours?

Any Imperial student can complete a nomination form, but it's best not to nominate yourself!

What happens if you are awarded a Colours

Being awarded a Colours is a great honour and privilege. Those who receive these awards are presented with an award certificate at a ceremony, a tie or pin, and in the case of the higher awards a gift like an engraved tankard or Honorary Life membership of the Union. The Union keeps a record of all the people awarded Colours.

What do you need to do to be awarded a Colour?

To be awarded Half Colours you need to have made a "positive contribution to the general life of the Union in an extraordinary fashion."

To be awarded Full Colours you have to "repeatedly, through outstanding achievements, over the course of the year, have made a significant contribution to the life of the Union."

For an Outstanding Service Award "you will have displayed continuous outstanding achievement across a broad spectrum of Union activities." Few of these are given out, only five a year at most.

The Fellowship and Distinguished Fellowship awards are much harder to get as they are based on the contribution the awardee has made over a length of time.

To receive a Union Fellowship award you need to "have continuously served the Union in an exceptional manner." Very

few of these are given out.

To receive a Distinguished Fellowship you need to have "served the Union in a selfless and dedicated manner which is both exceptional and beyond reproach."

If you don't know which award to nominate someone for then choose the one you feel is appropriate and the Colours Committee will change if necessary.

How can I nominate someone?

Nominations are open from Tuesday 6th May 2008 to midnight Tuesday 27th May 2008 at 12 noon. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the website imperialcollegeunion.org and can be emailed to colours@imperial.ac.uk.

You'll have to give the name of the nominee, the award you are nominating them for and tell us, in less than 200 words, why you think they should get it. Also include your name and CID.

What happens then?

Your nominations will be considered by the Union's Colours Committee and then the results will be announced towards the end of the term in Felix and successful nominees will be given their awards at an Colours ceremony in June.



Stephen Brown
President
president@imperial.ac.uk

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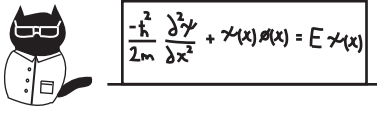
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The Imperial College London Summer Ball 2008 is a fund raising event for Imperial College Union with all proceeds going towards the Building Redevelopment Fund.





Spruce a sprightly 9,550 years old

Research in Sweden reveals the world's oldest tree is a Norway spruce, previously thought to be a recent arrival to the area where it was found. The secret to its longevity? An ability to clone itself, it seems...

Katrina Pavelin

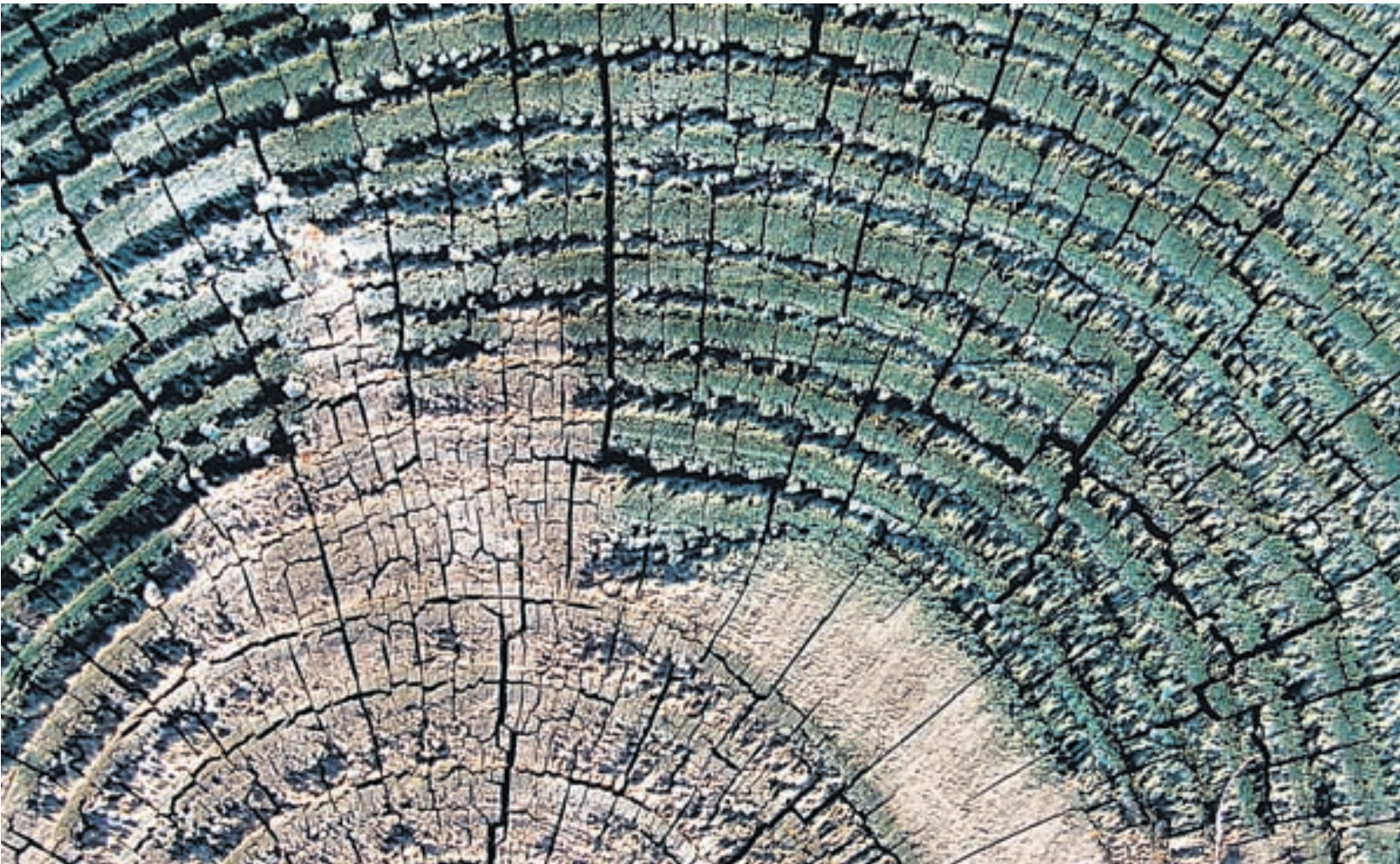
A new contender for the world's oldest living tree is a 9,550 year-old Norway spruce found in the Darlana province of Sweden last month. The spruce had previously been assumed to be a fairly recent arrival to the Swedish mountain region.

“Our results have shown the complete opposite, that the spruce is one of the oldest known trees in the mountain range”, says Leif Kullman, Professor of Physical Geography at Umeå University.

Spruce trees survive the harsh mountain weather conditions by re-producing via clones, a feature which also explains the long life expectancy of the tree. The main trunk is usually only 600 years old, but when it dies a new trunk can grow up from an underground root system to replace it. The tree can also clone itself in winter, when heavy snow pushes the low-lying branches to the ground, allowing them to take root and become new trees, genetically identical to their parent.

The research team led by Kullman used carbon-14 dating on bark and cone remains under a spruce in Fulu Mountain which revealed four “generations” of tree: 375, 5,660, 9,000 and 9,500 years old. The remains were found to be genetically identical to the tree above them, and so are clones of that tree.

Kullman believes that these spruce trees may provide a useful insight into climate change. As well as having been around for a long time, the Norway spruce also seems to respond to temperature changes. It originally grew in a shrub formation in the Swedish mountain region, but has since evolved a more upright trunk in response to rising average summer temperatures over the last 100 years.



Nine-thousand five hundred and twenty one, nine-thousand five hundred and twenty two... Blast – where was I? No, this wasn't how Leif Kullman found out his spruce tree's age: he used carbon-14 dating. Hmm, Leif... Was he destined to work on trees?

Whether the spruce is the world's oldest tree is contentious. Previously, the oldest recorded individual tree (not a clone) was a 4,768 year old bristlecone pine tree in the White Mountains of California, according to the

Guinness Book of World Records. There is also a clonal colony of quaking aspen in Bryce Canyon National Park, United States which have been estimated to be between 80,000 to one million years old.

Thanks to all who wrote in for a crack at getting Simon Singh's new book, *"Trick or Treatment: Alternative Medicine on Trial"*. You all answered correctly: he was indeed based at Cambridge for his Ph.D. But Aled Moses' name came out of the hat first – well done!

Everybody's doing it

Claudine Chen

Free will and independent thought may be considered superior traits in some circles, but for the welfare of a community, consensus-based decision making may be smarter. This, at least, seems to be the result of new research recently published by Dr Ward and colleagues in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"Quorum responses" keep animals from blindly following the unsound decisions of a maverick leader, allowing them instead to reserve judgement until a threshold number of their peers do the same thing. While quorum responses have been observed for social invertebrates like ants and bees, Dr Ward and his collaborators believe their experiment is the first time that such behaviour has been documented for animals with more complex nervous systems.

The study observed the behaviour of fish in the presence of danger (a model of a predator) and their reaction to leaders, in this case, replica fish. In a group of two, when a leader moved towards danger, an individual fish would

override its own instinct, and follow, in order to stick with a 'friend.' However, if more fish were present in the group, the quorum response applied, and more leaders were necessary to budge the crowd.

Dr Ward: "Social conformity and the desire to follow a leader, regardless of cost, exert extremely powerful influences on the behaviour of social animals, from fish to sheep to humans." If your friend jumped off a cliff, you may very well not, but if a crowd went running down a street, wouldn't you?



Are we quorate?

Novel findings in the fight against HIV

Scientists target proteins on white blood cells to prevent the HIV virus from mutating into resistant strains

Laura Starr

Scientists have announced a novel method of attacking the human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, the cause of AIDS.

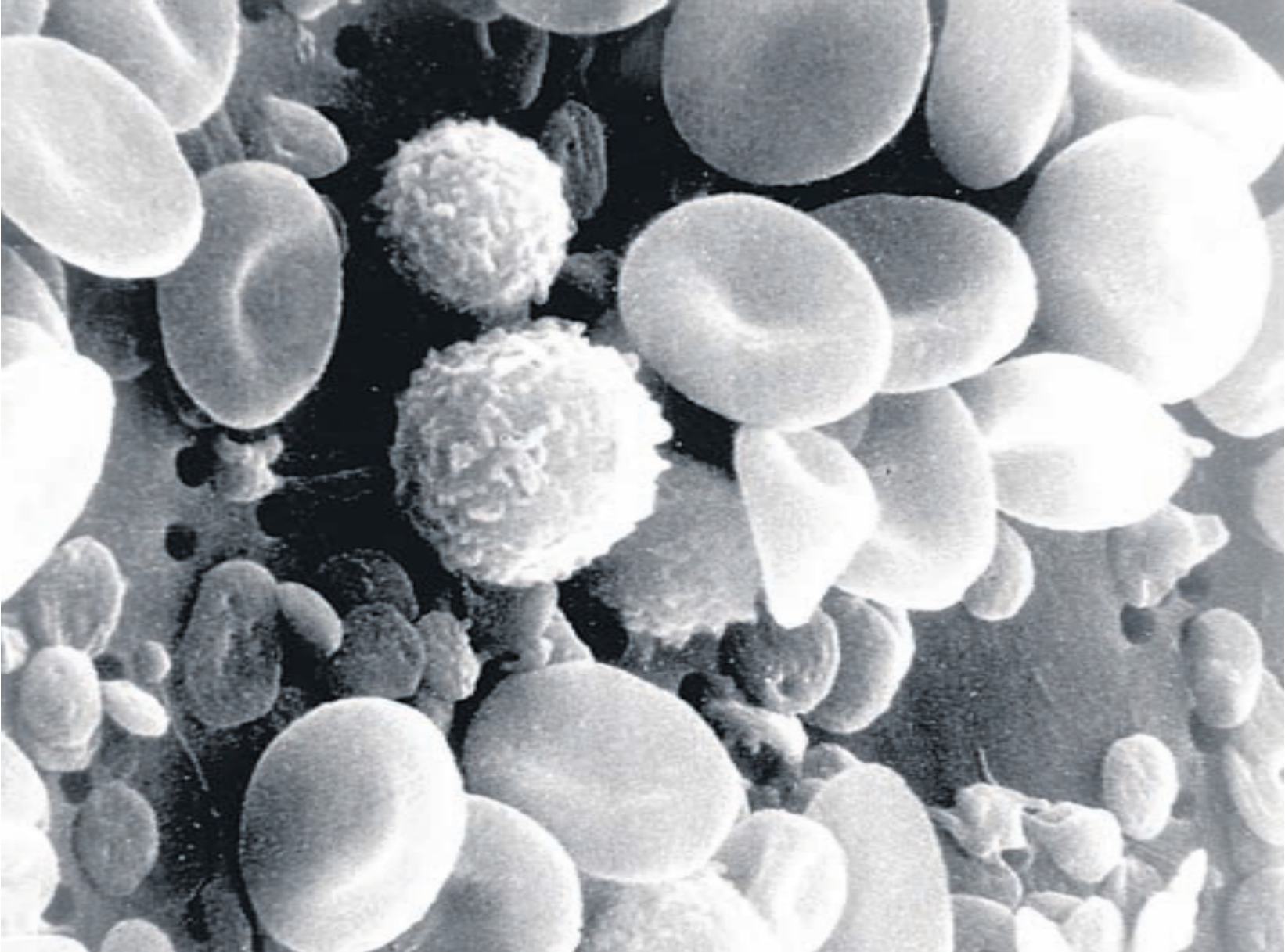
The study, a collaboration between Boston University and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), investigated the targeting of a protein located on human immune cells. Once targeted, the virus was unable to infect these cells. Eric Green, the director of the NHGRI, said that “This new insight represents an important contribution to HIV research,” and spoke of the discovery as “an exciting model for deriving potential new HIV therapies.”

“Human blood cells have much lower mutation rates, so are optimal targets”

The human immune system is made up of white blood cells, a large proportion of which are known as T cells. It is these cells that the HIV virus attacks when it infects the human body. The researchers interfered with interleukin-2-inducible T cell kinase (also known as ITK), a signalling protein on the surface of these cells. The protein is responsible for the activation of T-cells, required for the body to mount an efficient immune response.

Schwartzberg, one of the lead researchers, explained that “suppression of the ITK protein caused many of the pathways that HIV uses to be less active, thereby inhibiting or slowing HIV replication.”

Drugs in the past have targeted proteins present on the virus itself. This is problematic, as a process called genetic mutation means these proteins can rapidly alter in composition, allowing



Blood cells. The white blood cell is the one "which looks like a Ferrero Rocher", according to our editor. Ah, yes. Leucocyte sighted, mein kapitan!

drug-resistant strains to appear. The human cells, however, have a much lower mutation rate, thereby making them an optimal target.

The inactivation of ITK was carried

out using a chemical and a genetic inhibitor. The T cells were then exposed to the virus, and its effects were studied during different stages of the virus' replication cycle.

It was not only shown that the virus' ability to enter cells was reduced, but also that interference did not affect the cell's ability to survive, a crucial requirement for any potential therapy.

The study was published earlier this month in the online edition of the prestigious U.S. journal; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. See www.pnas.org for more.

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We certainly are: Follow the leader, leader, leader; follow the leader...



Caz Knight
Arts Editor

Greetings, erudite Imperialist! As I write this the sun is shining and I hope you are procrastinating revision to enjoy the weather and give the left side of your brain a rest from all those numbers, rules and facts while indulging the right side of your brain with some art, creativity and randomness.

Rid your cluttered mind and indulge in some fantasy created by artist H.R. Giger, the man my article to the right is about. If his work is a little too far out for you, then perhaps both Derren Brown's hypnosis and artistic skills will provide more suitable relief from the Nernst equation. Those dreaming of the approaching day when they can cease their abstinence and go on an alcohol rampage, take heed: read our theatrical review about the detriment of alcohol.

For now, though, let us talk of "psycho-geography". As exciting as it sounds, psycho-geography creates playful, inventive strategies for exploring new cities. That is, getting one off the beaten track, allowing oneself to be drawn into our environment, meandering into the unknown and going with our spontaneity through the act of *dérive* (drift).

One example of this is *The Naked City*, a reconstructed guide to Paris featuring areas which its authors (Jorn and Guy Debord) felt had not been spoiled by capitalist redevelopments. Another example is our weekly Tube Map, where we hand-pick anything from theatres to museums to book shops to parks. In this issue I have selected a few of London's more pleasant and attractive parks. Perhaps on your ramblings you will embark on an adventure you never thought possible, meet your celebrity crush or even the mother/father of your children. If you are dissatisfied with the nature of the modern environment and want to make the everyday world more interesting look no further than Felix!

Summer is a time for festivals, with a plethora of them available. However, the excessive crowds at many of them and pounding music may be a little off-putting. Extend your psycho-geographical journey outside London by taking in some of this summer's more quirky opportunities such as the Secret Garden Party at the end of July. The theme this year is 'Revolutions, past, present and future' where you are encouraged to take part in theatre, performing Shakespeare around fire circles, parades and much more. With only 5000 capacity it promises to be a much more intimate alternative to some of the other gatherings. Equally eccentric is the August-time Green Man festival in Wales: psychedelic ramblings (?), literature and music from Super Furry animals are some of the things going on.

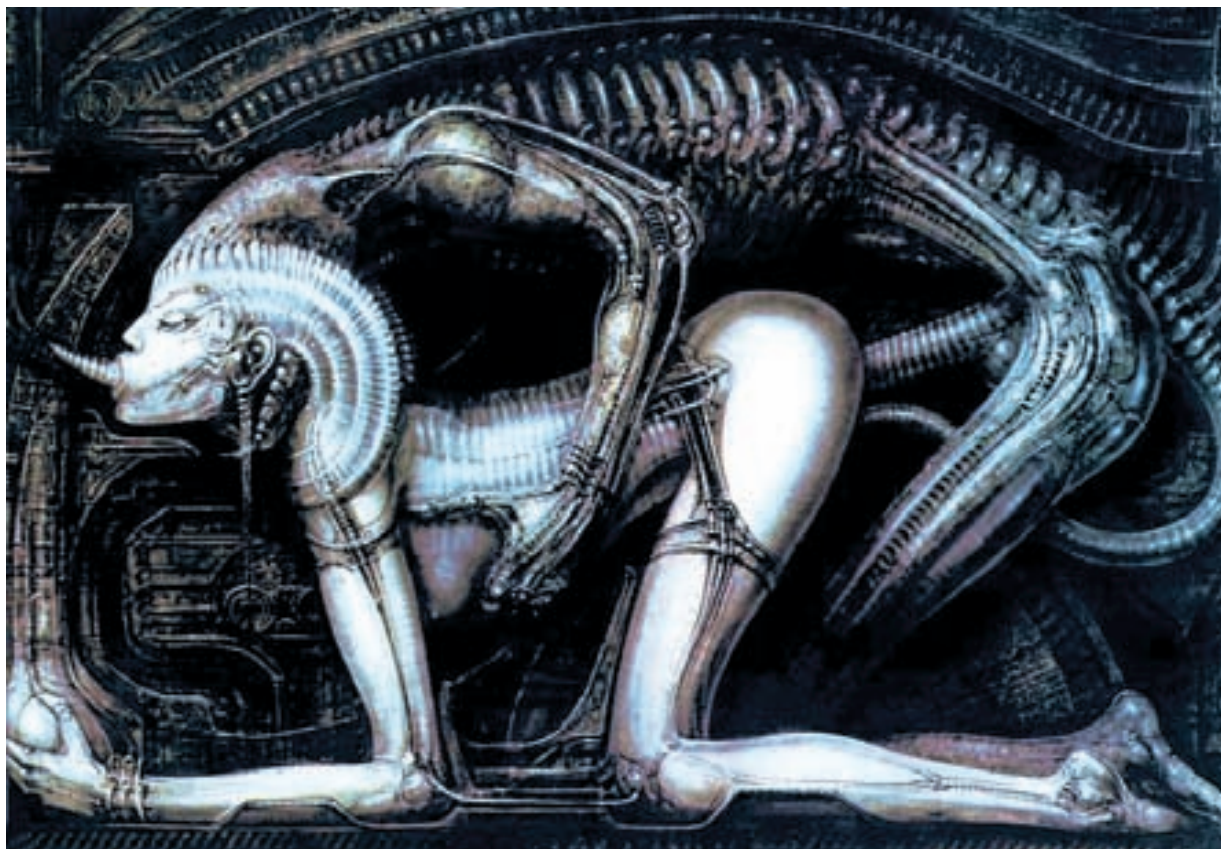
More mainstream and closer to home is the Hampton Court Palace Festival throughout June where you can enjoy concerts and picnics at the same time.. Our advice at Felix is to indulge yourself by buying a ticket to the festival of your choice to keep the moral up until it's all over. No more exams? Buy one anyway!

Hans Rudi Giger is revealed

Genius to some and a cause of offense to others. **Caz Knight** tries to scratch the surface on one of the most important, albeit at times unheard of, artists of our time

My purpose, through the medium of this article and adjoining pictures, is to convert you to the art, the genius and pure astounding talent of H.R. Giger. "Artist" is a term that does not even scratch the surface of what Giger is and what he has done for many dimensions of culture and fantasy, too. Painter, sculptor, architect, innovator, genius, fantasist, creator of dreams and nightmares would come a little closer to describing who he is, and yet still leaves much to be desired. He is recognised as one of the world's foremost artists of Fantastic Realism, and fantastic is truly what his artwork is. "Fantastic realism": Giger brings fantasy to life and makes it so real one has trouble believing his creations have not existed, or do not exist somewhere. The slightly oxymoronic nature of the phrase captures Giger himself brilliantly: his work escapes definition by having a seemingly "split" personality and this reinforces the beauty and originality of his artistic endeavours.

The Swiss artist was born to chemist parents in Chur, Switzerland in 1940 and had an educational grounding in architecture and industrial design from the School of Applied Arts, Zurich. His father, when interviewed, remarked at how a man with no knowledge of art could bring into this world an artist of such immense talent. From science comes art, and from art comes science: many of Giger's works are a cause of pure ecstasy to science-fiction fanatics. One of his most notable offerings, which transcends artistic disciplines, is his work on Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979), cinematic masterpiece. Ridley



Begoetterung IX, acrylic on paper (1979)

Scott was "never so sure on anything in my life" when he saw Giger's third (and most famous) book *Necronomicon* (1977), which served as the inspirational fodder for the film in designing *Alien* as well as in the landscape of planet LV-426 where the crew first encounter the alien eggs. His work earned him the 1980 Oscar for Best

Achievement in Visual Effects. However, it is saddening when the majority of fans of the film have not even heard of the mind and imagination behind its success. Alien fans reading this; make it your business to educate yourself on the man who is about to become your favourite artist and "dreamer of dreams".

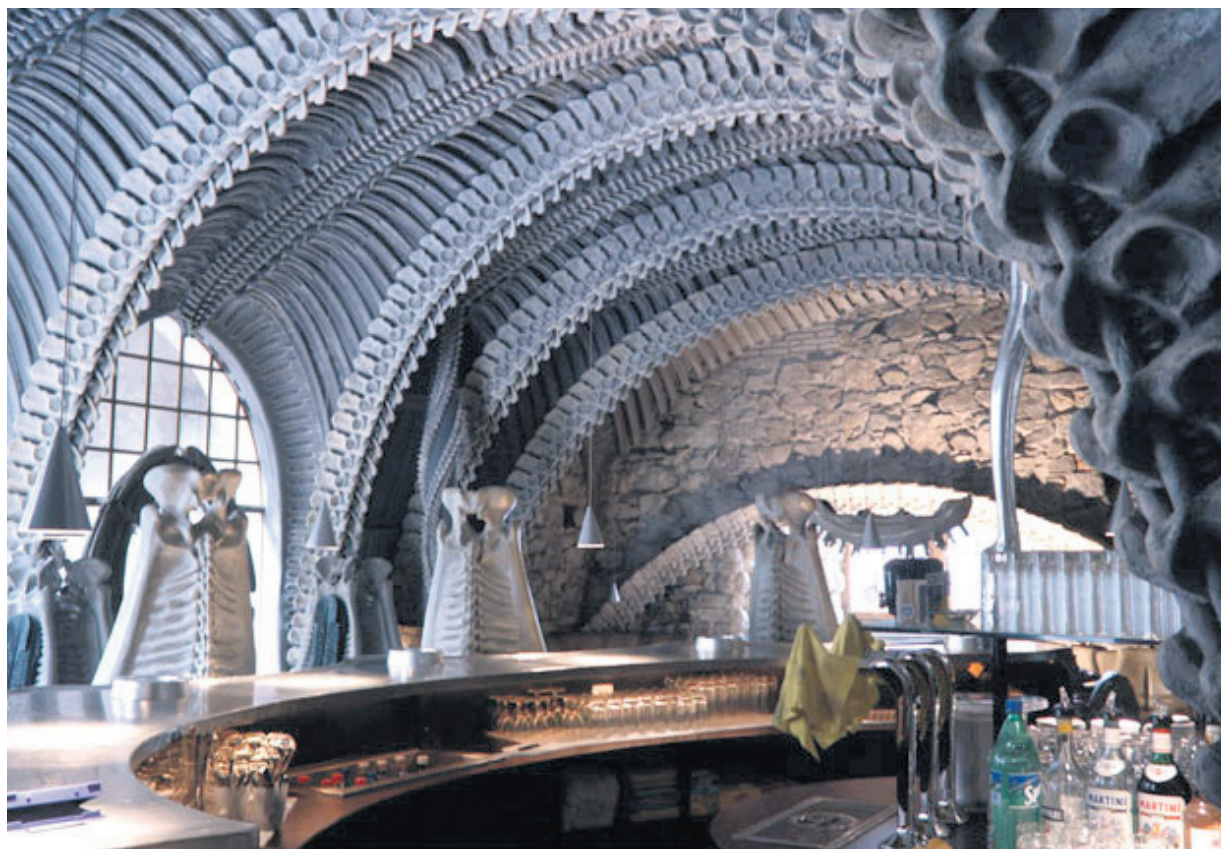
Unfortunately, the UK is not the best place to go in search of Giger exhibitions. Culturally abundant in most other areas of art, the country lacks access to what artist Ernst Fuchs believes is "one of the most important creators of fine art of our time". At present Giger's work can be viewed in Vienna, New York, Prague, Zurich (the artist's cur-



Mutanten ink on transcop on wood (1967-8)



Giger works his magic on top of Brian Aris' photo of Debbie Harry for her cover of *Koo-Koo*



One view from inside the spectacular Giger bar in Gruyeres, Switzerland

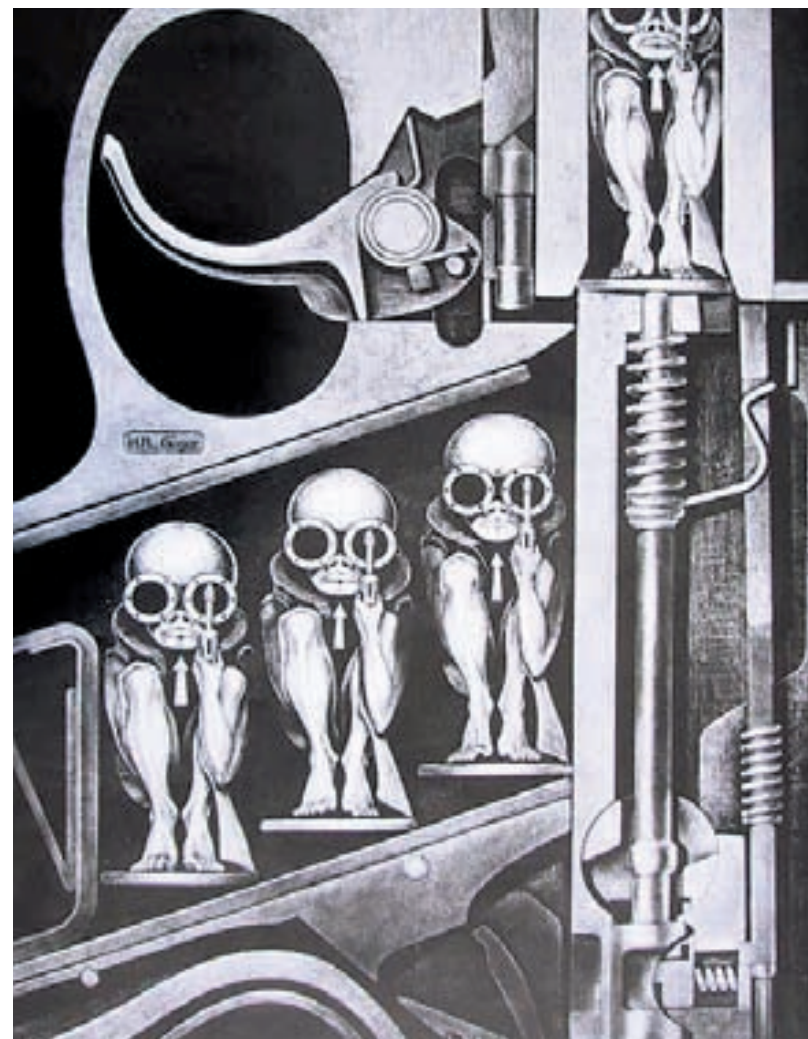
rent home) and of course in Gruyeres, Switzerland (of cheese fame) which is home to the Giger Museum. The four-level building complex in the historic, medieval walled city is the permanent home to many of the artist's most prominent works and also home to one of the Giger Bars. The Gothic architecture of the 400-year old space is mirrored by the designs for the bar with giant skeletal arches covering the vaulted ceiling, stony furniture and a "church-like" feature which contrast to the interesting-looking, body jewellery adorned bar staff.

One film work that truly pays homage and does justice to Giger is David N. Jahn's H.R. Giger Revealed which combines a documentary with a 3D

animation of some of Giger's work (paintings, drawings and sculpture). And Jahn certainly is in a position to give an insider's view on Giger, having worked as his assistant for a number of years (a position many thousands of art students and fans alike would adore to be in). The documentary seeks to illustrate just how magnificent Giger is as an artist instead of providing an insight into his history or personality. Giger's reluctance to give interviews nowadays is due to the belief that he has said everything he has wanted to in undoubtedly countless previous interviews following his work on *Alien*, *Species* and album covers including Debbie Harry and ELP's, and does not wish to repeat himself. Certainly, Giger seems to be a

somewhat shy and reclusive character, if not absent minded, still exuding personality. As often with genius, he has the quirks and desire to exist basking in and exploring the wonders of the depths of his imagination. What Giger possesses is the "HOW", the technical skill in realising the plot of the stories his mind unfolds and the "WHAT", that is the imaginative power to create such intricately detailed images.

However, this detailed surface textures of his paintings in no way detract from what it is he is presenting to us. The sheer fact that Giger can propel one into the abyss of our own imagination is something many artists lack, although in the case of Giger's works one can be equally spellbound by aban-



Birth Machine Baby, ink on paper on wood (1967)

doning that imagination and taking a free ride on what we see before us. One psychiatrist remarked that never had he seen anyone who manages to extract the experiences of the psyche and portray them so amazingly, and it is hard to disagree with him.

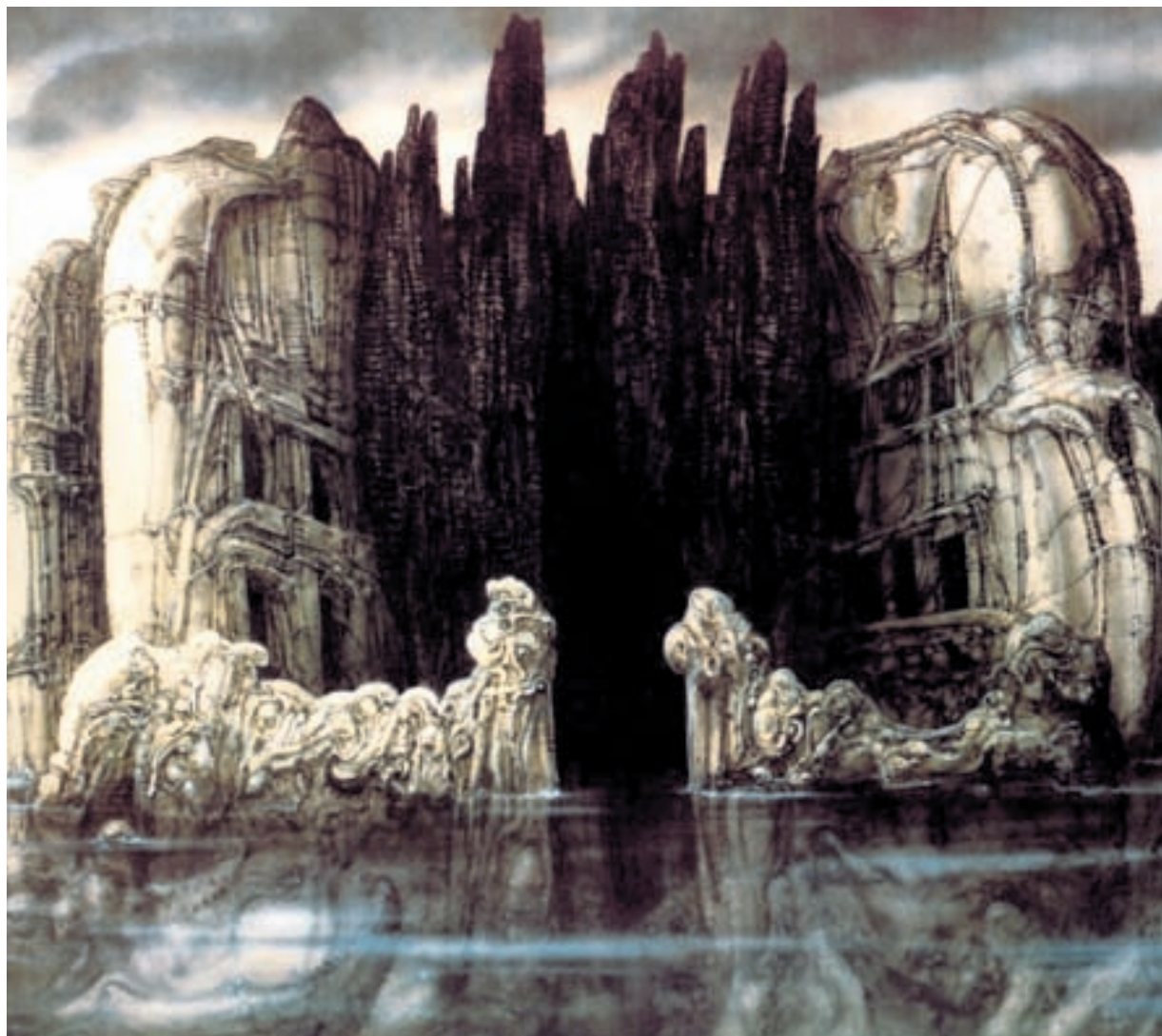
By watching Giger's *Art in Motion*, one begins a forty minute journey of awe with the 3D animation of his art married perfectly to sound effects and music. The aural dimension mirrors the obscurity, enhances and heightens the experience edging the mind to go further into the realms of fantasy. Ten of Giger's work are brought to life as the camera scans over them, allowing the viewer to appreciate in minute detail things they might otherwise overlook when presented with it as a static image in a gallery or on paper. It begins with *Atomic Children*, an ink drawing completed in 1967 when the threat of nuclear war inspired Giger to present his idea of the potential horrors and mutations to human beings. So groundbreaking and previously unseen was his work that it was reacted to with shock. Yogurt tubs and dog excrement were hurled at the showcases. What those objectors were overlooking was an attention to detail nothing short of genius: the stuff of dreams, nightmares and maybe even drug trips. The real inspiration for Giger's creations were the nightmares he had as a young boy and his penchant for day dreaming. His will to overcome his fear manifested itself as the realisation, the "making real" of his nightmares. His art will not appeal to all, with many paintings being quite sexually explicit in content. Here is a man with a profound understanding and interest in the human form. The art does not come off as seedy, pornographic or distasteful and is presented in a rather matter-of-fact way. The sexual content of the art pales in significance next to their visual impact. A personal favourite is *Erotomechanics*, another example of where Giger's concept and attention to detail baffles. The beings in his art seem preconceived as if made my God Himself.

From looking at one work, *Biomechanical Landscape*, it is clear where the in-

spiration for many subsequent films, such as *The Matrix*, came from. He has created the notion of the biomechanical. We live in a world of technological dependence and Giger illustrates this in his work by conjuring a world where the living have become part of the mechanical world around them. Other 'snapshots' from his works in the film include phallic trains in New York City, grey landscapes not dissimilar to the Mine of Moria in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, as well as a demonic, goat-like creature surrounded by svelte, snake-skinned beauties in his work, *The Spell*. One recurring paradox in so much of his work is, in a sense, the "masculine" versus the "feminine". On one hand many images in his creations have a dark, aggressive, demonic, cold and even satanic feel. Many of the characters could be intimidating but Giger depicts them in a still and serene manner where they always look at peace: horror so beautifully presented. It is the industrial, mechanical and masculine versus the svelte, gold and goddess-like beings. It truly is like magic and it is no wonder that Giger will appeal to so diverse an audience: science fiction fans, fetishists, S&M lovers, fans of heavy metal and even the girly girls who dream of fairies and nymphs. Some may accuse Giger of Satanism, given the dark nature of some works, or a pervert because of the naked forms and sexual connotations. Although an interest in the occult, that is, "the hidden", could understandably lead to people believing so, it has been confirmed by many sources, including Jahn, that Giger is no such Satanist. Or pervert for that matter. Interestingly, he was recently married to the director of the Giger Museum in Gruyeres.

With so much emphasis often put upon the "ulterior motive" of a piece of art in a lot of modern art, it is a joy to merely enjoy art for how it looks and for its beauty. Even if, aesthetically, Giger does not inspire something magical in your mind, his pure technical skill will dazzle you.

In the words of New York artist, Pet



The Dark Island

It is an Evening of Wonders indeed

Mustapher Botchway experiences a night of suspended boxes, mind reading and twin gorillas



D to the errren Brown himself. Legend

This guy/thing/alien/weir-do needs no introduction, for seeing his acts on the television should tell you he/it is something special.

Monday 12 May was the day a couple of friends and I went to see Derren Brown perform *Mind Reader: An evening of Wonders* at the cosy Garrick theatre. The aimless and farfetched postulating of what subliminal messages Brown could have planted on the tube and in our newspapers was probably a signal that we had let Brown mania consume us even before the show started.

However, more intriguing was the mysterious-looking box suspended in mid air: More on that later. The show started in great fashion, fooling sixty percent of the audience within two minutes. The phenomenon of *Change Blindness* and not magic was used in this instance. I shan't bore you with the details (it was a psychological study) but the aforementioned sixty percent could not notice a pair of table tennis players exchange places with a couple of gorillas. ('Wiki' it!) And all this before Brown had appeared. Good use of forty pounds then.

The act itself was nothing short of brilliant. More so, a refreshing retreat towards the early Brown work, mentalism. I sense he is taking a break from television, which he regards as "fatuous" and "less fun". Indeed one detects this lack of passion in the second series of Channel 4's *Trick or Treat*. Like this newspaper, the new series has flirted on a more sensationalist approach, with the 'will she or will she not kill the cute kitten' and the upcoming 'ambush' episode highlighting such views. Nevertheless it should still not be missed. Without giving the act away, Brown managed to 'mind read' the words six people were thinking of. And no, they were not 'cat', 'dog', 'house' or 'mouse'. The serial number of a ten pound note was also 'guessed' by the father of one of the audience. As could be expected, another example of *Change Blindness* was performed by Derren Brown and his 'twin gorilla' before the interval, fooling almost everyone this time.

One of Brown's endearing qualities is his scepticism of the paranormal. He openly admits what he does are tricks and he has not been bestowed with an arsenal of abilities by Tom Cruise or anybody else from Planet Glong. The table turning exercise demonstrated this view.

Having seen a multitude of his television shows I have longed to become the subject of one of his tricks, just so I can use my alleged intelligent mind to outwit him. In spite of this, it was my friend who received this privilege (mind fuck). Before the interval Brown asked for two hundred volunteers to submit a personal question into an opaque envelope, with only their initials and seat number on the visible side. This was in preparation for Brown's re-enactment of a magnificent trick, first performed in the 1920's.

The customary embellishment and convolution preceded the trick with Brown wrapping himself in hospital bandages to facilitate the seeing of the audience's words and not their faces, as well as the disregarding of about one hundred and eighty envelopes as the feel of their handwritten initials was not 'right'. He correctly guessed that a nineteen year old woman had suffered an alcohol-induced kidney infection after a heavy night out drinking (on a Wednesday, in dB's perhaps?). Another answer to one of the two hundred questions was that a forty three year old man had once had his ear almost torn off by a fishing line. More fascinating was that Brown had correctly predicted the same guy had recently arrived back in the UK from a flight. This was not in the envelope.

To further convolve the trick he asked the audience, whilst still covered in bandages, to think of a fact about them and 'aim' them towards his chest. Brown then asked a twenty year old male sitting in the dress circle to stand up. The sudden rush of blood to my head subsided when this guy's name had to begin with the letter A. My friend, engrossed in aiming his fact towards Brown's chest had not noticed that he fitted this profile prior to my



A selection of Derren Brown's portraits. For the extra-keen, you can buy prints from his website

polite nudge. The trick continued after another member of the audience from the dress circle was identified. Brown, amazingly or not, predicted that they both had a pet; that both pet's names began with 'sh'; that the pets were a cat and a dog. Finally, and extraordinarily, he had correctly identified that the cat and dog were called Shelley and Shadow respectively. I will leave you to guess which donut decided to call their dog after an optical phenomenon.

This left my friends and me awestruck, to the applause of the rest of the audience. This ended the show. Now the box suspended in mid-air. Brown performed yet another trick in the encore to select the 'most psychic' member of

the audience. The lady then opened the box and revealed a scroll with a collection of words, apparently written by Brown forty five minutes prior to the show. The words included some of the words that the six people had thought of, and other notable words and objects from the show. Extraordinarily, completing the scroll were the words 'lady, long blond hair, grey trousers'. Indeed this was a fitting description of the lady holding the scroll. And on that note we were shown the door.

The show was astounding and for the three days following it, my revision had ceased and my mind was focussed on working out how each astonishing trick was performed.

Indeed I seem to have deciphered most of the tricks, but it is still a privilege to watch this guy use 'magic, suggestion, psychology, misdirection and showmanship' to perform his tricks in real life. I certainly was one of the 100% of people who were eventually fooled in his show.

At forty odd pounds for the best seats, it is not cheap. However, the Garrick is a relatively small theatre and I envisage those paying £30 for upper circle seats not suffering a great deal. It is definitely value for money as the two hour performance is full of tricks, audience participation, flashes of comedy and is definitely more captivating than watching him on TV.



Derren doesn't just come in disturbing monochromatic shades, honest

That Face: aka Why Alcohol is Bad

Lucy Harrold discovers that too short a play results in excessive alcohol consumption and an almighty hangover to match. Somehow though, she managed to overcome any memory loss and write us this review

This was my second visit to the Duke of York's theatre since I have started writing for Felix, the first being to see the ill-fated "Rent Remixed", and it appears they have not done much to the theatre since then as even the set seemed very familiar. After having to run to the theatre to get there in time, due to an uncooperative tube, I just had time to flick through the program to find that a) the friend I was with had seen Lindsay Duncan (Martha) on stage before and b) Hannah Murray (Mia) was the anorexic one in *Skins*.

That Face was originally performed at the Royal Court, Sloane Square, one of the forerunners for original playwrights. It has helped to develop pieces such as *East is East* and *Shopping and Fucking* and has gained much acclaim in nurturing new talent. The talent in this case is Polly Stenham. That Face is Stenham's debut play and an incredible debut at that, a remarkable feat given that she was only nineteen when she wrote it (I only found this out whilst writing this review and am now thoroughly depressed as I'm nineteen and all I've got to show for my life is a rather large debt). After its well-received premiere at the Royal Court Upstairs last year, That Face has now arrived at the Duke of York's theatre with a bang: or perhaps a loud guitar riff would be more fitting.

Many plays I have seen have a tendency to be wimpish about informing you of the actual plot - not here. The first scene is the catalyst for everything else you are about to see. We are taken to a private school-girl's dorm where a balaclava-wearing girl is being given her "initiation". However, we never see the initiation as she has been drugged with valium and is hence unconscious. What makes this worse is that she has been drugged by an incompetent fifteen year old. We learn that this fifteen year old is Mia (Hannah Murray), the daughter of Martha (Lindsay Duncan) an incompetent drunk/pill pusher who is being provided for by her son Henry (Matt Smith). Henry is trying to keep his family together and also keep their life a secret from his father Hugh (Julian Wadham) who is with his second wife in Hong Kong. The first two scenes showed the contrast between the lives of mother and daughter. Mia's boarding school life is orderly, even bordering on the military with Izzy, her house leader, as sergeant, in contrast to her mother's tiny trashed house strewn with wine bottles and books. The whole situation is real life turned on its head, Henry acts as both mother and father to Mia and Martha, Martha being the uncooperative stubborn teenager and Hugh the prodigal son.

As the play progresses we see the effects that Mia's impending expulsion from school has on the family: everyone except Martha who does not seem to care on account of being drunk. Stenham ensures that each character treats the situation in a way that belies them - Mia does not think it's a problem, Henry nearly falls apart and Hugh just throws money at the problem. Throughout this Martha appears to be in her own world where it is just she and Henry, who she treats as both a young boy and a soldier although he is an eighteen year old art student. The situation comes to a head in the final scene where (for once) the storyline



Hannah Murray. Yes, the anorexic one in *Skins*. Also known as Cassie

is actually resolved (I won't say how, you'll have to see the play for yourself). In my experience this is a rare but good thing for a play to do; having paid to see a play, it is nice not to have to make up the ending myself. The play moved at such a pace that I had no time to look at my programme (something I usually do when bored) and so I expected I would have time to do that during the interval. But by the last scene as all the ends were being tied up and there was nowhere else for the play to go I got a bit suspicious. When the cast came out for their bows I realised there was no interval, thus proving that Wikipedia is wrong, as it claimed the play was in two parts. Oh well, at least it meant I couldn't waste my money on wanky ice cream.

I thought That Face was an incredibly intelligent and astute look at a family in turmoil, Stenham's writing was fresh and up-to-date without losing the classic feel of a West End play. Her observations of life as a teenager were witty and shrewd, obviously it helps that she was still one herself whilst writing it. Although I have never been faced with the problems addressed by the play I felt that the writing was realistic and I could understand and sympathise with all the characters and their emotions. Of course this could not have been achieved without the efforts of the director and the actors.

Jeremy Herrin's use of the space (the Duke of York's is a rather more square space than the deeper and narrow one that you would want) was really inventive, storing the main bed set at the back so that you are constantly reminded of the state of Martha's world and the looming chaos and having the bed slide down the set as if being thrust back into the audience's mind. I also loved his scene transitions, as the set

was very minimalistic with no back-grounds as such and everything happening in this white space. The characters from the last scene would stay in a slight blackout as if observing the next characters' lives. The next characters would bring on the scenery for their scene, as though bringing their emotional baggage with them.

The quality of acting was astounding (or as I put in a text to a friend afterwards "IT WAS FUCKING AMAZING!!!"). The only weak link I found to be Hannah Murray, she seemed

at times to not quite understand her character's motivation for her actions almost saying the lines but not taking in their meaning. I think this will come with time and as she plays the role more will become more confident and more aware of herself as the character of Mia. Someone I haven't mentioned yet is Catherine Steadman as Izzy, the school bully and posh totty. Although this is only a small part she stole every scene she was in as this nonchalant, selfish bitch who only cared about getting out of trouble and getting laid

(both of which she achieves). Lindsay Duncan, as expected, was outstanding as the out-of-her-head Martha. She made her character loveable despite what she had done to her family but could turn her emotions at any point just as a real drunk would. Her relationship with Henry varied from absolute adoration to sheer hatred and in a pseudo-sexual Freudian relationship, Martha gives Henry a lovebite in an attempt to mark him as her territory. Look out for her "conversation" with the talking clock - absolute genius! The individual that stood out most for me was Matt Smith as Henry. At first I was not too sure about him - his accent was funny in a stuck-up posh way and I could not work out why he seemed to be acting like a small child. This was all part of the character playing up to his mother to keep her reality alive. As the play progressed Smith's character struggles to hold his family together until he finally snaps. The final scene was harrowing and heartbreaking as Henry loses it whilst dressed in his mother's nightgown and pearls. Smith made his pain accessible to the audience, opening himself up completely. I was truly disturbed by his transition from normal teenager to a character more like his mother.

That Face is a genuine, freakish look at modern family life and essential viewing for anyone who likes to drink lots of alcohol or know someone who does. It's a harrowing tale of what alcohol can do to you and those around you; ultimately it is not the drunk whose life is ruined but the people who care for them. That Face is an extraordinarily powerful play and is definitely worth a visit to before it ends on 5th July, tickets start at £10 with the Royal Court offering an allocation of top price tickets for £25 if you book through their box office. Plus we were out by nine leaving plenty of time to do lots of *cough* revision.

For more information about the play and how to get tickets, log onto www.dukeofyorkstheatre.co.uk



The alcoholic Martha, played by Lindsay Duncan

The Great Culture Crawl

Chapter Ten – Pretty Parks in London

Written by Caz Knight, designed by Rosie Grayburn

Hampstead Heath

The infamous playground of the rich and famous, this is another north London offering with superb views over London which some of the more central and southern parks do not have. The heath is made up of hilly terrains as well as bogs, streams and ancient woodlands which were saved from development by residents during the 19th Century. The heath boasts the largest variety of wildlife of any other London open space and this is due to its more rustic and “untouched” feel as a result of the absence of tarmac roads, signs and formal plantings, although there are increasing signs of modernisation such as the possibility of installing CCTV. One hopes that notion will be abandoned like the move to ban the swimming in the ponds. Thankfully, swimming is still allowed and so strip off and cool off if you don't mind a bit of mud and dirt! The heath spans Highgate in the east and Parliament hill in the south east. This location is perfect for those missing their more rural home settings or for those in need of escape from the South Kensington bubble.

Regent's Park

Regent's park was an enclosed royal estate and hunting ground until 1835 but it was in 1811 that George IV commissioned John Nash to reinvent the park which included the addition of terraces of fine houses on the east side, and the Grand Union Canal which flows along the north of the park. Regent's park is another immensely beautiful green addition to a city that has always been an urban jungle and comes as welcome relief, breaking up the mayhem that would otherwise ensue between Marylebone and Camden Town. The location is perfect if one is out doing touristy things such as Madame Tussaud's, the Planetarium or going for a more “alternative” alternative in Mecca (i.e. Camden). The park is home to our city's Zoo as well as the Queen Mary Rose garden that boasts at least 400 rose varieties (another great opportunity for romantic ramblings). The boating lake, monuments and tree-lined walks are some of the things that await you here.

Alexandra Park

The best way to enjoy this park is as the sun rises on a spring morning. The views from this park over London are exquisite and breathtaking and on a clear day all the taller features (Gherkin etc) of central London are visible. The park itself is stunning and as well as being the home of several types of exotic trees it contains the Grove Garden and the Rose Garden which looks southeast over London. The main attraction of the park is technically Alexandra Palace, more commonly known as Ally Pally. This is named for Princess (and later Queen) Alexandra of Denmark who married one of our Princes, Edward, and not for the architect who designed the palace: Alexander Mackenzie. It was built as a “pleasure ground” with paid entry, housing some of the World Fairs, and today still serves that function in the form of exhibitions and a wide range of music events.

The park is accessible via Wood green tube with the need for a bus journey too. However, for the more energetically minded and bodied, Alexandra Park can be reached on foot from Finsbury Park via the High-gate Woods.

Holland Park

Although it may be the Royal Borough's largest, it is one of the smallest public parks in London as a whole. Taking its name from Sir Henry, Earl of Holland, the park is essentially the grounds of Holland House which was occupied by Cromwell's Parliamentarian army during the Civil War (1642-1651). What is left of the house after bombing during WWII is now a youth hostel and also houses temporary exhibitions. For those not content merely basking in the May sunshine or strolling around the formal and informal gardens and woodlands, there are tennis courts, cricket nets, a golf bunker, netball and football courts. The park is home to the Kyoto Japan Garden, an eco garden, which was developed for the 1991 London Festival of Japan. What better way to woo a loved one then by meandering through the rose gardens as the peacocks only add to the beauty of your surroundings. Alternatively you can gate crash the adventure playground! During the summer one can return to Holland Park in the evening for a wide range of operatic and dramatic events. If you go along please do send us a review!

St James' Park

The park was first acquired by Henry VIII but has undergone many landscape changes since that time. John Nash, of Regent's Park fame, helped in the process of landscaping which included the addition of the lake and scenic paths throughout the park. If Hampstead Heath is a little far to soak up some rustic flavour then St James' offers a more central location for some rural scenery if the right spot is found. Leafy plane trees inhabit the park and pelicans can be spotted lakeside. Situated to the east, St James' is a perfect green getaway after fumes of Piccadilly Circus and if Green Park is heaving a bit too much with tourists and locals alike.

Kensington Gardens

Everyone at Imperial will be familiar with these beautiful gardens. Home to the Albert Memorial, in all its halcyon glory, the gardens are a welcome relief from their slightly more “mainstream” older sister, Hyde Park. The gardens have their own cultural offering in the form of the Serpentine art gallery and Kensington Palace - occasionally frequented by the Royal family. It contains two attractive water features, including the Italian water garden (commissioned by Queen Victoria) and lake, with deck chairs next to the lake. The presence of tiny green vans provide cool refreshment within easy walking distance of your chosen spot and a restaurant on the Lancaster Gate side of the park will provide something heartier. These gardens are a personal favorite of mine for their tranquility and beauty and the animals certainly seem to think so as the park is home to considerably more wildlife than Hyde Park. Playground crashing opportunity also exists here.

Kew Gardens

Officially named the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, this is the Holy Grail for any plant lovers, botanists or biologists. Set along the Thames, it is home to a huge range of flora in and out of doors. The formal garden setting provides an aesthetically pleasing and botanically organised way of displaying such beautiful plant life. The houses, such as the Lily, Palm, and Temperate Houses, are architectural delights unto themselves and contribute to the features of note at Kew. The gardens include Japanese, rose, knot and rock varieties and there are other features such as the introduction of limited and temporary areas of farm crops to illustrate farm ecosystems. Anyone who has lost the will or ability to perambulate can jump on the Kew Explorer, a small road train which comes at an additional cost. Unfortunately there is an entry fee to pay. However, the Old Deer Park at Richmond borders the Gardens which makes for a more relaxed and economical alternative, where beachwear and Frisbees are more appropriate.



Music

Music Editors – **Peter Sinclair** and **Susan Yu**

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Susan Yu
Music Editor

Another week of hard work at the office. It's a shame that the sun has ducked away, leaving everybody bereft of her benevolence and sweet charms. You know what, who cares if the sun ain't shining no more, because at the end of the day, we are talking about the British weather and when it comes to this, there are no surprises in store for any of us here. At the back of my mind, I'm thinking, hang on a minute, we still have f***ing immense music to console ourselves with. All is not lost. All is not lost.

Two weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending Moby's new album launch party at club Indig02 inside the O2 Arena. Moby performed a smashing DJ set, with guests Mylo and Trentemoller brandishing their DJ dexterities alongside the master of electronics. With 'Last Night,' Moby grants us dance floor killers; some would say he's back with a vengeance, others are not so sure, this being the general consensus amongst the critics. For me personally, I have to admit, I do prefer his old stuff, with 'Play,' his sixth studio album still standing strong as an unforgettable sensation. 'Last Night' does however offer us with a range of timeless tracks, from rave anthems, old school, cosmic disco-pop, hip-hop, underground to down-beat chiller ambience. You certainly can't say that Moby doesn't like to spice things up somewhat. Seemingly, 'Last Night' is a dance music tour de force to be reckoned with.

This week, there is an interview with Cut/Copy who are prominent in the elctro-indie scene, as well as a catch-up with Ty at Jazz Cafe and many singles that need your undying attention!



We got a mountain of CDs sent to us over the holidays, and there's always gigs that need going to. If you fancy getting some free stuff, give us an email at music.felix@gmail.com

Cutting edge music maestros

Peter Sinclair gets cosy with indie-electro group Cut/Copy, finds out about their new album, where they see themselves in the future and interviews them in the process

This trio from Melbourne, Australia, are known for their dance/electropop, taking influences from post punk genres as well as 80s new wave. A few weeks ago, Felix spoke to drummer Mitchell Scott to find out a little about what makes these fellows cutting edge talent.

You've got the full album 'In Ghost Colours' on your MySpace page. Why did you decide to do that?

I think that was actually something our label did. For us, we just want people to here the music really so it's good as far as we're concerned. I think it doesn't stay up there for ever, maybe it's up for a couple of weeks around the release date of the record and then it's pulled back down to the regular number of songs. But the label doesn't mind, and if they don't care, we don't care.

What are the main differences between the new album 'In Ghost Colours' and your debut 'Bright Like Neon Love'?

We just kept doing what we're doing really. It's been a little while since our last record so maybe our tastes have changed and we might have been subtly influenced.

I guess one of the main things though is that we had more time to spend in the studio working on the record so it's probably a little more developed in that sense. And we've also come a long way in how we play music in that we'd never been a band before the last record. It was all totally new to us really – we barely knew how to play our instruments – so maybe we've come along in that sense as well. With the first record, we only had half a day in the studio to record the live elements, and there was also some dodgy bedroom recording. This time we had about six weeks in the studio.

What kind of music were you listening to when you were writing the album?

Loads of stuff, I mean you have your old favourites that you always come back to. I guess this time there was a bit more psychedelic electronic stuff, like Tangerine Dream, Krautrock, things



Cut/Copy all adorning copycat smug expressions... could they be clones of one another?

like that. Things like Animal Collective, Sleepy Jackson.

How have you seen the 'Indie Electro' scene progress since the release of your debut?

It's definitely come along like crazy. When we made that record there wasn't really a scene for what we were doing at all. Our first record sold nothing much, although gradually people became aware of it and started coming to our shows. But this album debuted at number one, so there's a pretty large difference. The scene's grown to a huge extent.

Where do you see it going in the future?

There's a lot of different ways you can go with it. We've gone for a bit more of a live, more guitar-driven direction, but there's other bands doing really

well who are going in a much more dance floor friendly direction.

I don't know, it's hard to say – a scene is usually made up of people who aren't really conscious of being part of a scene. Ideally it's just a lot of people doing their own thing which gets lumped together to a certain extent. But for us, we just try to not be too conscious about what's going on around us and just try and make music which we care about.

What kind of bands are there around at the moment that you're listening to?

There's always quite a bit of stuff. We're going on tour with Black Kids, I think they're quite cool. The Presets have just got a new record out. Ladyhawk, Joakim who just did a remix for us, Nightlife. It's just across the board, I like a pretty broad range of music.

Are you playing at any festivals this year?

Yeah, definitely. I'm not sure which ones. We're looking at all the offers and locking them in at the moment, but we don't actually know which ones we're playing at. People have been saying to us "Oh, I see you're playing at this festival later in the year" and we actually... don't know. We're definitely going to be playing at some summer festivals though, I can't wait to get back to that.

How do you find your music is received at festivals as opposed to clubs or smaller venues?

It can be really good, there's a lot of energy at festivals. People are there with a definite aim to enjoy themselves so we can often get the crowd involved. When that happens it's really cool.

There's a different kind of vibe at festivals – you're playing to people who might not necessarily come to your own show. It's a large new audience, and it's often there that people find out about new music. People who go to see you might not have heard your music before, or they might have just heard a song on the radio, so they may not be people who'd like to hear some obscure track from your back catalogue. We'd probably play some of our better known stuff or more recent stuff.

It took you a while to find a producer for the new album, eventually settling on Tim Goldsworthy. What was it about him that made you want to work with him?

We've got a very healthy respect for PSA and pretty much everything they've done. More recently they've been taking their remixes and production and putting a more psychedelic bent on things, and Tim's good at that as well. He's drawn out like ten minute cosmic synth epics, we really liked everything that he had his hands in up until now. Having conversations with him, he really seemed to get where the music was coming from. He could pull out the key references and was bang on with everything he had to say about the record – where it's coming from and some of the things he thought he could do with it. Getting over there and getting on with the process, we became even more happy with the decision. We have a really good working relationship with him. A surprising fun fact is that he dropped out of high school to follow around My Bloody Valentine on tour, so he really took to a lot of the guitar driven songs which was not what we expected, we thought he would be more into the disco dancey stuff as opposed to the guitar songs.



This photo was taken moments before some gnarly dude grinded the phat rail on the right taking the young man's head clean off

Ty vry mch 4 ur awesum gig

Ty
Live at Jazz Café
★★★★☆

Take any stereotypical impressions of a rapper and cast them aside when you think of Ty, arguably one of the most underrated artists of his genre in the UK. Notably absent from his three albums, released with the pioneering hip-hop label Big Dada, are the obnoxious bragging, delinquent potty-mouth, and paranoid, yawn-some obsession with ‘the haters’ that seem to blight the majority of his peers. In place of all this we find an upbeat, soul-and-jazz-inspired blend of thoughtful hip-hop that you find yourself tapping your foot and smiling as your head nods along in contented agreement.

His lyrics are pensive yet witty, mature while retaining a refreshing element of playfulness. Neither is he afraid to dabble in the political, drawing references to topics ranging from the 1994 Rwandan genocide to the murder of the young Damilola Taylor. Indeed, his long and active involvement in London’s poetry and spoken-word scene provide further testament to his wordsmithery.

His live performances don’t disappoint either. Whether performing with a full live band or DJ, Ty establishes a rapport early on with the crowd through his energy and humour. At the Jazz Café in Camden, he was joined by not only a DJ, but also welcomed to the stage an R&B singer, a soul singer, British and Nigerian rappers and even a lad playing the harmonica over the hip-hop beats. Even the DJ couldn’t resist stopping the records and joining Ty in some impressive beat-boxing.

‘It’s all about people having a good time’ said Ty after the gig. ‘I want people to enjoy themselves, enjoy the party. I don’t care who I bring on with me, as long as I achieve that.’ True enough, considering that he played a gig with Damon Albarn only a couple



Ty’s friends are such jesters

of days before and has recorded with artists ranging from Albarn himself, to saxophonist/rapper Soweto Kinch, top London DJs Scratch Perverts and hip-hop heavyweights Roots Manuva and De La Soul.

A week before the Jazz Café gig saw the annual Brit awards and Ty’s opinion was rather frank: ‘It’s simple, they’re killing music. All this pop-music-industry back-slapping takes away the focus from artists who take risks and are innovative. UK hip-hop artists are struggling to get the recognition they deserve because the only way to get recognised is to conform to the industry’s expectations.’ It is worth noting that his inspirational sophomore

album Upwards was nominated for the prestigious Mercury Music Prize in 2004, eventually missing out to Franz Ferdinand’s influential debut.

Plans for 2008? ‘Recording.’ Trying to tease out some juicy information about style, timeline and collaborations was difficult: ‘I’ll be recording but I don’t have a particular agenda for it at the moment: it’s still in the early stages. I like to just take my time, make music that I really feel, take the best tracks and put it on a record.’ Judging from his three previous outings, the new instalment of the Ty musical saga will be interesting listening indeed.

David Kaye

The return of Coldplay

Coldplay
Violet Hill
★★★★☆

After a three-year gap, Coldplay are back with their latest offering – Viva La Vida or Death And All His Friends – and if their new single is anything to go by, it might not be too bad either.

Violet Hill is the first single to be released off the album and is a rousing introduction, with reverb-laden vocals and thick electric guitars. You might be forgiven for thinking “Oasis” when first hearing the track, and whilst it’s definitely Coldplay, there is something oddly reminiscent of the Mancunian band in the overall sound. It’s a far better offering than their last lead single, 2005’s Speed of Sound, which was essentially their 2002 hit Clocks with a slightly re-phrased piano riff.

Singer Chris Martin leads us through a tumultuous journey of snow and rifle-wielding priests, interspersed with the lyrical hook “If you love me, won’t you let me know?” I’ll be honest – I’m still trying to understand what he’s going on about, but in reality it doesn’t matter. It works, and you soon find yourself singing along.



Coldplay, showing how pensive indie poses should be done...

There is something very catchy about Violet Hill, be it the pounding drums that carry you until the penultimate chorus or the well-placed guitar riff halfway through. Either way, it’s a solid

single at the start of what promises to be a great album. Coldplay fans rejoice, and music listeners enjoy.

Stuart Higgins

Middle of the road tunes from Royworld and Pigeons

Royworld
Dust
★★★★☆



Royworld calmly sits in Dust

These guys formed at Goldsmiths College back in 2006, the London quartet are tipped to conquer the music industry in 2008 and beyond, currently venturing into the music scene with their second single: ‘Dust.’

Pinched from Royworld’s forthcoming debut album ‘Man In The Machine’, to be released on 2nd June, ‘Dust’ is an easy number to locate on the musical barometer. As far as the soundscape is concerned, Royworld’s memorably layered keyboard driven melody, soaring guitar lines, thumping drums, along with frontman Rod Futrille’s crooning vocals will easily entice old fans and newcomers alike.

The song is definitely crafted in a highly sophisticated manner and one certainly gets the impression of the band’s confidence through the way in which everything is put together, strangely, an epic, dynamic feel suffuses this track.

Dust is a paradigm of Royworld’s immensely fine songwriting talent. One to watch out in the future.

Susan Yu

The Pigeon Detectives
This is an emergency
★★★★☆



The Pigeons looking tough

Is this really an emergency?

The Pigeon Detectives certainly claims so with their new single from their novel album ‘Emergency.’

It seems that bands aren’t immune to the “bus law” either. You wait ages and two come along at once: noisy guitars, fast paced hi-hat rhythms, and simple shouty choruses; and I can’t help but feel The Wombats do it just that little bit better. The momentum of the track carries you through to the riff-rich chorus and the singer’s continuous reiteration of how urgent the situation is. It’s the kind of infectious song that will probably get a reasonable amount of Radio 1 airplay, but I’m not sure whether it has enough sustenance or originality to make it last beyond a few weeks.

If you’re after a loud sing-a-long track and liked their previous songs, such as I Found Out, then this might be for you. However it’s a simple song, with a simple outcome: all right.

Stuart Higgins

Scientists’ heady concoction

We Are Scientists
Chick Lit
★★★★☆

We are Scientists’ new single has been hailed as ‘a wave of pure charm... f*cking awesome’ by NME. Couldn’t agree more!

This emotionally charged stormer taken from their chart topping second album ‘Brain Thrust Mastery’ that plunged into the UK Album charts at number 11, sees the duo sizzling with deliciously raw, edgy sound, a concoction of sirenesque melodies, roofrocking vocals, thrashing drums and guitar franticness. The wholesome picture of indie rock and roll. Mind you, the video for ‘Chick Lit’ is worthy of

attention too, funny entertainment to say the least. Seemingly, it pays tribute to ‘A Nightmare on Elm Street, Part III: The Dream Warriors,’ and ‘The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,’ with both Chris and Keith embracing the role of cattle herders in the Old West. These musicians, they really do just have a kind of fetish for weird and wonderful backdrops don’t they? I guess a change of scene does no harm...

Having just finished the ‘Back in Style’ tour across the country, the duo are set to headline a night at Ibiza Rocks in July, which promises to be a real firecracker. Scientists have yet again enlightened us with their dynamite inventions.

Susan Yu



These mad, mad Scientists have many, many tricks up their sleeves

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Your opinion counts – Disabilities

We would like to hear your views and opinions about disability and Imperial College.

Have you enjoyed your experience as a student here? Do you think Imperial could improve some of the things it does to support disabled students?

We are holding confidential meetings (focus groups) to give you the opportunity to voice how we can improve what we do for disabled students at Imperial College. Your comments will be treated in strict confidence with an external independent specialist facilitating the meeting(s).

If you would like to participate please contact Christine Yates, The College's Equalities & Diversity Consultant at c.yates@imperial.ac.uk or tel: 020 7594 5558.

You need only state which time you would like to attend, for numbers (and catering) purposes only. The times and venues are as follows:

Tuesday 27th May at 10.00—13.00 Room 311, Level 3, Sherfield Building, South Kensington

Tuesday 27th May at 14.00—16.00 Room 307b Level 3 Sherfield Building, South Kensington

Monday 2nd June at 10.00 —14.00, Room 311, Level 3, Sherfield Building, South Kensington

Monday 2nd June at 14.00—16.00, Room 311, Level 3, Sherfield Building, South Kensington

Hangman

Putting the cat out to dry

Imperial student finds Sainsbury's bakery: annual profits soar by 28%



Ross Goldberg after three weeks at Imperial

Supermarket chain Sainsbury's has recorded an increase in profits of 28%. While market analysts have linked the strong growth to the completion of a recovery plan set out in 2004, evidence from Imperial College seems to indicate a stronger force at work.

Imperial student Ross Goldberg didn't take long to seek out sugar, hot buns and delicious french treats. Unfortunately, he was at Imperial, and had to settle for artery-clogging pastries instead of sexy girls called Helene.

His daily trips to Sainsbury's became ever more extravagant, he would often spend upwards of £50 on sumptuous 6-pack-destroying goodies. Soon he was transformed from the rippling god on the right, to a man whose attractiveness is only slightly above the average of Imperial students.

As his waist grew wider, Sainsbury's share price similarly rose. Soon business analysts around the world were talking about the 'Fatty Factor', while McDonalds bosses were livid that they had missed a trick.

Ross became an instant celebrity, receiving offers from shitty food outlets



Goldberg in his golden prime

across the country, inviting him to gorge his fat face in their establishments.

Unfortunately, this story does not end well. Like the dot-com bubble, Ross was destined to burst. He was stabbed one night returning from Sainsbury's. Congratulations Ross Goldberg, you beat it man, you beat heart disease.

Editor elect – a little girl?



"Sewing is useful, yeh bruv?"... no bruv...

Apparently, the future editor of this orgasmic publication has decided to give up his degree in engineering or whatever, in order to take up his childhood sissy passion of knitting and sewing.

Marquee creates jobs, devours students



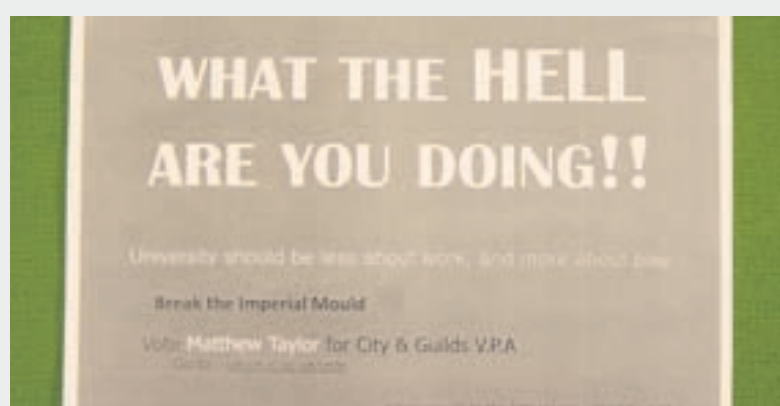
Blink and you'll miss it!

Cunning observers may be able to notice two things about the severe awesomeness that is the stealth marquee on the Queen's Lawn. One, quite macabre, the other one, not much so.

It has come to the attention of the contributors to this section, that Imperial College has single-handedly created a free-marqueet system for the Marquee setting-up contractors, which this year has been put up and taken down a grand total of 631 times. According to

the Office of the Rector, the College is now worried that the increased market for marquee Putter-Uppers will translate into an immigration problem of unprecedented proportions. It is known that Englishmen have problems getting it up, and foreign-trained marquee putter-uppers would be in better shape to erect it on Queen's recently trimmed turf.

It also appears that during each of these quickies where the marquee vanishes, some students are gobbled up by it, and it is not clear where they are stored. The rumour mill is abounding with horror stories of zombie physicists being used as slave labour by the draconianly efficient DPFS, Chris Larvin. The Deputy President denies all claims with a sick smirk on his face. His girlfriend was unavailable for comment.



Answer: I'm about to kill myself... sigh, it's just SO bad

Theorem:
Engineers
hate
creativity.
Proof follows
below

Did you vote for Matthew Taylor in the recent CGCU elections? Yes? You should be ashamed of yourself.

I'm sure that Mr Taylor is a gentleman and a scholar, but... sorry, I'm trying to think of a funny way to say this. Never mind, his poster is just terrible. What the HELL are you doing Matt? The slogan 'Break the Imperial mould', would be more inspiring if he had made any attempt with his poster. Is it really that hard to make posters that are creative, aesthetically pleasing; at the very least a poster that INCREASES your

chances of being elected?

It appears that CGCU disagrees with me. Matthew was actually elected. I know, I was pissed off too. It's obvious that, rather than me being wrong, engineers actually celebrate dull, colourless and bland creations. Did I mention they were engineers?

But don't fear, readers, you're not doomed to this fate. There are a few useful tips, that if you keep in mind should prevent a slow, painful death

- 1) USE COLOUR DAMN YOU!
 - 2) Avoid engineers
 - 3) Don't run for election... ever
- QED



Needy McNeedy: tweaking nipples since ‘78

She’s squeezing humanity’s pimples for your benefit. Email your problems to: agony.felix@imperial.ac.uk



24yo F, GSOH, masochist, enjoys laughing at others’ pathetic problems and then publishing said problems in student newspaper, seeks troubled M for future columns. If interested email agony.felix@imperial.ac.uk. I’ll tell people we met at your therapist’s.

Dear Needy McNeedy,

My flatmate and I are doing a PhD in the same research group. I see him all the time, at home, in the office, in lab, in the Holland Club...
All aspects of my life are now linked to this guy who can’t help talking about science all the time. I knew being a PhD student was uncool, but I had never imagined it would be totally depressing. Is my social life condemned for the rest of my time in London?

PostgradInDistress

Dear PostgradInDistress,

No. Your relationship has clearly reached saturation point, and your

flatmate, being the kind of person (they are oh-so-common at Imperial) who can only just distinguish between the facial expressions of the insanely jubilant and the clinically depressed, needs to realise this.

Given how hard it is to explain the concept of emotions to the uninitiated, I suggest you take matters further and subtly get him to decide to hang out with you less. A few ways you could do this are: make a move on him (if he isn’t gay, find out first or this could backfire), get a girlfriend with some really annoying characteristics, or take up strict religious practices which coincide with his daily routine. He’ll soon decide that he’s better off without you, and you’ll be free to continue your life unabated. (Doing a PhD is, in fact, not cool. You might want him back at some point.)

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

My best friends have finished all their work and keep asking me to go out

with them and get drunk, but I’ve got loads of stuff to do. They make me feel like such a loser. How can I study and still keep up my cool image?

UpsetMedic

Dear UpsetMedic,

Wanting to spend time studying automatically makes you pretty uncool. Writing a letter about your “problem” to fictionalised agony aunts in your college paper has pretty much pushed you off the scale of cool and into a slag pit with croc shoes and people who watch Big Brother. You might as well just put a bit more effort in and get a degree.

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

I’ve been on a couple of dates with this girl from my hall, and things are going really well, she’s really pretty and funny and we’ve had a really good time. I’m quite traditional, and even

though some of my mates have taken the piss out of me for not sleeping with her yet, I’m standing by my decision to wait for a bit and get to know her first. The trouble is, the longer I leave it until we have sex, I get increasingly nervous, and I don’t get turned on thinking about it. How can I make sure I don’t lose my nerve (and my hard on) on the big night?

FrightenedFresher

Dear FrightenedFresher,

This is why it is always best to get the whole sex thing out in the open as early as possible in a budding relationship before issues like this build up. Always put out on the first date, girls!
You’ll need to drink heavily on the date in question to make sure you’re less worried/numb the pain when things inevitably go wrong. Also, try and find your most arousing sexual fetish so that if you start getting floppy you can close your eyes and think of exams/men/the Rector and wait for the results... Good luck!

Needy xxx

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



Aquarius

This week, the guy who writes the horoscopes overhears you discussing his work with those vapid imbeciles you call friends. He decides to use your conversation for material. making you extremely paranoid. When was that? Where did I have that conversation? OMFG I’m being watched aren’t I? Yes... yes you are.



Taurus

This week your greatest fear materialises in your bedroom. Your laptop sprouts legs, arms and a perm and starts raving to MGMT – Time to Pretend (OMG awesome). When you awake to find this technological nightmare, you calmly light a cigar, take out a pistol and unload 6 shots in its memory board. I told you Macs were evil.



Leo

This week you reveal to a total stranger how fucking stupid you are. According to you, the recent changes in the classification of marriage-jew-wanna mean that you can’t ‘smoke outside any more.’ I mean OMG wtf omgz zomg. Theres nothing else to say in the rest of this horoscope... you had such promise as a kid.



Scorpio

This week... btw one of the editors of Felix is so fit. Who is it? Lets narrow it down. It’s a female editor. Ok so there’s like 10 editors who are of the fairer sex (and who don’t find any of these horoscopes funny coz they often involve the words gash, face and cunt). If you figure out who you are, and who I am, lets get it on. Yehya, HELLA, manana.



Pisces

This week theres could be a NUS referendum, or wait, maybe not. Eugh, there are more interesting things to do with your life people!!! Remember when you were a kid and you went out with your friends not doing anything interesting but it was ok coz you had your friends? You don’t? Oh you didn’t have any friends, so that’s why you’re heavily involved in the Union... cunt.



Gemini

This week some douche tries to talk to you about drugs. He says he’s representing some kind of cat. You get worried when he starts asking you about how much skunk you light up weekly. You shift uncomfortably, clenching that eighth in your jacket pocket. You breakdown in tears, shout ‘fine just arrest me!’ and run away into the road and get run over. YOU SEE, weed KILLS.



Virgo

You get more depressed when you remember that you actually didn’t have any promise as a child. The only reason you got into Imperial is because your name is Richard Sykes Jr and they needed you to bump up the female:male ratio in Materials. That’s right you’re an 18 year old girl called Richard, there’s nothing left for you to do except give blowjobs and do gape porn.



Sagittarius

This week you (i.e. Robert Winston) are caught reading Felix. Chill Winston weez won’t tell nobody, but you got to give us something in return. I quite like your moustache, that would be payment enough: or maybe one of your titles; you don’t need to be a Lord, Sir and Professor all at the same time. We could discuss it over some dinner and a dip in your jacuzzi. FYI, we luvs you Winston.



Aries

This week you die. I’ll be so depressed if a student dies now... crap, right let’s make an agreement, neither one of us will die, ok? What do you mean, you can’t keep that promise? Just stay away from terrorists, buses and guys named Mark. Yeh you’ve got to watch out, they’re right cunts... Sorry, just one guy called Mark is a cunt.



Cancer

This week you are in front of a first year Physics class. Nearly all of them are below-average looking guys. Hey, a really hot girl... no that’s just the effeminate long haired geek in row 3... I’ll never get laid, maybe I should change course, Biologists lock up your ladies and throw away the key. This horoscope is far too true for comfort... sigh.



Libra

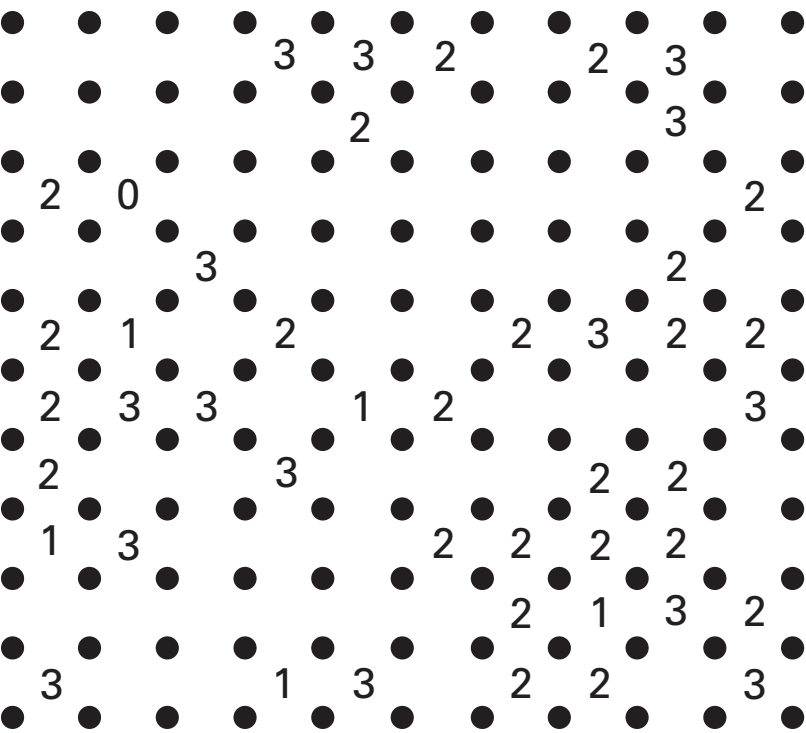
This week you remember how much you love gape porn. Run back to your room, lock the door and indulge. Except you’re not in your room, you’re in the SAF and you’re not indulging in gape porn, you’re watching the Pain Olympics online. Go on, I know you’re curious, google it. Beware, if you didn’t like 2 girls 1 cup... well you’ll see.



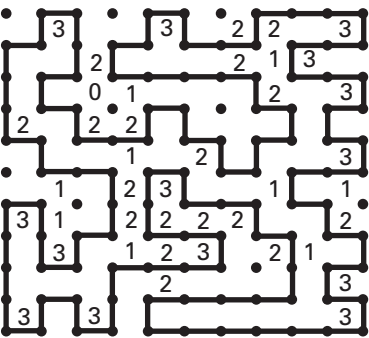
Capricorn

This week the level of bitching around you reaches feverish heights. The gossip is moving at light speed, literally. I mean you hear the scandal before you see the persons mouth move. You could put things in perspective by reminding them about famine but you realise that the vapid sons-of-bitches don’t have souls, so theres no point... fizzbitch.

Slitherlink 1,404



1,403 solution



The winner of Slitherlink 1,403 was **Hringur Gretarsson** yet again! Awesome cheesecake with strawberry puree and a cinnamon biscuit base. We'll give a prize out in the summer. The more entries, the better your chances.

How to play:

Crudely speaking, Slitherlink is similar to Minesweeper mixed with a dash of Sudoku. The object of the game is to draw

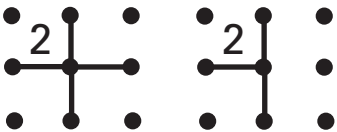
lines between the dots to create one long, and most importantly, looping line. It should have no start or finish; just like an elastic band.

Each number indicates how many lines should be drawn around it, for example:



Cells which don't contain a number can be surrounded by any number of lines.

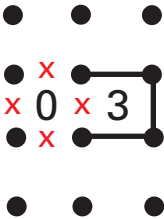
Remember, the line must form a loop, so the line cannot branch. The following situations are not allowed:



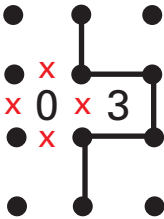
Squares are not allowed either. There are never cells containing the number 4 in Slitherlink.

So, where do you start? The most

common place to start on a Slitherlink grid is by drawing crosses around any zeros. Drawing crosses is purely done to so that you know where there can't possibly be a line. So, take the pattern below as an example. Begin by drawing crosses, then by filling in some lines:

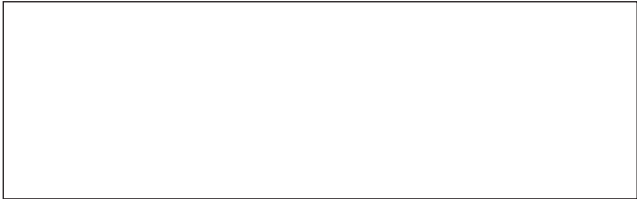


Now the lines can only continue in the following directions:



Wordoku 1,404

	M	E	S				K
F							
			M		E		H
	T			M	F	K	E
	I		K	T	A		M
M		K	E	S			F
I			H		K		
							I
A					S	E	K



1,403 Solution

A	C	I	Z	T	O	G	M	Y
Z	M	G	Y	C	I	O	T	A
Y	T	O	G	M	A	Z	C	I
M	I	T	O	G	Y	A	Z	C
G	Y	A	M	Z	C	T	I	O
O	Z	C	A	I	T	M	Y	G
C	A	Z	T	Y	G	I	O	M
T	O	Y	I	A	M	C	G	Z
I	G	M	C	O	Z	Y	A	T

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

The winner of Wordoku 1,403 was **Sofia Vatti**. Congratulations! The hidden word was: ZYGOMATIC. Keep those entries coming in.



07980 148 785

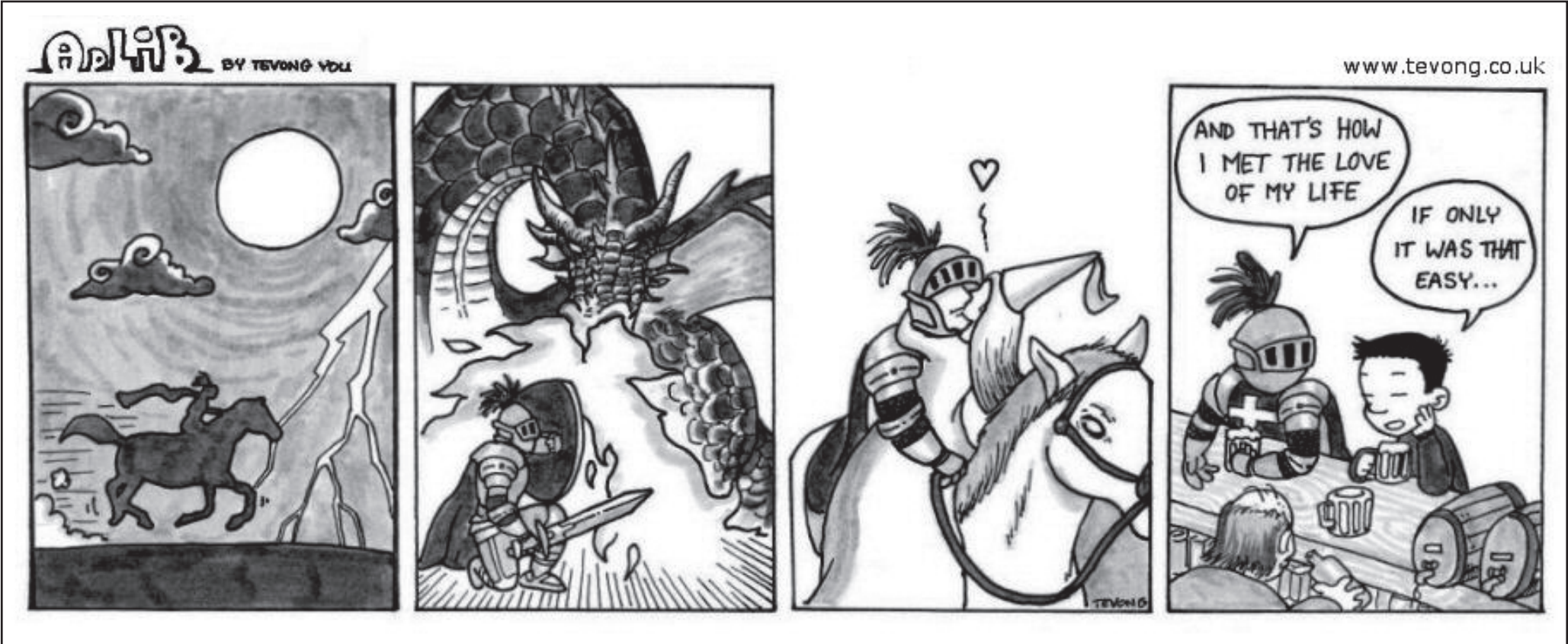
TEXT US! OR
WE WON'T
FEED THE CAT!

This week's texts:

"ACP: Advanced Crap Physics, thats straight visualizable mechanics... My kind of thing - piece of piss, Get that 2:2, i can smack this bitch... Sit down, paper open, staring back, 3 jokes problem sheet questions... 3 jokes problem sheet questions, I caned out last night... 3 jokes problem sheet questions, I did again this morning tight... Ive seen this shit too many times, Thought to myself 90%, thas right... Started banging out the shit, Line by line im actually raping it... 15min though, got that feeling, Why cant i remember from the morning... With the panic, ensuing, vicious circle i'm feeling... I'm chokin' on one, I'm choking on two... Chokin' for 90minutes, I choked the whole lot..." [Read the rest next week!]

Adlib by Tevong You

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or see www.myspace.com/silfest

Imperial hockey club President’s Day 2008

Jack Cornish
Incoming Sports Editor

After a hugely successful season for the Hockey Club, including a whole stash of silverware and the first full year for the newly elected President (Mark Roberton), it was capped off on Saturday during the annual President’s Day! The general idea was to eat, drink, play hockey and catch up with all those old faces...

An early start was required for such an epic day and more than one ULU Hockey Club Member (who also play for IC) missed the 9.30am bus to the Fortress due to their annual dinner only finishing at 4.30am that morning! However the show went on and the hockey started with a bang... and a siren...and a horn! Some surprisingly decent hockey was played with many nursing hangovers and the rest having not picked up a stick for a few months (or a few years in the case of the old boys). With the tournament in full swing and the roasted pig and lamb arriving courtesy of The President the

rain started... after a week of scorching sun the typical British sun had been substituted for grey clouds and a brisk breeze. But the club members (new and old) have been hardened week in week out playing at the barren-wind-swept landscape that is The Fortress Harlington. The play went on and an interesting mix of spritely youngsters and clapped out old gits had reached the semis. The youngster team, The Ringers, were to play the all granny Gaol Pie!, while the mid-aged All Stars took on the great-grandfathers of the tournament Imperial Strangers... but first it was time for a spot of lunch! The hog and the lamb were devoured by the hungry players while Nedic led the way in hacking up the meat.

The Semi-Finals resumed and the youthful teams pulled through to the grand-final. By now most had drunk one or two pints and the club’s most recent member Mr. M. Phone was at hand to amplify any abuse the merry supporters had to give. Even though both teams were still trying to digest the copious amount of meat consumed

at lunch, the pace of the game was high. The Ringers went up by two goals but a dramatic substitution by the All Stars captain meant the score was all back square at the final whistle. Extra time and sudden death penalty flicks could not separate the teams, and in a dramatic announcement by The President that, it was decided that the winner of the tournament would be decided by a boat race, which was agreed upon by all present. Back up at the bar, the FA Cup Final finished and the selected members from each of the finalist teams got ready for a swift coxless five race... the competition was certainly not as close as the hockey with The Ringers seeming to sink even before they had started, and the All Stars cruised in for a 2 length victory!

The evening saw even more fun back at the Union Bar where generations of ICHC Legends discussed their times at the best club in College! The Club would like to thank Mark Roberton (ICHC President) for hosting such a great day and we will all be back next year for more beer, meat and hockey!



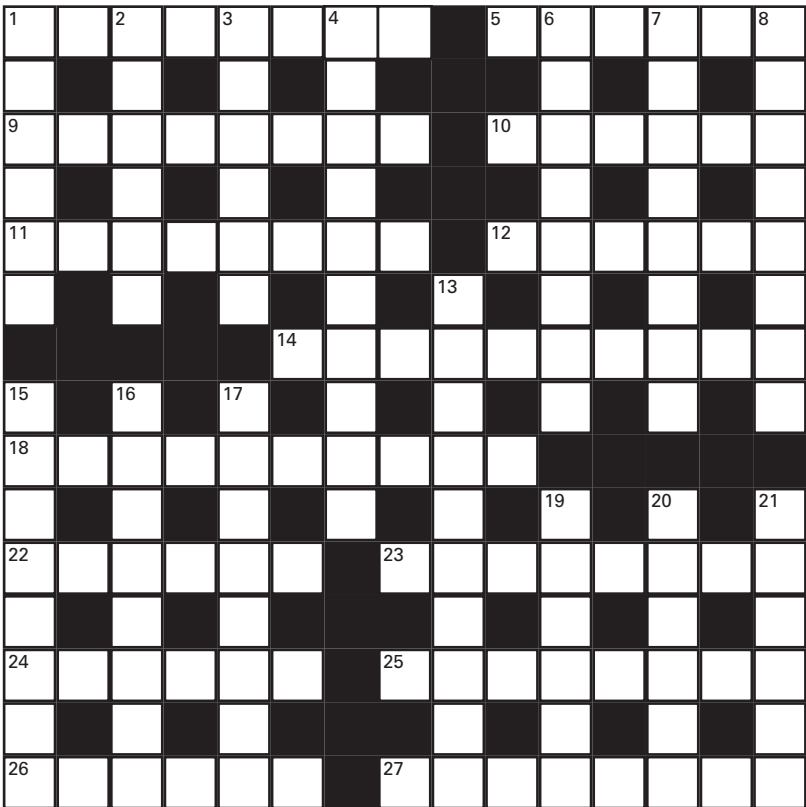
The hog and lamb roast ready to be devoured by the hungry mob



Hockey Club President, Mark Roberton

Crossword No. 1,404

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

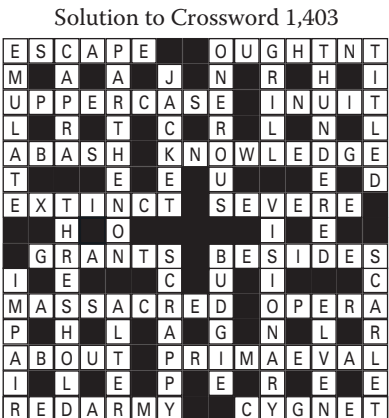


- ACROSS
- DOWN
- 1 Expression of disapproval at French possession (8)
- 5 Settle down with Swiss chocolate (6)
- 9 The building knew the sound in a moment (8)
- 10 Ok, I’m Chinese, but I can show you a Korean dish.
- 11 Secretly take your old English (8)
- 12 Children follow mother into an exclusive cult (6)
- 14 Waving talk during a one-night stand (10)
- 18 Independent reporter for a clean, freer arrangement (10)
- 22 ‘No Deal or Deal’ lays out a painful experience (6)
- 23 Empty task is left out (8)
- 24 Arugula can rise rapidly (6)
- 25 Projectiles find employment in solid rings (8)
- 26 German replacement writes the last letter after the end of her exam. (6)
- 27 Obligated to hold while having existed (8)
- 1 Quiet after head of family decides to starve (6)
- 2 Short jumps with weights (6)
- 3 Nibble on margarine, not butter: it makes you lightfooted.
- 4 Casual song contains note, after initial newcomers objected nastily. (10)
- 6 Demi-rates opened up to Arab nation (8)
- 7 Giant crockery shakes my world? (8)
- 8 Show us out? (4,4)
- 13 Organize reforming in a smelter (10).
- 15 Regular affair, certainly (2,6).
- 16 Decisions to drive around the outermost precincts (8)
- 17 Tidiest on a net scale, after rearrangement. (8)
- 19 Lunatic disguised as shy policeman (6)
- 20 Diseased heart removed, only to be insulted (6)
- 21 The United Nations is on as one. (6)



Guess who’s back: it’s **Di-Emma**, who managed to win last week’s crossword. Good to hear from you ladies, welcome back.

Enoch





Jovan Nedić
Sports Editor

Luckily, the sports pages have actually been filled for now, however I must admit it has come at a price. To those teams that I have held back articles, I'm sorry, but if I hadn't have done that, we would have had one issue with about six pages and then nothing for the following three weeks. I hope that those clubs to whom I did this understand and to those that still have matches going, send us in an article, let us know how your season is going!

With the end of the academic year fastly approaching, clubs and societies have been sorting out their handover for next year. Well here at Felix we are doing the same and we've managed to find two people to take over the sports section for next year, Mustapher Botchway and Jack Cornish. The success of the sports pages will only continue with the support of the clubs and societies, something which was evident this year and will hopefully continue into next year.

Finally, work is underway for the Felix Sport annual awards! Prizes will be available for the best of the best, but your help is needed. Do you know anyone who you think is a true sportsman, or a true socialite. Is there a club or team deserve special recognition off the field? Let us know at sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk and send in any pictures you may deem suitable for the occasion. More information will be available next week and the results will be announced in the last issue of term.



Beer, meat, hockey

Hockey club report on their President's Day, see page 31

Champions League final... Game of four halves?

Mustapher Botchway
Incoming Sports Editor

The first all English final certainly disappointed those who thought the game would be drab, defensive and cagey. The personalities of both teams were evident in the days leading up to the tie. Chelsea, much like their playing style, were regimented, serious and studious. However it was their nervousness which was predominant. Manchester United were playful, relaxed and comfortable, probably because they have previously been to the final.

The teams were evenly matched, with Chelsea having a slight advantage with their recent form. United had stumbled in run up to the climax of the Premier League and Chelsea had done their best to capitalise on this, to no avail.

Pleasantries from both managers were exchanged and the stage was set. Tacky Olympic-esque opening ceremony aside, the spectacle began.

Both teams started off nervously with early long ball strategies deployed to test the quality of the reported crap pitch. Luboš Michel stamped his au-

thority with frequent stoppages in play for feeble tackles. We were in Europe and not England of course.

The first half was dominated by United with Ferdinand and Vidic keeping out the dangerous Drogba and Ronaldo causing Chelsea stalwart, Essien problems. Scholes and Makelele clashed heads in the twentieth minute leaving both players with a booking and Scholes a broken nose. Ronaldo silenced his critics six minutes later by scoring in a big game. A slick one-two by Scholes lead Wes Brown to deliver a cross in which Ronaldo escaped Essien to head past Petr Cech. After a masterclass in goalkeeping from both sides producing fine reaction saves Chelsea drew level. Lampard caught on the end of a deflected Essien shot and slotted home past Van der Sar after he slipped.

This gave Chelsea confidence and they were by far the dominant team in the second half. Essien and Ballack foiled half chances after a good spell of possession by the Blues. United were almost silenced further with twelve minutes to go when Drogba superbly spun and unleashed a Kraken off the

post.

United hung on and forced the game into it's third half. After excellent but unconverted chances from Lampard and Evra, the game went into the fourth half unchanged. This was largely uneventful except for Drogba getting sent off for slapping a brick wall. A disappointing end to his rumoured last game for Chelsea.

A penalty shoot-out was to decide the winner for the fourth time in seven years. Champions League top scorer Ronaldo almost suffered "the worst day of his life" after he could not help aiming his shot at the scientifically enhanced fluorescent orange jersey of Cech. But that title went to John Terry after he slipped, sending his penalty off the bar. Hero Van der Sar saved Anelka's penalty and the rest as they say...

Credit has to go to the Union for installing the big screen in the quad, enabling over 1000 fans to enjoy this spectacle without the discomfort of having to share stools, sweat or snakebite with three other people.

Manchester United continue their quest for football domination in the FIFA Club World Cup in December.



Beit Quad was packed with over 1,000 fans watching the final