



FOUNDED IN 1949

Felix

NEWSPAPER OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

FREE!

No. 361

FRIDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 1974

FIJIANS DELIGHT IC



AS IS plain to see, an exuberant Fijian dance troupe recently visited I.C. apparently in connection with the International Festival of Youth Orchestras. They gave a dazzling display in front of Queen's Tower and then moved on to entertain Southside, still dancing and generally freaking out.



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COURTLINE OWE SUMMER ACCOMMODATION £25,000

Courtline, the holiday tour firm which recently went bankrupt, has Imperial College as one of its creditors to the extent of £25,000. It appears that the firm made several block bookings with the

Summer Accommodation Centre and whilst the normal practice of providing a bond as collateral was tacitly expected, somehow such a bond was not adequately chased up by the person respon-

sible.

The Courtline, company is still in the Receiver's hands. There are a multitude of other creditors who are patiently waiting to see if they will get part of their money back.

Editorial

FELIX goes offset-litho

IT HAS FINALLY HAPPENED.

At long last we are now able to print FELIX on our own offset-litho unit. We have already published the Union Diary (which incorporates the College registration card) and the new-format Bluebook which now has Societies information. The results from these two publications have been fairly impressive.

Establishing the printing-unit and making it operational has been by no means an easy task. In the past six weeks, various mechanics have made a total of about ten calls to repair/adjust faulty equipment — which explains why it has been impossible to produce a FELIX at an earlier date.

Now that the first FELIX of the year has been completed, it just has to be sighs of relief all round. And we really have to thank Kyrle Gillespie, our litho operator, for all the suggestions

and guidance which he has given in these early stages. One wonders what would have happened without him.

*

A journalist's nightmare is surely one where a particular story undergoes major developments just after it has been written and set in print. What should he do? Does he rip the story out and rewrite it or does he plead ignorance to being aware of further developments? One such instance has occurred in connection with the story of the construction work being carried out on Weeks Hall. At first, the issue was the reason why the concrete slabs were falling off the front of the building; then it was discovered that the concrete used in the beams (not the slab facings) of the hall were made from the same cement which caused a school's roof to collapse about a year ago. So clearly the major

issue now is :- What happens if further internal construction work is required in Weeks Hall? (*STOP PRESS: It is understood that Weeks will be evacuated for at least the first term and its future is indefinite.*)

*

It tends to be a feature of many 'first editorials' for the Editor to guffaw and ramble on about plans for future issues and generally to make promises which he can only be vaguely sure of being able to keep. I do not plan to do that sort of thing, so there. *Yaboo sucks and whoopee.*

*

Copy date for the Freshers' Day issue will be Friday, 20th September. Copy received after that date will be zapped to smithereens at the Editor's discretion.

PG's Tutoring & Demonstrating Rates

Tom Abraham

AS SOME of you may well know, we have been campaigning on this issue for over a year. After intermittent negotiations over a long period of time, the final outcome has been a college decision to the effect that:

'1. With effect from 1st October 1974, the rate of pay for part-time student demonstrators should be the inclusive sum of £2.00 per contact hour for any form of demonstrating and tutorial work. The new rate is inclusive of preparation time for which no additional payment or allowance should be made.

2. The new hourly rate is tied to the lower end of the Lecturers' Pay Scale from 1st October 1974, and will be increased by the same percentage addition as may be applied to that scale from time to time, subject to the constraints of Government legislation, UGC direction or advice from the CVCP'.

Both the fact that the rate for demonstrating is £2.00 per contact hour, and that this is tied to the lower end of the Lecturers' Pay Scale is welcome. However, since this is inclusive of preparation time, it means that effectively there is no increase in the tutoring rate. This point has been taken up with the College and we hope that some sort of solution will

be found. It would help our case if the PG's doing tutoring work could get in touch with me and tell me how much they are earning at present, because the rate appears to vary from department to department.

OBITUARY

LORD BLACKETT, Senior Research Fellow of the Department of Physics died, aged 76, in July.

His scientific career spanned some 55 years during which he became one of the world's most distinguished scientists. Among the many honours he gained were a Nobel prize, the Presidency of the Royal Society, an Order of Merit and a life peerage.

After a Naval cadetship at Dartmouth, Patrick Maynard Stuart Blackett served as an officer at the Battle of Jutland during the first World War. Leaving the Navy in 1919, he went to Cambridge to work under Rutherford. His work there, on the bombardment of nitrogen with alpha-particles, along with his experiments on cosmic rays (which led to the observation of the positron), ensured his international reputation.

Blackett left Cambridge for Birkbeck in 1933 where he worked for four years; it was at this time that he set up an experiment 100 feet below ground, in Holborn tube station, to measure the penetrative power of cosmic rays.

The outbreak of war found him in the Anti-Aircraft Command, where he made significant contributions to the defence of blitzed London, in terms of his research. Later on in the war he worked for the Admiralty again doing very valuable research for Bomber Command. It is said that in this period, his early naval training proved invaluable.

In 1948, he received the Nobel Prize for his work on the Wilson cloud chamber and on cosmic rays. He published, in the same year, a controversial book entitled 'The Military and Political consequences of Atomic Energy', in which he analysed the potential effects and use of the Atomic Bomb. Blackett criticised the thesis that atomic bombs would or should decide any East-West military conflict, and put forward the view that the world had to learn to live with the Bomb, before it could control or abolish it.

Blackett came to IC in 1953 and remained here. The 60's saw him as one of the architects of the Labour Party's policy on Science and Technology, and in 1964, he became a scientific adviser to the Ministry of Technology.

He became President of the Royal Society in 1965, holding the post until 1970, and in recognition of this and his other achievements, he was awarded a life peerage in 1969.

Lord Blackett leaves a widow, a son and a daughter.

FELIX

Michael J. L. Williams
Editor

No. 361

Friday, 13th September, 1974

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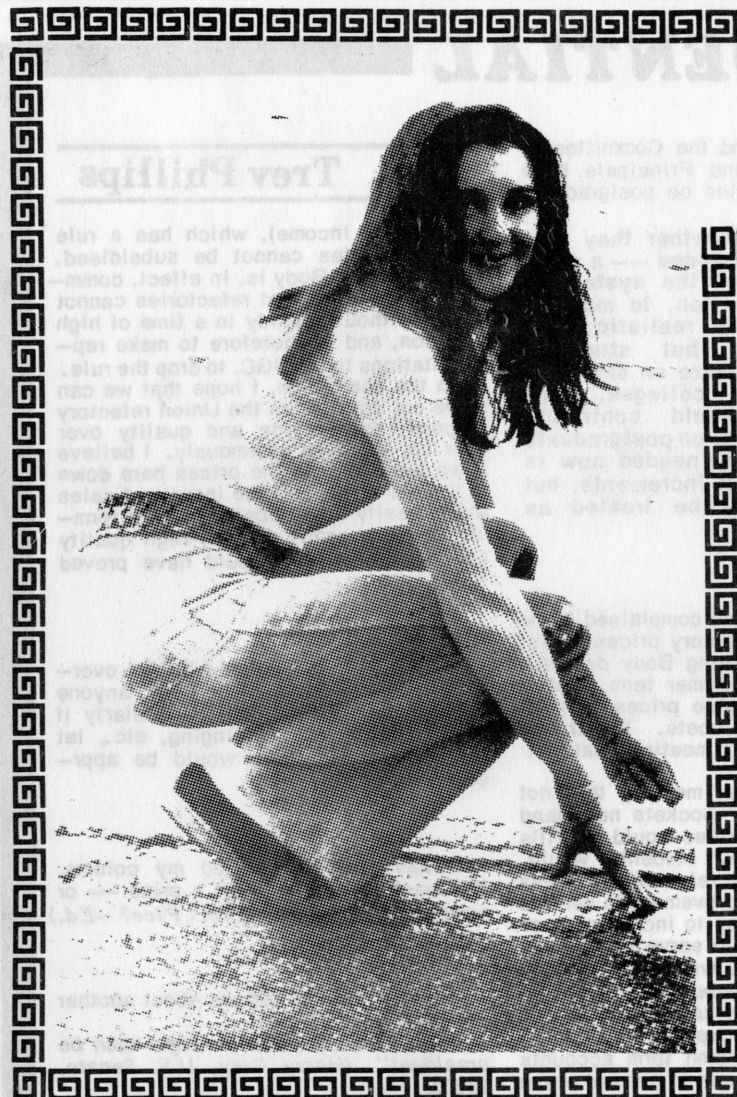
Many thanks to Kyrle, Catherine, Clive, Tom,
and Ramon.

Special thanks to Alice, Sue and Dol for
succeeding in getting me up in the morning.

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KATIE MCKINNON, a student from Institut Francais, is the President of I.F. Union next year. When asked to pose for FELIX, her hesitation was natural, but as you can see, her reluctance was short-lived. This picture was taken next to the Round Pond in Kensington

Gardens in the middle of August. Katie will be with us in future issues as a regular columnist and it is hoped also to maintain this 'bird-watchers' spot' as a weekly feature.

Photo: RAMON NEWMANN

THEFT RAISES INSURANCE QUESTION

ON FRIDAY, 5th July, a theft was committed in Fal-mouth Hall to the tune of £350.

A stereo, two cassette decks, 50 records and £15 cash were taken from Physics third year Ian Reid's room whilst he was with friends at the cinema.

The decision to go and see a film was taken shortly before they left at 7.30 p.m. with the door of the room locked. At 8.30 p.m., Paul Wadsworth, last year's Editor of FELIX, and owner of one of the cassette decks, knocked on the door of the room (though he did not try the handle) and got no reply. At 11.20 p.m., when Ian and his friends returned, the door was

and the theft, thought to be an "inside job", had been committed.

The police were called but with so many master and sub-master keys in existence, their job cannot be described as easy. Even Mr. Argent of College security who went to great lengths to interview many of Ian's acquaintances was unable to come up with anything concrete.

The position of the College's insurance policy now raises questions regarding its adequacy because it makes provision only for forceable entry and covers loss only up to £200. Fortunately, Ian and his girlfriend, who lost the 50 records and £15 cash, were covered by their respective parents' policies, but not so Paul Wadsworth who is apparently just pressing optimistically a claim on the College policy through the normal channels.

SUMMER

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE
≡ REGISTRATION?

ACCOMMODATION

WHEN A 1st year P.G. overseas student with a letter of acceptance to Imperial College asked to be put up for a few nights at the Summer Accommodation Centre, he expected to be treated as an I.C. student and to pay the student rate of 70p per night. Imagine his surprise when he was asked to pay the full tourist rate of £2.45 on the grounds that "he is not an I.C. student until he has registered in October".

Ahmad Vakilzadeh, the office manager, told FELIX that there was considerable discussion in the S.A.C. office as to whether the full rate or student rate should be charged and Mrs. Spencely-Collins, this year's Scheme Manager, put the matter to College Block but in the

meantime took the decision to charge the full rate of £2.45, which the student had no option but to pay.

Finally, clarification came from Mr. C. K. McDowall (Chairman of the Overseas Students Committee) and it is understood that "if overseas students produce their letter of acceptance... they will be treated as registered students". FELIX put it to Mrs. Spencely-Collins that a refund to the student might be appropriate. Her comment was "I don't know about that".

The Summer Accommodation Centre is essentially a hotel scheme which is run every summer. Hall rooms are let to tourists at standard hotel prices. It is believed that the major part of the profits from the scheme are used

to help run the halls during the term. The scheme employs students to act as cleaners in return for a free room and roughly £10 per week in wages.

Cleaners this year criticised the apparently new policy adopted by the scheme to the effect that many of the cleaners were "crammed into the triple rooms of Garden Hall" -- as one cleaner put it. It seems that in the past, cleaners have been able to have a room in one of the newer halls (e.g. Linstead or Southside).

Many blame the triple room situation on the fact that, at one stage, the scheme was hopelessly overbooked, but it was nevertheless eventually agreed to pay the cleaners a bonus equivalent to 4 hours overtime per week.



Ian Reid

"College policy should be more clearly explained to students regarding up to what sum and under what circumstances they are covered" is Ian Reid's view, but FELIX wishes to raise the question:—Recognising the apparent ease with which this theft was carried out, is the College insurance policy adequate? Granted that 'forceable entry' tends to eliminate the possibility of claims turning out to be pranks, but would not a police statement to the effect that they were satisfied that a burglary had been committed, be sufficient?

And only three weeks previous to the theft, the Student Halls Committee did state that they considered "£200 insurance cover too low".

PRESIDENTIAL

After five weeks as President of Imperial College Union, it is perhaps appropriate to take a look at two of the major issues which are, at present, confronting students, particularly postgraduate students. I do not propose, at present, to do more than outline these issues and indicate my attitude; this is neither the time nor the place to do more.

First and foremost — postgraduate grants. All SRC award holders will have received letters telling them that they were not getting their increase until January. Since then, pressure from the Department of Education and Science has caused a rapid reversal of the SRC's attitude, and you will now be receiving the increase in October's cheque. Strangely enough, the DES had to be told by the NUS and the Colleges (certainly this one) that the SRC was had "neglected" to let them know! Did I hear someone say "Bloody bureaucrats"?

The reaction that I have had from some PG's to the level of their grant (£960) was one of disappointment. Despite the welcome concession of the London weighting, the Government has given us a palliative, not a decent grant. Coupled with this, the DES, presumably at the Treasury's insistence, has taken a step backwards by the introduction of the spouse's contribution.

It is clear that no-one is prepared at this point to spend more on postgraduate education. Yet everyone is complaining that there are not enough students doing postgraduate work, and wondering why. I need hardly point out to a postgraduate the massive difference between his income and standard of living, and that of the man in industry — even if, as is often the case, the latter is doing precisely the same work as the former.

Both the DES and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals have set up working parties on postgraduate education.

It is doubtful whether they will recognise what is needed — a complete revamping of the system of postgraduate education, to make it more flexible, more realistic, and more worthwhile; but students, through direct pressure on and discussion with the colleges, and through NUS, should contribute directly to the debate on postgraduate education. What is needed now is not piecemeal grant increments, but that postgraduates be treated as they deserve.

Many students have complained to me about the rise in refectory prices on 1st August. The Governing Body decided, at the end of the summer term, that it was necessary to raise prices to meet inflation and rising costs. We argued very strongly at that meeting that not

very strongly at that meeting that not only could students' pockets not stand it, but that raising prices would do little good, because many students would simply stop using the refectories, unless there were a vast improvement in service and quality. The way to increase turnover, we said, was to serve better food in a more acceptable way — let's face it, you're hardly encouraged to eat in Southside by the service!

They did not accept this (though I believe that the autumn term accounts will prove us right), and increased prices by 17½% across the board. However, they did concur with our view that the real culprit was not Mr. Mooney, but the UGC (from which the college derives

Trev Phillips

most of its income), which has a rule that refectories cannot be subsidised. The Governing Body is, in effect, committed to the view that refectories cannot be run without subsidy in a time of high inflation, and is therefore to make representations to the UGC, to drop the rule.

In the short term, I hope that we can prove our point when the Union refectory reopens; the service and quality over here has improved enormously. I believe if we were to hold the prices here down to the old level, that the increased sales would easily cover costs, and the formula of "low profit margin, high quality and good service" would have proved itself.

I have had a request from an over-60's group in Fulham for help; anyone who can spare the time, particularly if you can entertain by singing, etc., let me know. Any help would be appreciated.

I have not yet named my column. The best suggestion wins a prize — or something. (*How about Preci Pice?* — Ed.)

Finally, two quotations about another presidency:—

"Sir, I would rather be right than be president". (Henry Clay, U.S. Senate, 1850).

"I am not a crook". (Richard Nixon, 1973).

No comment.



DO



BACK ISSUES

Especially Issues 279, 313, 334, 336, 339, 338, 342, 350, 357.

HON SEC

Jacqui Gerrard

There are only a few things to write about at the moment, as things are, as I'm sure you will realise, rather quiet over the summer.

Parking

Application forms for parking permits are now available from the Union Office. If you wish to park your car in college next session you must obtain a form and fill it in. When doing so please write down all the information asked for since it helps considerably in sorting out the 193 successful applicants from an expected total of over 600.

I must advise you however that you will be far better off not bringing a car into London at all; but if you insist on doing so, please remember that there will be strong competition for each permit.

These application forms are only for registered students, all other people should apply through their department.

Accommodation

Several people have come into the Union Office over the last couple of weeks asking for accommodation.

As I'm sure most of you realise, there are no places

left in halls, houses or Union flats for the coming session. There is an accommodation bureau run by the University of London with a branch at 8, Princes Gardens. Another bureau, run by USK, is situated at Queen Elizabeth College Union Office. You should also be able to get some help from Dave Salisbury, the Accommodation Officer who can be found somewhere around the Union building, keep an eye open for signs.

Elections

Maybe you have never given it much thought, but PG's are as eligible to stand for elections to a Union post as anyone else.

At the beginning of term there will be several elections: Mech Eng and Chemistry Departmental reps; Carnival Coordinator; a Floor rep; committee members for External Affairs, Welfare, Community

WANTED for
FRESHER'S FAIR '74
(Tuesday 1st Oct. 1pm-6pm)
One Urn contact
R. Kill - small reward (liquid)

Arkle

Ron Kill

Fresher's Fair

Arrangements for FAIR '74 are well underway. Most clubs and societies can expect to receive details of the arrangements in the next week or so. I say "most", because many clubs, especially cultural societies, still have not indicated that they wish to participate. In case you have not yet heard, FAIR '74 will be in the Union building from 2.30 to 6.00 p.m., Tuesday October 1st. Mr. Mooney has kindly agreed to close the Lower Refectory at 2.00 p.m. so that the

room can be used for the FAIR.

Duty Officers

These have been sadly lacking for the past few years. The recent increase in discipline offences and violence on Union premises has prompted me to re-introduce the system of duty officers. Unfortunately, not many students seem to care enough about their property to want to do the job. So (here is a plea from the heart) how would you like a go at being duty officer in either Southside or the Union one night next term? Drop me a line or ring Int. 3915 and tell me or leave a message.

Lastly, to those of you taking resits — Good Luck!

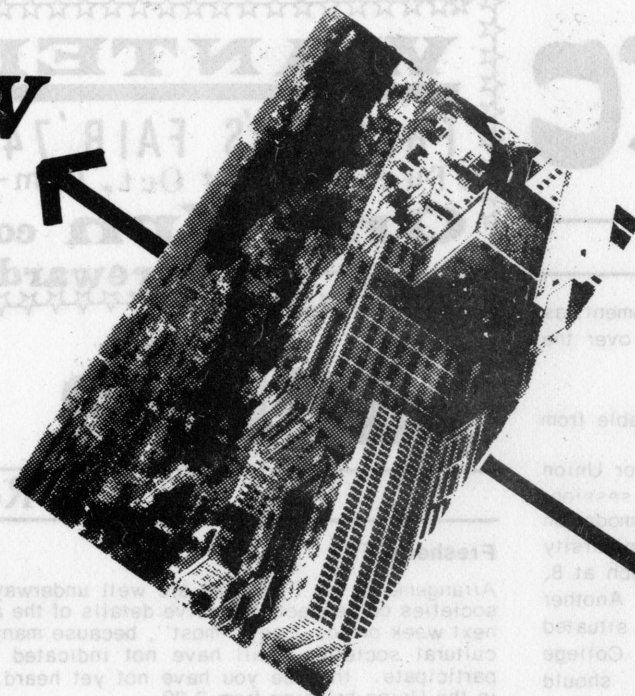
Action, Publications, Accommodation and one or two others. Nomination papers will be going up at the beginning of term and if you wish to find out more about these posts do not hesitate to ask me.

There are also some vacancies for PG departmental reps. for details of these see Tom Abraham on Int. 3103. Why not amaze every one and actually stand for a post.

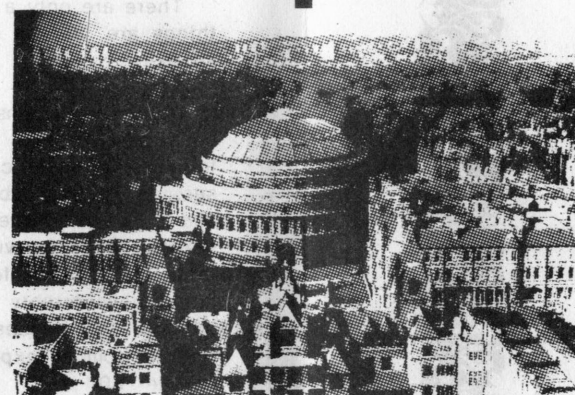
HAVE ANY
OF Felix ?
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25p paid for the first of each of these issues rec'd.

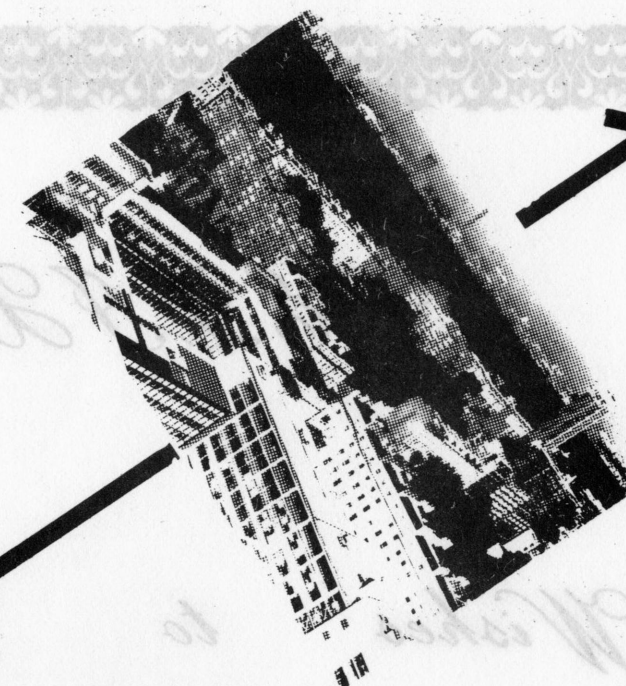
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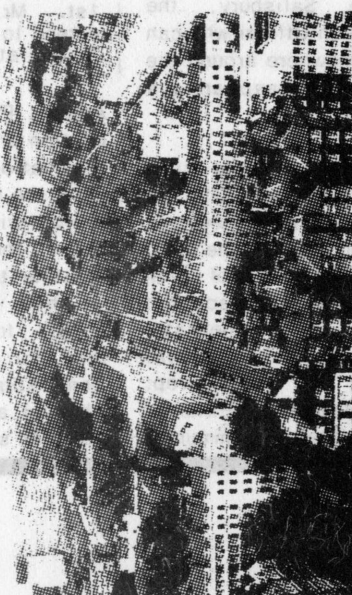
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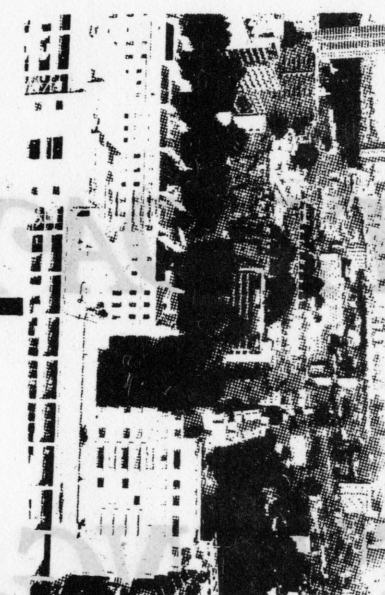


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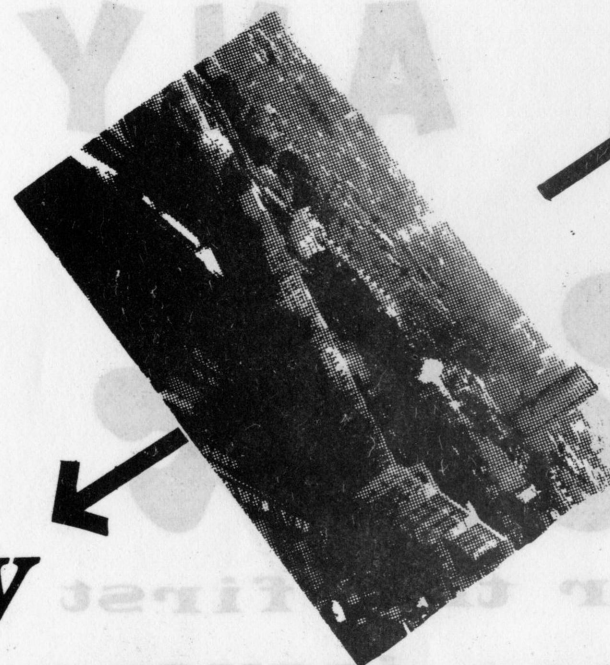


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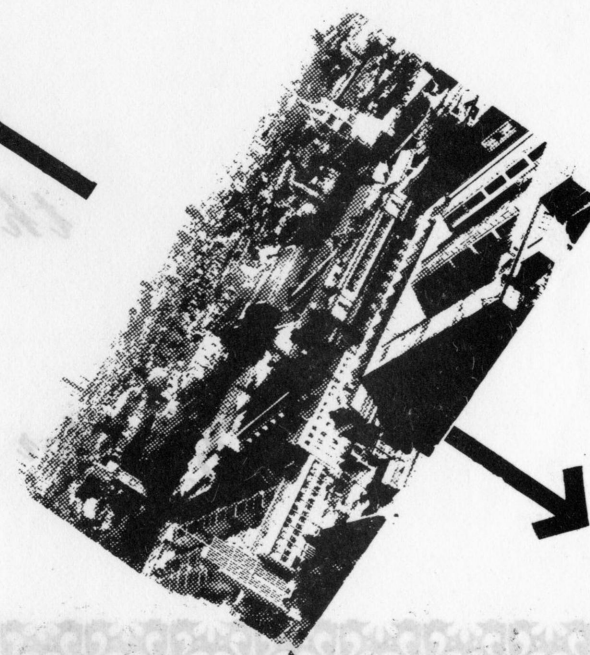
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FELIX

Wishes to Extend

**BIRTHDAY
GREETINGS**

to the

Rector

MONEY

IN RETURN FOR THE USE OF
YOUR BODY (mostly arms and legs)
Sunday 22nd Sept Help with
furniture moving in the
Union Building
£1 per hour
CONTACT RON KILL Int 3915

Riverboat Party Recipe

Richard Upton

To produce a delightful late summer entertainment proceed as follows:

Ingredients.

- (a) 100 people — (Imperial College Post Graduates and their guests).
- (b) 1 river — (the Thames is ideal).
- (c) 1 boat — (sturdy but unglamorous, e.g. the St. Mawes Castle).
- (d) 1 bar — (well stocked, not too small).
- (e) 1 discotheque — (assorted dancing music).
- (f) sausage rolls and crisps to taste.

Method.

Collect all ingredients together at Tower Pier early one evening (say 30th August 1974). Wait for boat crew to arrive then cast off vessel. Play music and cruise down ingredient (b) past Greenwich. Turn boat around (more adventurous chefs might like to

continue to Amsterdam or Haifa). Proceed back up river admiring lighted bridges, buildings etc. N.B. During the preparation various ingredients may become over agitated. This may be due to excess alcohol or loud music. College union Presidents and newspaper Editors (part of ingredient (a)) tend to absorb too much of contents of ingredient (d). There is nothing that can be done about this problem. Carry on enjoying yourself and hope for the best. If you are really lucky troublesome elements may be completely immersed in ingredient (b).

When the exercise has been successfully completed return (a) and (c) to starting position. Many who have partaken of this recipe maintain it could be sampled annually with few ill effects.

CHEAP TRANSPORT

Student owned minivan with driver will reliably transport you and/or your stuff, flat moving etc. anywhere in the U.K. mainland 24 hours a day.

In London and Heathrow — £1.75.
Elsewhere: Phone for estimate e.g. Leeds £10.

Phone after 6 p.m. 748-2691 and ask for Trevor. Leave your name and phone number if I am out.

PiG AFFAIRS

Tom Abraham

THIS HAPPENS to be the second PiG affairs corner although few of you will realise it. The first one appeared in the last issue of P.G. News, but unfortunately the top end was cut off (it was painful). This, by agreement, will appear as a regular column in FELIX — when the Editor decides to produce one (and when this PiG decides to write something — Ed.). I do not intend to use this column to sermonize, in spite of the fact that most PG's are apathetic, uncooperative etc. etc., but only to tell you of the good news.

It has so far been a dull, dreary, rainy summer. Most of us were probably hoping for a quiet peaceful summer, when the undergrads left. However that has not been the case, because somebody up there, in their infinite wisdom, decided to bring in American tourists to keep us company. We are told that the money that we get from them is used to keep down Hall fees. Well, I guess we have got no choice but to suffer the inconvenience.

The ICPGG, which stands for Imperial College Post-

graduate Group, is organising a few events. All that is required for these events to be successful is for postgraduates to participate in them. We also hope to show some films between now and the end of September and these will be advertised as widely as possible.

There have been few Union activities during the summer. Part of the reason lies in the apathy among many postgraduate students. However, the main reason is that many of the clubs and committees cease to function over the holidays. I am hoping that this state of affairs can be reversed, and hopefully in the coming session these things will be put right under the dynamic leadership of Yours truly.

ICPGG has a committee consisting of the PG Affairs Officer who acts as chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and one representative from each department. At the moment many departments are not represented on the committee. Will anybody (there are apparently 1640 PG's somewhere) interested in helping out in any way, please get in touch with me.

PEN FRIEND

We have received a letter from a Japanese girl called Emmie Suzuki who would like to correspond with a student here at IC. The text of the letter (reprinted below) has been slightly altered for the sake of grammar.

3-3-13, Asahigaoka
Ikeda, Osaka, 563
Japan.
August 28, 1974.

Dear Sirs,

I hope you will forgive me for writing to you so suddenly.

In fact, I want to correspond with one of your students aged 19 years — 21 years. This is because I'm very interested in your college and England, and want to know about them very much. I hope it will not bother you to ask such a thing, but please, would you mind giving this letter to a student who wants to have a pen friend in Japan? If I could correspond with your student, I would be very happy.

I'd like to introduce myself.

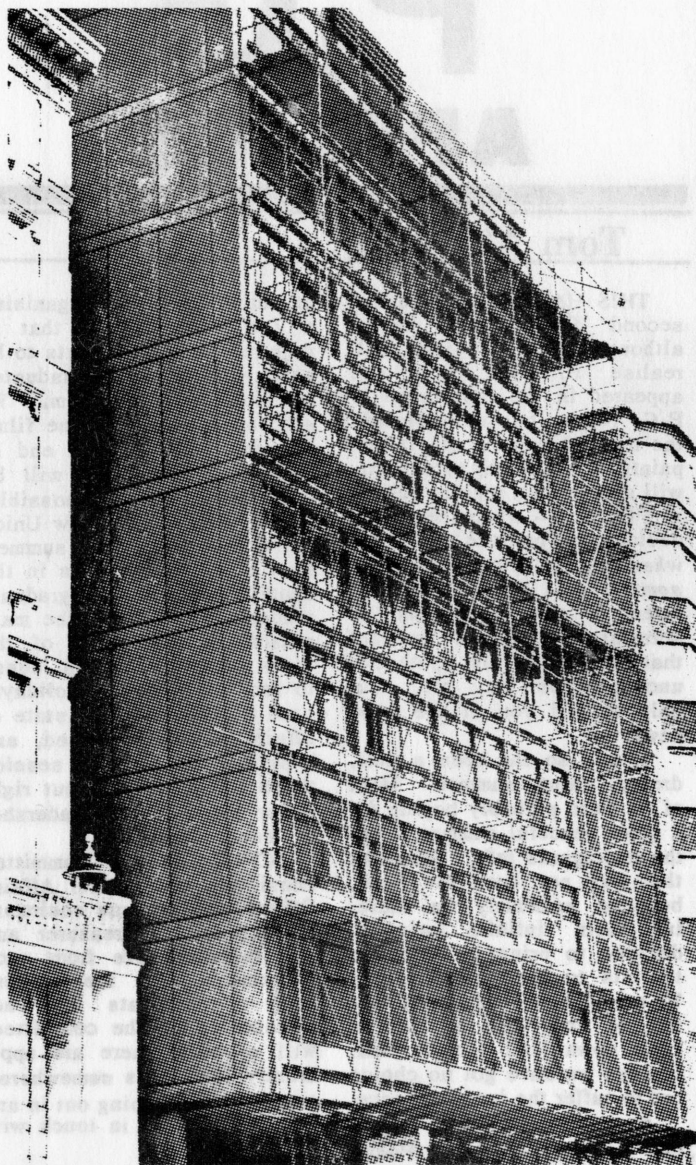
Name: Emmie Suzuki
Age: 21 (a college student)
Birthday: April 26, 1953
Birthplace: Tokyo
Hair: Black
Eyes: Dark brown
Height: 5' 1"
Weight: 94 lbs.
Hobbies: playing the piano and the guitar, listening to all kinds of music, collecting beautiful postcards and stamps, handicraft.
Purposes of corresponding: making great friendship through letters, knowing about your college, English students' life and England.

Well, I will close this letter, hoping to receive a letter from one of your students. I will appreciate your kindness with all my heart.

Yours sincerely,
Emmie Suzuki.

Anyone who would like to write to Emmie should either write direct or contact FELIX for further details.

WEEKS HALL:



The present situation looks gloomy

IS WEEKS HALL about to fall down? The answer is :- in the short term, probably not, but in the long term it is quite a possibility. Ever since it was built fifteen years ago, Weeks has been dogged by the fact that the concrete block facings just under each window were continually crumbling and creating a potential hazard for passers-by. Contractors work on the replacement of the blocks started at the beginning of the summer at a cost estimated to be in the region of £40,000.

There is speculation as to why the blocks are falling apart. Mr. P.W. Throsby, Warden of Weeks Hall, suggested that it might be 'natural decay

from moisture etc.', but several engineering PG's have suggested to FELIX that in fact the building may have been inadequately designed, the gist being that holes for the central heating pipes had to be drilled right through the concrete blocks and this tended to disturb the inherent tensile strength of the concrete.

As though this were

Existence of PG's claimed

FOR SEVERAL weeks now, there have been wild rumours about the existence of a new species of carnivorous mammals known as *Homo super sapiens postgraduate* (PG for short) writes our PiG correspondent, Tom Abraham. Unfortunately, it has been very difficult to verify these rumours, the main reason being that they are indistinguishable from the run of the mill *Homo sapiens* like you and me (*Speak for yourself - Ed*). However, intrepid researchers led by Prof. Abe Rahim are hard at work trying to isolate this species. Abe Rahim is 96. (*And he doesn't look a day older than 22 - Ed*).

During a recent interview, Prof. Rahim admitted that although progress had been made, there was still 'a long way to go'. A few specimens had been obtained and a thorough examination of their internal, external and mental characteristics was being carried out by a group known as the ICPGG. When he had approached one of the specimens it had emitted a loud screech which necessitated an instant withdrawal. The screech seemed to sound something like 'I want to go home to mummy' (*God these space fillers just get worse - Ed*).

Speaking about his efforts to isolate the species, Prof. Rahim said that late last year, some specimens betrayed themselves when they suddenly

realised that they were being given insufficient meat for a type of mental activity known as demonstrating. After a lot of whining and groaning, they did manage to persuade the authorities to virtually double their meat allowance. However, these specimens quickly disappeared once it appeared that they had won their objectives.

When I made a comment about the haggard, unkempt and under-fed look on the faces of the specimens, Prof. Rahim cited two reasons for this. One was the extraordinarily long queues in Southside due to a virtual takeover of College facilities by another species popularly known as sub-humanæ to belong to the genus *Homo sapiens*). The second reason was the extremely pitiful amount of money set aside for the preservation of this species. However, since the overthrow of Col. Heathco by Col. Wislon in the recent bloodless coup, he was more hopeful about an increase in the grant (*written before the government announcement - Ed*).

Finally, when confronted with the rumour that there were 1500 specimens in or around Imperial College, Prof. Rahim retorted 'Bull***t'. He categorically stated that only two specimens had so far been isolated and he had both of them.

Readers will be kept informed about any advances in this most exciting field of research.

not bad enough, misfortune struck Weeks Hall again when it was discovered that the concrete in the beams supporting the building was a special quick-drying, high alumina type and it was concrete of this nature which, apparently, was thought to be responsible for the roof of a school collapsing about a year ago.

As a result consultants, Messrs. Clarke, Nicholls and Marcel, were appointed at a cost of £8,000 to assess the hall by means of a physical test involving deflectometers provided by the Civil Engineering

Department here at IC.

It would appear that further internal reinforcement work on each room is a possibility which is not being ruled out. Meanwhile, it has just been learnt that Weeks Hall will be evacuated for at least the first term. Presumably the hall residents will be filtered into places in residence created by students who fail their exams and VIth formers who fail their A-levels.

It is tough luck on those who are top of the reapplicants reserve lists though.

REVIEWS PAGE

Philip Webber

Victoria's Heyday (J.B. Priestley, Penguin)

M.G.M. if they were capable of it might have called this book 1850-1860 in glorious technicolour. J.B. Priestley (the author) presents it as 'Victoria's Heyday' she being the Queen over this period of time.

This is a decade brought to life for you — a very interesting decade of British history too — teeming with, for want of a better word, 'characters', whose various idiosyncrasies and grandiose projects are portrayed with humour and intelligence, along side some very courageous sponsors who were not afraid to use their wealth.

People like Darwin, Rosetti, Tennyson and Palmerston thrived in these times and it is difficult to avoid thinking that nowadays some of their careers would be quite impossible. Taking for example Darwin who did badly at most things at University but was still able to know his professors personally and go fishing with them, finally ending up on a world cruise on the *Beagle* which later led to his 'Origin of Species'.

The author is not afraid to quote widely from other authors where they say things better than he could, or to use many sketches and colour plates to illustrate the era with his own personal interpretation of them. History can be

made very boring when presented in a school textbook manner, every other word a date and isolated from events as if watching a large scale puppet show; but this book suffers from none of these deficiencies. It gives one a very good idea of what made the people of the time tick, being a very well balanced account and personal interpretation of the social pressures and events which affected everyday life and society at large, viz. social barriers and class distinction; sexual repression and extremely wide-spread prostitution; the series of very costly and ill fought wars such as the Crimea, in which the shambles which was the British Army at the time was realised fully.

Worth a glance at least, with 296 pages (big ones) and many colour plates, and a good reference section. — Price £2.25.

The Way In (Charles Tomlinson, Oxford)

The Poetry Book Society Choice of the Year. Set in five parts, this is poetry inspired mostly by acute observation and occasionally by inner philosophical thoughts or memories.

The five parts:—

MANSCAPES

Observations upon Man's artificial

constructions and rules, inside the worlds within a world created by him, although even the sky is like concrete sometimes. The inhabitants are Men, The Young, Old, Rich, Poor, Illiterate, the Child and himself the artist.

UNDER THE MOONS REIGN

Upon subjective beauty of a world without men populated by dusky twilights, rosy dawns and animals. The sadness in 'After a Death' and the reality in 'A Dream' is moving.

ELEMENTS

Fragmentary insights of objective reality of 'things' the meaning of one word taken apart in 'Hyphens' love — liness / love — lines, the observation of a falling leaf.

HEBRIDEAN PIECES

By the sea or on the sea, always aware of its destructive power and the conflict of sea and rock or Man's works. Also a tragic poem 'Of Lady Grange'.

WORDS AND MUSIC

Amusing when 'Beethoven Attends the C Minor Seminar', courtesy of an adjustment to the Celestial Computer and confounds Ludmilla Quatsch, Queen of the sleeve note but philosophic upon 'Gesand Ist Dasein?', 'Song is Being?' and others.

All said and done, these poems grow on you and make you laugh, sad, thoughtful, which is what poetry is meant to do. I suggest you read them.

Clive Dewey

The Love-girl and the Innocent (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Penguin).

The Love-girl and the Innocent, first published in English in 1969, is set in Autumn 1945, when the principle character, 'The Innocent', Rodion Nemov, has only recently been an officer in the Russian front line, fighting the Germans — the same course that Solzhenitsyn followed when he was first arrested. How far the similarity carries is anybody's guess, but I shouldn't think it stops there.

The book is supposed to be about Nemov's relationship with a pretty, unfortunate, yet wise girl Lyuba, but only a fifth of the book is really devoted to their time spent together. This is only a 140 — page book, so I wonder whether the title is little more than an excuse to write about the cruel Soviet system.

Not that that is ideal in itself. After all, who could rejoice in a system where Lyuba gets an eight — year sentence for anti — Soviet agitation whilst Granya gets only a ten — year sentence for murdering her husband. Professional criminals are regarded by the State as 'Social Allies' and get lenient sentences (about five years) whilst political prisoners are regarded as 'Social Enemies'.

Back to the story. Nemov has barely been at the camp before he is

appointed production chief. When the Camp Commandant is called to head office Nemov is left in charge. Imagine that, a new prisoner left in charge of the whole prison camp. It does seem as though Solzhenitsyn is trying to send the whole camp up, and he at first succeeds. In the Commandant's absence Nemov increases productivity at the camp whilst getting acquainted with the ways and practices of the prisoners. In the foundry prisoners get extra rations and pay by making irons and treadle sewing machines for their manager Brylov to sell in the nearby town. Even the Commandant is corruptible and accepts vodka and other goods smuggled into the camp.

For everyone, from the lowest prisoner to the Commandant is struggling to survive. The Commandant, pressured by his bosses for increased productivity, is only too eager to use a boastful engineer, Khomich, to drastically improve production. After some persuasive talking by two prisoners who have taken a dislike to Nemov, he sacks Nemov and appoints Khomich in his place. Whilst working in the foundry Nemov realises that in the survival struggle, all means are fair and you can trust no-one. Camp conditions are bad but they are even worse if you are on 'general duties'. Although he later admits to Lyuba (about being on general duties) 'It's horrible, it's as good as a death sentence. (Pause) Only being a boss is worse than death.....'

His relationship with Lyuba starts

after his dismissal as production chief. Lyuba is a camp love-girl who is prepared to sell herself for privileges and extra rations. She has seen so much of camp life to know that this is the only way to survive. She starts off wary of his love and treats him as any other camp-lover. Nemov has fallen passionately in love with Lyuba, but she whilst feeling deeply for Nemov, appreciates the realities of camp life, which he does not, and realises that their affair cannot go much further. The camp doctor fancies her and even though she rejects him, she knows that she will either have to love both Nemov and the doctor or else Nemov or herself will get transported to another camp. Nemov is uncompromising but in a desperate bid, Lyuba, realising the consequences of his action, tells the doctor that she will be his love-girl. Thus Lyuba and Nemov are to be kept together in the same camp. Their happiness is short lived as Nemov is nearly killed in an accident at the foundry. The book ends with a group of political prisoners being transferred to a much harder camp on the Crimean River.

At 35p the book represents good value to anyone who has not encountered Solzhenitsyn's writing before. To those who have read some of his other works this represents a rather timid companion. As a play it does not show enough of the Nemov-Lyuba relationship and is more concerned with showing conditions in the camp — and in this it presents a very true picture.

Prof Slams UG Standards

PROFESSOR J.R.A. Pearson, of the Department of Chemical Engineering has publicly criticised undergraduate standards.

In a letter to New Scientist, Prof. Pearson says that 'Few of them have much grasp of the subjects they have studied' and on the subject of professional competence, 'in many cases they will clearly never become so'.

He goes on to blame the trouble chiefly on the rapid expansion in numbers which universities have undergone in the past fifteen years and expresses his dissatisfaction with the government policy which governs such expansion.

Not to be outdone by this, Mr. Steve Webb, a research assistant in the Cosmic Ray Group in the Department of Physics, put pen to paper in defence of undergraduates. He stated the point that criticism should be more appropriately leveled at falling lecturer standards and the deterioration of staff/student contact. He also makes a valid distinction between education and training — 'It has never been the claim of departments teaching pure science and mathematics that they are preparing people for a job'.

Both letters are reprinted below.

undergraduate course is still an adequate period of formal training for our leading technologists. It is not and it is time that they encouraged excellence and continued study among the more ambitious and gifted students. Extravagant plans for tertiary education have already exceeded what the national budget will stand. Cuts in the real value of university grants have already been made. It is now no longer possible to be enthusiastically in favour of a general increase in student numbers without further endangering the quality of our output.

This is not to put the blame on a desire to teach science and engineering as widely as possible, nor on the students themselves. It is an indictment of those who should be insisting on righting the situation but who instead pretend that all is well.

J. R. A. Pearson

Imperial College
London

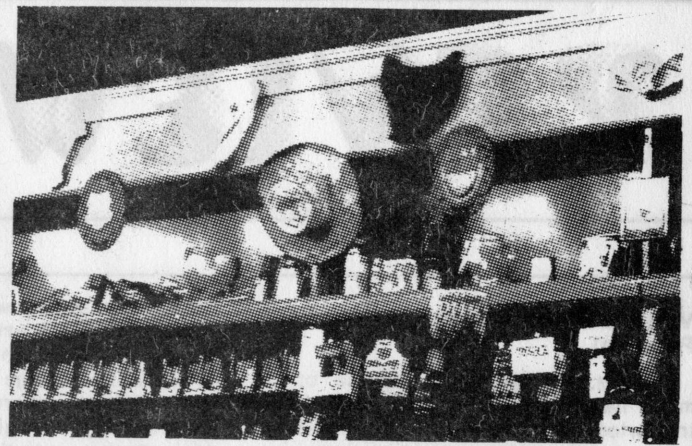
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Sir,—In suggesting that falling standards in graduate achievement are responsible for falling salaries in graduate employment, J. Pearson (Letters, 4 July, p 46) appears to be putting the cart before the horse. He suggests that science graduates do not understand the fundamentals of their subject and have little idea of how to apply them. If this is so it is not for the reason implied. The quality of students admitted has not deteriorated as departments have expanded. What has deteriorated is the personal contact which once existed between staff and students and an atmosphere congenial for study. It is an insult to reduce a student to a mere statistic. The most that too many students, having difficulty with their work, can expect is a few somewhat grudgingly spared minutes with their tutor, and lecture halls are too crowded to permit sensible questioning at that time. Meanwhile courses become tougher and lectures move more rapidly to advanced work, often wrongly assuming that the fundamentals will be covered elsewhere. While it is the most they can do to take down notes during ever faster delivered lectures and questions are discouraged, it is hardly surprising that

Sir,—Your leader on jobs for women graduates (Comment, 27 June, p 743) prompts me to say that it is high time somebody told the truth about the abilities and achievements of most graduates in science and engineering on leaving university in Britain. Few of them have much grasp of the subjects they have studied. They do not understand the fundamentals and they have little idea of how to apply them. The gap between what is hoped for in their examination or thesis performance and what is achieved is regularly depressing. It is frivolous to suppose that these graduates are professionally competent, and in many cases they will clearly never become so. What is surprising is not that a small proportion are later employed as technicians but rather that so many of them are employed professionally at all. Small wonder that their salaries have fallen in relative terms.

About 15 years ago some voices were raised against rapid and massive expansion of the university system and it was argued that there was not a sufficient untapped reserve of talent to maintain university standards as they had been traditionally understood. We now know that these forebodings were justified.

Falling average standards may have no serious repercussions in some subjects. They are, however, disastrous in professional disciplines, particularly in science and technology. Yet we pretend that they have not fallen. The government assumes that a nationally uniform three-year



KNICKERS!

WHEN A group calling itself the Communist University of London (C.U.L.) decided to hold a week-long conference (7th – 14th July), in the IC Union building, one event which could not have been anticipated was their decision to pass a motion condemning the presence of the knickers in the Union Bar.

'Sex-ists!' came the communist accusation, 'take your knickers down!'. But things got beyond a joke when, on the Friday evening, an intrepid communist acquired a long pole in order to remove these feminine garments.

Big Andy Clapham easily wrested the pole from the assailant but clearly by this time things had got beyond a joke. Nearer to closing time, another incident marred the C.U.L.'s hitherto spotless record when one of the barmen, Alan

Larson, was apparently threatened with a beer glass.

On re-opening the following evening, the members of the C.U.L. re-generated the previous night's provocation and Brendan Clemments, another barman, closed down the bar and allowed only registration card-carrying IC students onto the premises.

As a result of these events, Mr. J.A. Lane, the C.U.L. organiser and former ICU President, had £20 of his deposit forfeited.

students have little time left over to think what it all means. Ability to remember vast tracts of such lectures for examination being considered all important does not exactly help, either.

As to the criticism that graduates have little idea how to apply their studies, Pearson seems to have confused education with training. It has never been the claim of departments teaching pure science and mathematics that they are preparing people for a job. Perhaps the lack of job-satisfaction presently being experienced by the products of such departments is evidence that the nature of courses should change, particularly as opportunities to remain 'inside' university are decreasing rapidly. Progress and come about only when lecturers are prepared to dirty their hands a little and see what is really required of new graduates.

The message comes back loud and clear that in their present form they are not required. Perhaps in the very near future we should be seriously drawing a clear distinction between activities inside a university which are geared to future employment and those for the edification of the soul. If both were afforded equal value there might be some chance of educating a less frustrated graduate who can find his place in society.

Steve Webb

Department of Physics
Imperial College
London

These letters first appeared in New Scientist, London, the weekly review of science and technology.