



Issue No. 805
Friday 3rd June 1988

FELIX

FREE!

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Catering Assistant quits

IC Union Catering Assistant Mark Anderson resigned from his post on Tuesday, following the dismissal of Catering Manager Norman Jardine last week. Mr Anderson had been reinstated on 25th May when the investigation into alleged Snack Bar mismanagement had been concluded.



Former ICU Catering Assistant Mark Anderson (big arrow) and sacked ICU Catering Manager Norman Jardine (small arrow) whilst on holiday in Brazil.

Mr Anderson's resignation follows weeks of speculation over his future within the Union's trading outlets. He had been offered an open-ended contract by IC Union at the beginning of last week when he was cleared of allegations of 'gross mismanagement'.

The new Union Manager David Peacock commented that he was sad that Mr Anderson had resigned. He said that he felt that the strain had hit Mark harder as he was relatively young and that it would have made it difficult for anybody to continue in that situation.

'Mark hasn't left us in the lurch—he was perfectly entitled to leave. We can't whinge', Mr Peacock added.

Mr Anderson told FELIX yesterday that he had always enjoyed working in the Snack Bar but said: 'I feel it would be inappropriate for me to continue to be employed by people who have demonstrated their mistrust in my integrity.'

He remarked that he was sad to have to resign, and also that some people 'think themselves fit to judge him (Mr Jardine) with regard to matters of which they are completely ignorant.'

Mr Anderson described his resignation as an indication of where his loyalties lie.

Mr Peacock told FELIX that a major refurbishment operation of the Union Snack Bar will be carried out over the Summer, ready for its re-opening at the beginning of next term.

The Union President Sydney Harbour-Bridge (name changed in aid of Comic Relief) will be issuing a statement about the Snack Bar sometime this week. We hope to publish it in full in next week's issue of FELIX.

FELIX in defamation threat

The FELIX Editor, Judith Hackney, has received a letter from the solicitors of one of the people mentioned in last week's Blackmail column. The letter stated that the person felt that the identity of 'Mr Filofax' was 'patently obvious' to readers of the column, as 'he is the only College notable who both carries

a filofax and has a girl-friend with the name as the same as that published.' The letter asked for an 'unqualified retraction and apology' in this week's issue of FELIX. Otherwise, it warned, a Writ for Defamation would be issued against the magazine and the author of the column.



editorial

This week's FELIX may seem unusually big for this time of year but it's only because we've cheated and inserted the last issue of the *Phoenix* into the middle. Due to a UGM cock up, no papers went up for the election of next year's *Phoenix* Editor. Liz, the present Editor, is very keen to meet anyone who is remotely interested in working on the *Phoenix* next year. She can be contacted via the Life Science pigeonholes.

Wot no Welfare?

I realised the other night that I needed to talk to somebody about my accommodation situation next year. In the good old days I would have gone straight to the College Welfare Adviser, who would cheerily provided me with answers to all my questions. However, College no longer has a Welfare Adviser. I rang up the Student Accommodation Office to ask if anybody there could help me with my problems. They suggested Don Adlington, the Student Councillor—but it wasn't that sort of problem. I didn't want to discuss my problem with any old person in the Accommodation Office because they don't have the time to listen to my minor queries when they're running around trying to house two thousand students. The Union also has no Welfare Officer. Welfare Officers have a tendency to get disgruntled

with the lack of support they receive from College and the Union and decide to resign.

A long, long, long time ago the Welfare Adviser used to work from the Union Building but some bright spark moved him into Prince's Gardens and created 'Student Services'.

For four years we had the situation where Student Services (now called the Student Accommodation Office) was the effective landlord for 1800 students and at the same time was the place you had to go to if you had any queries or problems with your landlord. At least there was someone to talk to then! Now there is a void which still has to be filled, despite being highlighted in FELIX three weeks ago.

If we are going to make the Union more 'user friendly' perhaps it's time to take back the Welfare Adviser for ourselves and start concentrating on really helping the students of Imperial.

The Last Issue

We are currently preparing the last edition of FELIX, which is due to be published on Wednesday 22nd June. If you want to submit letters for this edition, the deadline is still Tuesday lunchtime the week before (14th June). Now's the time to let me know if you are writing a feature or an

opinion so I can reserve you some space.

I'm very keen to receive more opinion articles. H G Wells is quoted on page three this week. That was his opinion of Imperial College in 1934 so what's yours in 1988?

Bound Editions

Last year's bound editions are going to be picked up from the book binders today. If you've paid your deposit, you can collect your edition anytime from about 4pm onwards.

This year's bound editions will be sent off at the end of July. I estimate that they will cost in the region of £30 to bind. It sounds a great deal of money, but a bound edition of FELIX makes excellent reading when you're old and grey and telling the grandchildren about the good old days at Imperial.

Summer T-Shirts

We've ordered some more t-shirts with a wacky new summer design on to coincide with the last edition of FELIX. So don't leave College before Wednesday 22nd June!

Staff Photo

This will be taken on the steps leading up to the Royal Albert Hall at 1.15pm

on Friday 10th June. Anybody who has contributed in any way to FELIX this year is welcome to turn up. Be there or be left out!

Summer Printing

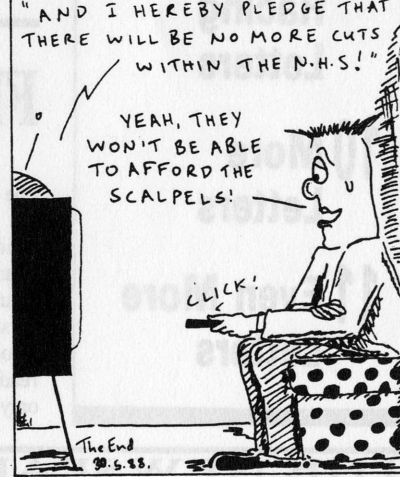
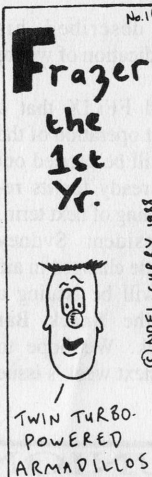
If you are a Club Publicity Officer next year and you want any Fresher publicity printed during September, contact next year's FELIX Editor Bill Goodwin via his pigeonhole in the FELIX Office.

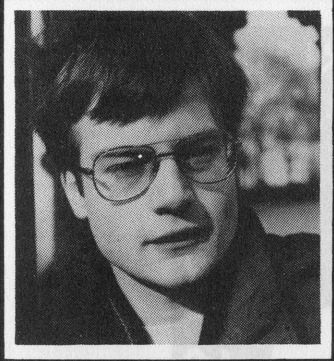
CVs

We can still typeset your CV in the FELIX Office for a small sum. See me, preferably on Mondays or Fridays in the FELIX Office if you want to use this service.

Good luck with your exams!
[Signature]
XXX

Editor-in-chief.....	Judith Hackney
Business Manager.....	Chris Martin
Reviews Editors.....	Andrew Clarke and Sumit Guha
Clubs Editor.....	Andrew Waller
Sports Editors.....	Dominic Strowbridge and 'Hector' Sullivan
Science Editor.....	Steve Black
Features Editor.....	Kamala Sen
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Printing.....	Dean Vaughan
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OPINION

Chris Martin is the Publications Board Chairman and FELIX Business Manager. He has been heavily involved in the running of Imperial College Union for several years whilst persuing a Computing PhD. He received a Union General Award last year.

What is consensus? Quite simply, when everyone involved agrees with a decision, that's consensus. Does it ever happen? It does—it's the way we make decisions every day, with our friends, our colleagues and our families. We all get together and decide what we are going to do...if we're going for a meal, and one of us doesn't care for Chinese cooking, we all won't go to a Chinese restaurant. There's no question of votes for, votes against and 'the ayes have it'; no 'procedural motions', no speeches, and no time limit. We keep talking until we decide where we all want to go.

The problem with a vote is that there are winners and losers. In every case, one side comes out on top. The

whole way, for example, that motions are debated encourages this 'adversarial' idea. You do battle with your opponent, and one of you is the victor. The loser always feels, in some sense, beaten; they aren't encouraged to take part in whatever decision has been taken. They sometimes may even work directly against the decision.

What effect does this behaviour have? We go along to a committee for the first time, and see two groups of people bashing each other with impassioned speeches and vote upon vote. There's shouting and yelling—have you ever been to a UGM?—and confusion upon confusion of standing orders and procedural motions. Wouldn't it be nice to have a single

UGM where we stick exactly to the agenda, with no procedural motions at all? There are rules at these meetings intended to allow the meeting to proceed in an orderly fashion. Yet time and again we see the professional hacks, who know the rule book back to front, cause the debate to disappear behind walls of procedure. They forget, or perhaps it isn't in their interests to realise, that the debate should come *before* the procedure.

Imagine the advantages if every decision we took had the support of everybody in the Union. No one would be alienated or feel left out, and they might even be encouraged to join in themselves.

It's important to realise that this isn't as difficult as it sounds. Of course, if you're familiar with the procedure, it's relatively easy to push a vote through a committee or two. But what have you gained? If your idea is really going to catch hold, you have to persuade not just the people that might agree with you anyway, but also, and perhaps more importantly, those that don't. Forcing a vote only alienates these people further. Persuading them to agree with you gets them on your side.

If you have an idea, then, the question shouldn't be 'what committee can I force this through', but 'how can I best get people in support of this'. There is nothing worse than turning up to a meeting with a bunch of papers, talking for half an hour, and then passing the whole lot on the vote. What you should do is talk to the people involved before you start writing the first word: they might have some better ideas than (even!) you. You get them involved in drafting a proposal; you consult all those concerned. Once you reach the stage of presenting your proposal to a meeting, ideally you have a consensus. The meeting then concentrates on how it can best implement the ideas.

Why am I talking of consensus and division? Well, in our own Union, the President is a person with strong views and a will to get things done:

to him, it appears, the ends justify the means. If he has to force votes to get things through, he will. I've locked swords with him on more than a few occasions myself. I agree with a lot of what he has done. I disagree with just about every way he has gone about it.

The first time we battled was over the censorship of the Freshers' Handbook. I proposed a motion which clearly was contentious; we had a debate and, more by luck than judgement, the motion was referred back to the next meeting. Before the next meeting, we got together, we discovered on what we agreed and on what we differed; I then drew up another motion on which we both agreed. This was passed at the next meeting without further ado. That motion is now Union policy and everyone is happy with it. A far better outcome than if the original motion had been voted for, or against.

This has been the exception rather than the norm: since then we have seen many things, most notably the new Union job descriptions, pushed through with only cursory debate and consultation. Ian (or Sydney, or whatever) has had a great deal on his agenda and it was inevitable that decisions which, with time, could be unanimous, have instead been divisive.

Again, when it comes to FELIX, when the Union disagrees it doesn't try (as once it would have) to get everyone together and sort the problem out. Instead we have division and another newspaper.

I am sure the President would say that the votes that have been taken are necessary, that there was no other way and whatever division they caused is unfortunate but unavoidable. He may be right—it all depends on where you draw the line between getting things done and keeping the Union together. I hope that he isn't right, and that the 'new breed of student activist' he claims to be, isn't the same species as tomorrow's City whizz kid, raking in the £££s without regard to the rest of society.

Then as Now?

In 1934 H G Wells wrote of Imperial College:

It is today a huge fungoid assemblage of buildings and schools without a visible centre, guiding purpose or directive brain. It has become a constituent of the still vaster, still more conspicuously acephalic monster, the University of London.

The thumbsy wisdom of the practical man, with a conception of life based on immediate needs, unanalysed motives and headlong assumptions, and with an innate fear of free and searching thought, is still manifest at a hundred points in the structure and working of this great aggregation.

The struggle to blend technical equipment with a carefully cherished illiteracy, an intact oafishness about fundamental things, has been well sustained. South Kensington will still tell you proudly, 'We are not literary,' and explain almost anxiously that the last thing it wants to impart is a liberal education.

The ideal output of the Imperial College remains a swarm of mechanical, electrical and chemimechanical, electrical and chemical business smarties, guaranteed to have no capacity for social leadership, constructive combination or original thought.

The Imperial College was and is still in fact not a college but a sprawl of laboratories and classrooms. Whatever ideas of purpose wrestled together in its beginnings are now forgotten.

It has no firm idea of what it is and what it is supposed to do. That is to say, it has no philosophy. It has no philosophical organisation, no social idea, no rationised goal, to hold it together.

I had come up to South Kensington persuaded that I should learn everything. I found myself in South Kensington lost and dismayed at the multitudinous inconsecutiveness of everything.

Hon Sex

still be outstanding by the end of my term of office.

Parking Charges

There is a meeting of the Parking and Traffic Committee next Tuesday at which this issue will be discussed. I should be able to report back after that meeting.

Residence Insurance

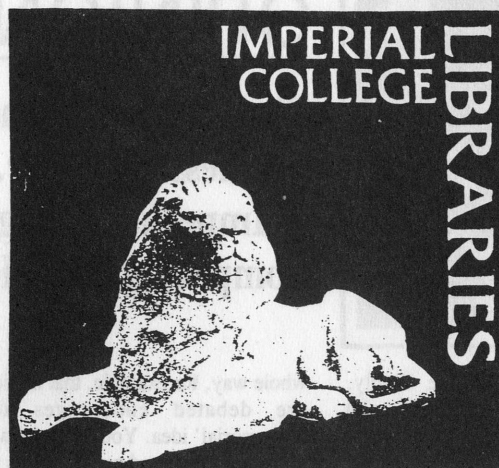
In a desperate last bid to clear the few outstanding claims, I have sent out several notes to departments asking for further information. If you have a claim outstanding, please look in your pigeonholes. On many claims, which seem to be for no discernable reasons, I have written a letter to the borders asking them to chase up the insurers. Unfortunately the insurers are becoming very pernickity about claims and delays are starting to arise, but when they have all the information needed, it should be just a matter of time.

One request I would like to make of claimants is that they leave me a contact address and telephone number for the summer vacation. Then if anything does come through, I can get to them as soon as possible. I hope that only the more recent claims will

Spanner

Calling all Guilds Officers, Dep Reps, Clubs/Societies Chairs/Captains, and any other hacks. When your exams have finished and you're looking forward to going home/on holiday/to your summer job, please give a thought to next year's Freshers, and their first impression of Guilds: the Spanner Handbook. Articles will be welcome on any aspects of Guilds; academic, sporting or social. I will be available in the Guilds Office most days from June 9th to answer any questions or you can leave a note in the pigeonholes just inside the door.

Adrian Bourne, Spanner Editor '88

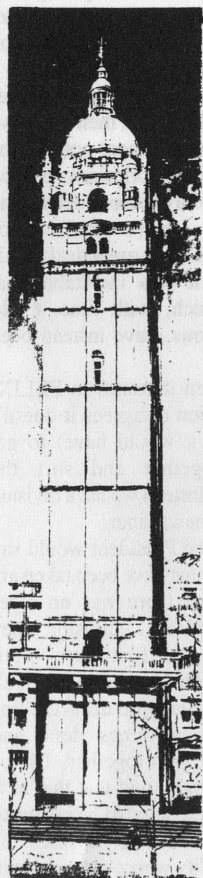


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library services.*



Summer Vacation Employment Queens Tower Guides

The Queens Tower will be open to the public again this Summer not only to ensure that the College stays firmly on the map but hopefully to produce a small additional income for the College. Visitors are to be conducted around the tower in groups of 10 or so by guides who will provide some background information on the features and historical associations. A total of 6 guides will be recruited with 2 of these carrying out gardening duties except at peak times when the number of visitors warrants extra control. Guides will keep the Tower tidy and clean and man the ticket kiosk/shop. Work will involve making a number of journeys up and down the iron and stone spiral stair cases each day. The guides will be divided into 2 groups each group consisting of 2 guides and 1 guide/gardener and working alternate days over a 7 day week. The Tower will be open from 10am to 6pm between July 1 and Sept 30 1988. Guides will receive pay at the rate of £95 per week and performance bonuses are to be paid at the end of the opening period if the income targets are met. **If you would like to take part in the scheme as a guide or guide/gardener please contact Mr R L Chandler, Room 531, Sherfield Building int 3409**

VACANCIES FOR WARDENS

A number of wardenships will fall vacant from September 1988.

Wardens receive rent-free accommodation in return for pastoral and disciplinary duties within the residence.

These positions are open to all members of the College and St Mary's Hospital Medical School. They include the Wardenships of Selkirk/Tizard Hall and Evelyn Gardens House, and Wilson House at St Mary's Hospital Medical School.

For further details and an application form, please contact:

Rob Letham, Senior Personnel Officer
Room 502 Sherfield Building
Extension 3302

Closing date extended to: Friday 17 June

KENSINGTON GORE SW7

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

● **CHEERY CHAS** 'a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse' Brereton, next year's ICU Deputy President is having a bit of trouble with naughty telephone calls. Apparently, some Beit Hall wag put a sticker in a telephone box with Chas' name and number on it. The message offers erotic massage.

If you are suffering from the stresses and strains of academic life, Chas can be reached on int 3512.

● **FELIX SUPREMO** Judith Hackney received a strange telephone call herself this week. It was from none other than Internal Services Officer (Elect) Neil McCluskey.

'I'll take you to court if you print anything about me and Karen,' he cried.

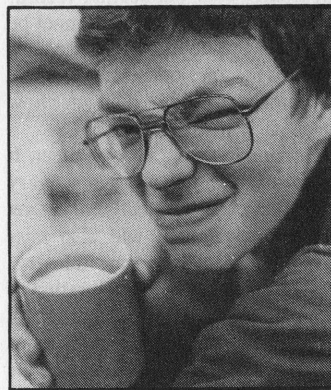
'I wasn't planning to,' she said. 'Who is Karen anyway?'

'She's my girlfriend,' he replied bashfully.

We in the FELIX Office are eagerly awaiting the Writ for Defamation of Character—but whose character have we defamed?

● **HAPLESS** Martyn 'El Prick' Peck isn't very welcome in the Union Office these days.

A certain well-known Union sabbatical was ranting and raving about the loss of a telephone and answering machine from Deputy President Alan Rose's office earlier



this week. My spies tell me that he was convinced that it had to be either Mr Rose himself or a FELIX subversive who had half-inched the equipment.

He had egg all over his face on Wednesday when rumour reached him that the equipment had been taken right from under his nose by his 'mate', El Prick, and was currently sitting in his Holbein room gathering dust.

● **Holbein House** residents witnessed a miracle on Tuesday evening when El Prick—it's that man(?) again!—cleaned his festering room up. Agogged Bean's Club loon Sunny Ghaie (pronounced GAY) soon realised why Prick had made such a superb effort when a gorgeous, pouting female, aged 22, was seen entering Mr Prick's top floor bijou residence.

El Prick, aged 18 and a bit, told my mole later that he didn't want to become Toy Boy no. 6 and all they did that night was 'drink tea, eat biscuits and talk'.

Love & kisses
Chris Jones

Delator would like to apologise to 'Mr Filofax' and 'Jacqui' for any embarrassment that may have been caused following the publication of certain entries from his filofax in last week's Blackmail column.

Delator also apologises to Mr Chas Jackson for any embarrassment he may have caused him and retracts all statements made about him in the Blackmail column (FELIX 803 and 804). He acknowledges them to be groundless.

Blackmail will no longer appear in FELIX. It has been pointed out to both Delator and the FELIX Editor that the column is ever-so-slightly illegal, despite being jolly good fun to read and all in aid of ICU Rag.

Au Revoir
Delator 1988

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If you would like to meet us, please write to me, David Pashley, enclosing a cv. Sponsorship enquiries from undergraduates are also welcome.

Editorial: Judging science

Last week the Department of Geology reconciled itself to its downgrading by the UGC. The Department will, in future, get less money and will not be expected (or funded) to do a broad range of research. The Department will fight for more money by asking its industrial sponsors to make up its losses, but there is no guarantee that this will save the day. The supposed reasons for the UGC's decision are worth looking at since they raise important issues about the way science is done. Other subject areas are now under review and the decisions made about them may affect all the departments at Imperial College.

Publication counting

The primary rationale for the UGC's reorganisation seems to be related to the Department's publication record. In their review of research excellence, the UGC asked departments to nominate a handful of their best publications in the previous few years. The poor geologists only came out of that review with an average grade, so the UGC was out to get them even before the countrywide review of all geology departments. When the full review was started a slightly more rational assessment was made of departmental research expertise based on overall publication record. Unfortunately the geologists still looked fairly average.

Another failure of the Department (in the eyes of the UGC) was its apparent lack of cooperation with other departments. However, what they actually meant by this was cooperation with other *Science* departments such as Chemistry or Physics. The geologists have very good relationships with the other departments in the Mines building, but the UGC was, apparently, not very interested in this.

I will come back to the issue of inter-departmental cooperation later, but, first, it is worth looking at the usefulness of publication records as an indicator of scientific worth.

The geologists have complained that their publication record is but a

UNDER MICRO THE SCOPE



by Steve Black

pale reflection of their true scientific worth because they do a lot of (unpublished) consultancy work for industry. Indeed, industry is supposed to think very highly of the department (though how much money they will be prepared to contribute is another issue). It could be argued that if the department is that useful to industry then it ought to get its money from industry and not the UGC.

However, the more important point is that sheer number of publications is a terrible guide to scientific merit. Some assessors prefer to use *weight* of publications since this takes fair account of long papers, but most official statistics just count numbers.

This drives scientists to cut all their work down to the minimum publishable size (unfortunately this is usually well below the minimum scientifically useful size). It makes little sense to publish a long coherent and well argued piece of work after several years, when you could publish it in fragmented dribs and drabs and get four times as many brownie points with your paymasters. Also, rapidly to publish a poorly thought out bit of work and to later have to publish a retraction, is twice as good for your publications rate as taking your time to get it right in the first place. In effect the UGC's criteria for measuring scientific excellence and encouraging just the reverse: an explosion of scientific hot air designed to impress the bosses rather than to push back the frontiers of science.

If we do have to judge scientists and departments, then we should look for more objective measures of their quality. The Institute For Scientific Information (ISI for short) publishes an index of scientific citations. Using the index you can count how many people read your publications (since they will put references to it in their papers). So if a department only publishes a few papers each year, but they are all classics of their field (and everyone else cites them in their work), then the department's citation index will be good despite an

apparently poor publication record. Also, your citation record cannot be improved by publishing vast amounts of garbage, since other scientists will not refer to dud work no matter how much of it you produce.

Citation Indexing is not perfect. It is, for example, biased against very new areas of science that have not yet become popular. It will also miss consultancy work for industry. Conversely, it gives a high rating to work in trendy areas whether or not it has any real significance or importance. However, despite its problems citation indexing has been successful at some things: it is fairly good at predicting Nobel Prizes, for example. Of all the 'objective' methods we have to assess scientific quality, citation indexing is the best and the one which causes least distorting of the scientific enterprise.

Constituent Colleges and the failure to cooperate

Whether the geologists would have done any better under citation counting is difficult to say, but the powers that be would clearly have looked more favourably on them if their record of cooperation with other departments was better. Unfortunately their bad record on this is not their fault: it is inherent in the way Imperial College is structured. The historic division of the College into three segments may be loved by the (handful) of CCU activists, but it perpetuates an illogical separation of similar departments and it gets in the way of inter-departmental cooperation.

Take the departments of Chemistry, Chemical Engineering and Material Science: there are good historical reasons for their present place in the College structure (RCS, C&G and

RSM respectively), but in any other university the overlapping areas would have been rationalised a long time ago. As it is their cooperation across the constituent college boundaries is almost non-existent. So, there is substantial overlap in terms of research interests but little actual cooperation. Good management would have sorted out this problem long ago, but British academics are notoriously conservative. They seem to resist change until it is forced upon them and this only makes the whole process more painful.

The poor geologists suffer from the same problem: they cooperate well with the other RSM departments, but they hardly talk to the scientists or the engineers. The anachronism of our tripartite constituent college system has now cost us a considerable amount of UGC money. When the UGC start to look at our other departments, the same thing may happen again. Three constituent colleges may give some people a good social life, but it's a stupid way to run a university.

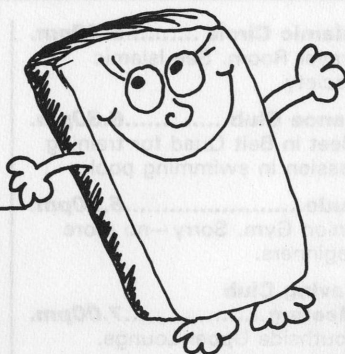
Managing universities

The basic problem with British universities is that they have never had to be well managed. The Government has (until recently) been generous enough to academia for the universities to do what they want without having to be well organised. Now, with the Thatcher squeeze, they are having to make hard decisions about the allocations of resources: they will soon have to be well organised to get anything done. People in industry *have* to be well organised: badly run companies go bankrupt. Universities have not been forced to live with such a harsh selective pressure: they usually survive whether or not they are inefficient, wasteful or badly organised.

If the universities are going to survive Thatcher, they will have to start learning how to *manage*. So they either have to teach academics the art of organisation or they have to attract top managers from successful industries to run their departments. That wouldn't be such a bad idea since managers are well equipped to make objective judgments about the relative merits of academics' work (whereas academics can be just a bit bitchy about the merits of their rivals' research).

The sooner we get our act together the less painful it will be in the long term. We can't buck Thatcher forever.

Do you think you might be a fish finger?



1) Have you every been battered?

- a) Yes, but I wouldn't recommend it.
- b) No, but I know a man who has.
- c) Why, are you offering, sweetie?

2) Have you ever been basted in oil?

- a) Yes, on my honeymoon.
- b) Yes, but it was virgin oil.
- c) No, your honour.

3) Have you ever been grilled?

- a) Only when the chips are down
- b) Yes, five hours at Lucan Place nick for alleged pubic hair removal.
- c) No, but I've been covered in chocolate spread.

4) On a scale of 1-10, how do you value yourself?

- a) 1-3

- b) 4-7
- c) 8-10
- d) £1.07 for 12

5) What is the capital of Upper Volta?

- a) Ouagadougou
- b) U.V.
- c) How should I know, I'm only a bloody fish finger.

6) What colour are you?

- a) Black.
- b) White.
- c) Crispy golden, full of E-numbers, orangey, sort of breadcrumby colour.

MARKS

- | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | a 5 | b 1 | c 3 | |
| 2. | a 0 | b 5 | c 3 | |
| 3. | a 5 | b 4 | c 4 | |
| 4. | a 0 | b 3 | c 0 | d 5 |
| 5. | a 0 | b 2 | c 5 | |
| 6. | a 1 | b 1 | c 5 | |

SCORES

Under 10: Well, one thing's for certain—you're no fish finger. It's a bit difficult to say exactly what you are really. To be blunt, you'd put a train-spotter to shame. My recommendation is that you apply for a job on IC Radio.

10-20: Yes, you're one of life's losers as well. All you think about is yourself. You're an egotistical, selfish bastard. Why not apply for the job of ICU President?

21-30: Congratulations! Join the fish finger club. You're prime 100% cod material. You can probably think of nothing better than sitting on a plate of peas, chips and grease. Captain Birdseye would be proud of you.

Above 30: You're clever, cunning with a crude sense of humour. You're also either a bloody liar or a hopeless mathematician since it's impossible to score more than 30.



Mama Italia—Part 1

A torrid tale of Venus & Mars

The best tortellini in Italy can be enjoyed only in Bologna and Modena. It will always be handmade. The pasta is rolled out into big sheets and cut into rectangular patches. A specially prepared stuffing is placed in the middle of each rectangle which is folded into shape to fit the navel of Venus—the Goddess of Love, Sex and the Joy of Life. So, when you men eat the exquisite tortellini imagine that it has been graced by Venus, if you are a woman think of the torrid Mars (God of War) as Venus would no doubt have done while eating this creation.

Venice

IC's resident expert on many aspects of Italian gastronomy warns that Venice is the classic tourist trap over the summer months. The expensive restaurants are out of the range of most students but are the only ones that maintain high culinary standards. The other establishments raise their prices but lower their standrads.

I suggest that you eat sandwiches for lunch and go to 'terra ferma' to have dinner. Venice is connected to Mestre by a bridge. Take a bus and go to a trattoria in Mestre. Those who insist on eating in Venice should try the trattorias in Guidecca (the former Jewish quarter). This quarter is located in the island across the water

from San Marco's Square and is clearly visible in the distance. Guidecca is relatively unspoilt by tourists and the prices will be lower.

Special tips

'Do Ferni' (the two ovens) is recommended for those willing to spend £25 per head, you will undergo an adventure in Venetian cuisine involving 10-15 courses of fish dishes. You can expect a mussel dish and spaghetti perscatora (fisherman's style spaghetti) amongst the courses.

Universal points

Buying icecream—The best icecream can be got at places that display the Gelateria Artigianle or Produzione Propria signs. It would be wise to go to places which only sell icecream. **Drinking coffee**—It might be worth pointing out that Italians drink Capuccino for breakfast and Espresso after dinner. The term 'café macchieto' should be used when requesting coffee with a drop of milk. **Ordering wine**—'Vino de la Cassa' will be the cheapest wine you will be able to order to accompany your food. This will be decanted into a carafe then served to you. Never accept any other wine that is not uncorked in front of you.

Eating in a pizzeria—This magnificent creation of Italian cooking must be cooked in an oven fired by wood. The places where you get take-away pizzas will be using electric ovens mostly. Those seeking the authentic pizza experience should only eat at establishments where one can see the 'Pizzaiolo' preparing the pizzas and using a wood fired oven. **Seasonal dishes**—Look out for

'Rissoto con i Bruscardoli' when eating in a trattoria. This rissoto dish uses a wild vegetable gathered in June/July.

A trattoria—Trattorias are often run by a family. You will find plenty of opportunity to sample what is effectively home cooking. A wide selection of dishes cooked to a good standard can be expected.

Recipe by special request ROGAN JOSH

This familiar Indian meat dish is a classic that is easy to prepare. Its secret lies in the reddish colour developed from the paprika and the slightly sour taste of the yogurt.

I have been requested to include more recipies. Two people in Holbein House asked that I include my Rogan Josh recipe which has been admired by a number of people.

Ingredients

2lbs boned lamb cut into cubes
½ pint of water or chicken stock
½ pint of whole milk set yogurt
Spices: 2-3 bay leaves, 6-10 cloves, 2 large cinamon sticks, 2 black cardomom pods (optional), 1 heaped tsp cummin seeds, 5 tsp paprika, 1-2 tsp chilli powder, 1.5 tsp garram massala.
8 cloves garlic
1 inch piece of ginger
3 medium size onions.

Method

Chop the garlic and ginger very finely or blend them with a little water into a paste. Chop the onions finely. Grind

the cummin seeds. Fry the lamb pieces in vegetable oil until lightly brown. Remove from the frying pan. Heat up a little oil, add the bay leaves, cloves, cinnamon and cardomom pods. Fry until the bay leaves change colour and the cloves swell up. Add the cummin, immediately followed by the onions. Fry on medium heat until all the onions become soft. Add the ginger and garlic and continue the frying. Add the fried lamb cubes and fry for a few minutes. Lower the flame. Add a little yogurt and continue stirring. Add more and more yogurt gradually until all of it has blended in with the sauce. Add the paprika, chilli powder and chicken stock or water. Bring to the boil, simmer the meat for ½ hours stirring intermittantly. Examine the thickness of the sauce. Remove the lid of the pot if it is looking water. Continue simmering until the lamb is tender. Never thicken the sauce by vigorous boiling but by gentle reduction.

Add the garam massala a few minutes before serving this dish with some rice. Add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.

I would like to dedicate this article to Luca Zullo. Thanks to him a number of pasta and risotto dishes will always be served at my dinner table. I hope this article managed to reflect the love Luca managed to convey to me when talking about Italian food.

Next week

The gastronomic survey takes a look at eating in Verona, Florence and Rome.

Ciou,
Yishu.

Diary

What's On

FRIDAY

Conservative Soc Meeting12.30pm.
ME 569.

Circuit Training12.30pm.
Union Gym with Cross Country and Athletics Club. Everyone welcome. Free.

Orienteering12.30pm.
Brown/Green Committee Room (top floor of Union Building). Arrangements for following Sunday's event.

Rag Meeting12.35pm.
Every second Friday. Union Lounge. All Welcome.

Islamic Prayer1.00pm.
The Union Building. See Islamic Society.

Into the Night7.00pm.
STOIC. Films, videos, chat, 'Countdown'. On all the televisions in the Halls of Residence.

Friday Feature7.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz).

IC Radio Disco9.00pm.
Southside Bar. FREE.

SATURDAY

Shotokan Karate10.00am.
Southside Gym. Beginners welcome. £1.

SUNDAY

Holy Communion ...10.00am.
Sherfield Building. The service with a smile.

Wargames Meeting1.00pm.
Senior Common Room.

Viewpoint7.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz).

MONDAY

Rock Soc Meeting12.30pm.
Southside Upper Lounge. Interested in any form of rock? Come along!

Parachute Club Meeting12.30pm.
Union Lower Lounge. See Max Hunt von Herbing (Chairman).

Artsoc Meeting12.30pm.
SCR Union. Come to sign up and pay your money for tickets for forth-coming events, eat

biscuits and drink coffee. Free to members (membership £1.50).

Recitation of Holy Qur'an1.00pm.
9 Prince's Gardens. See Islamic Society.

Golf Practice5.30pm.
Union Gym. See Golf Club.

Biology Soc Talk4.45pm.
W3. 'The Ultrasonic World of Bats'.

Intermediate Ballroom7.00pm.
JCR. 80p. See Dance Club.

Street Life7.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz).

Shotokan Karate7.00pm.
Southside Gym. Beginners welcome. £1.

Beginners Ballroom8.00pm.
JCR. 80p. See Dance Club.

TUESDAY

Christian Union8.15am.
Chemistry 231. See Steve Clark, Christian Union.

Guinness & Gossip 12.30pm.
Sailing Club meeting above Stan's.

IC CathSoc Mass ..12.30pm.
Chemistry 231. Quiet and contemplation between lectures or exams. Food provided (50p). All welcome.



Boardsailing12.30pm.
Regular meeting in Southside Lounge to organise trips.

QT Soc Meeting1.00pm.
Southside Upper Lounge (or Pizza Bar). Plot-hatching extravaganza! New members welcome.

Holy Qur'an Recitation1.30pm.
Prayer Room. See Islamic Society.

Amnesty Meeting1.30pm.
Brown Committee Room. FREE.

Islamic Circle5.30pm.
Prayer Room. See Islamic Society.

Canoe Club6.30pm.
Meet in Beit Quad for training session in swimming pool.

Judo6.30pm.
Union Gym. Sorry—no more beginners.

Caving Club Meeting7.00pm.
Southside Upper Lounge.

Advanced Ballroom7.00pm.
JCR. 80p. See Dance Club



Psychedelic & Indie Show8.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz).

Improvers Ballroom8.00pm.
JCR. 80p. See Dance Club.

Canoe Club Meeting8.30pm.
Above Southside Bar.

Dai Rocking9.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz). The best in hard rock and not-so-hard rock music including the featured album every week with Dave Williams.

WEDNESDAY

Sailing12.30pm.
Meet outside Southside.

S.L.A.G.S. Meeting 12.30pm.
Society for Lesbian and Gay Students meets in the Green Committee Room (top floor Union Building). Come along for a chat if you don't mind people thinking you're going to a Wargames Society meeting!

Golf Meeting1.00pm.
Sudbury. Regular weekly meeting.

Caving Club Meeting1.00pm.
Union Snack Bar.

Wargames Meeting ..1.00pm.
Senior Common Room.

Beginners Rock n Roll2.15pm.
Union Dining Hall. 80p. See Dance Club.

Shotokan Karate3.00pm.
Southside Gym. Beginners welcome. £1.

Offbeat Practice3.15pm.
Union Dining Hall. 80p. See Dance Club.

ULU Meditation Group7.00pm.
Room 3A, University of London Union, Malet Street. Traditional breathing meditation. Everyone welcome. No charge.

Viewpoint7.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz).

THURSDAY

ICYHA Meeting12.30pm.
Southside Upper Lounge.

Socialist Society Meeting12.45pm.
Brown Committee Room. All welcome. Contact Adrian Grainger (Maths 3).

Newsbreak1.00pm.
STOIC. IC's own news programme.

SFSOC Library Meeting1.00pm.
Green Committee Room, Union Building. Borrow books from our vast library, help plan future events. Members only.

Arabic Classes1.30pm.
Prayer Room. See Islamic Society.

Gliding Club Meeting5.30pm.
Aero 254. Arrange trial flights, lifts to Lasham, talks and then to the bar.

Orienteering Training5.30pm.
Union Gym. Social meeting held from 6.30pm onwards.

Newsbreak6.00pm.
STOIC.

Judo6.30pm.
Union Gym. Sorry—no more beginners.

Street Life6.00pm.
IC Radio (999kHz).

ULU Lesbian Gay Group7.30pm.
ULU Building, Malet Street (Russell Sq. tube). For speakers and booze and if you're feeling adventurous a trip out to nightclub or pub afterwards.

ICCAG Soup Run9.15pm.
Meet 16-18 Prince's Gardens.

TENNIS

Second team UAU competition

UCL—11 sets, IC—7 sets
IC—8 sets, Essex 4 sets

On Saturday May 28 it was almost the second second team which travelled to Colchester to play both UCL and Essex on the same day. Due to the 3 matches planned in the day, each match was the best of 18 sets over the 9 combinations of each team's 3 pairs.

First we had to play UCL who had just finished beating Essex by 14 sets to 4. In the first round, the third pairing of Hideo Takano and Chris Tomdgidi did well to force a draw against the UCL thirds. After a spirited first set, the second pairing of Peter Hunt and Dhnusha De Lanerolle lost to the formidable UCL second pair, and the first pairing of Ken Cheung and Roy Harrison were disappointed with a draw against the UCL first pair. In the second round our second pair beat the UCL third pair as did our first pair in the final round also in the last round the second pair did well to force a draw with the UCL firsts. So, after three and a half hours of tennis under blistering heat, we had another whole match to play which we had to win.

Careful pacing and plenty of liquid intake ensured that we all felt capable of lasting the day. Essex had had an afternoon's rest but were a fairly weak team and after the second round, Cheung and Harrison were heading for a clean sweep with De Lanerolle and Hunt unbeaten, but it was 8 o'clock in the evening and Essex decided to give up.

Consequently UCL and IC went forward to the last sixteen of the UAU 'Junior' Competition. Many thanks to those who turned out at very short notice and despite looming exams, to spend a day getting totally knackered and very sun burnt.

**Bernard Sunley
House
announces that
its house sale
has been
cancelled**

RACING

by Martyn Peck



Kahyasi became the Aga Khan's third winner of the Derby on Wednesday when he ran on the final furlong to head *Glacial Storm* in the fastest Derby ever run. *Kahyasi*, an 11-1 shot at the start, waited until the last minute before challenging strongly and winning by 1½l, with *Doyoun* just holding onto third from the fast finishing favourite *Red Glow*. Bookies were delighted with the result, as they stood to lose £1m if either *Red Glow* or *Unfuwain* had won. It looked as if *Unfuwain* would take it at Tattenham Corner when he was four lengths clear but, with *Red Glow* taking the wrong path and coming inside only to be hampered by the slowing *Clifton Chapel*, jockey Ray Cochrane took *Kahyasi* home and the Aga Khan was left to scoop the £500,000 prize money. By the way, the Aga Khan also owns *Doyoun*, the 2000 Guineas winner, who took the third place in the same race.

Wednesday also saw the Group Three Diomed Stakes which produced the most entertaining winner. *Wajib* came from last to first in a matter of seconds with a turn of pace more suited to a Derby winner than a minor handicap.

Meanwhile at Carlisle, *Minizen Lass* lost her bid to achieve six wins in a row when finding a 10lb penalty too much.

We can now look ahead to an Oaks on Saturday which promises to be a splendid run. This is difficult to judge because two main contenders, *Trusted Partner* and *Dancing Goddess*, first and second in the Irish 1000 Guineas, will not run unless the going is soft. If it does rain before the race, I predict a 1,2,3 for *Sudden Love*, *Diminuendo* and *Trusted Partner*.

This week's tips are on the news pages, and I'll be back next week with more news.

LETTERS

Cock up 1

Dear Judith,

In last week's 'Blackmail' column, you printed an allegation about myself which is quite definitely untrue and almost definitely libellous. Although I am still giving serious thought as to any further action that I should take, I am obliged to request that an immediate and unreserved retraction of this allegation be printed, and that I be offered a full and sincere apology.

Whilst you consider this, you might also consider seriously your responsibilities, and the possible consequences of printing material of this nature.

Yours sincerely,

Chas Jackson.

An apology:-

I am very sorry if anything that has been printed in FELIX about you has been untrue and for any trouble this may have caused you.

Cock up 2

Dear Judith,

In last week's FELIX (Issue 804) you indicated that I reported to a 'Blackmail' source a personal comment about Mr Charles Jackson. I would refute this comment, and state that this can only be classed as libellous. I would also state that I agree totally with Mr Jackson in his request for a full public apology.

I feel that I must remind you that FELIX is your responsibility and I suggest that you think twice about the material that you print and its possible implications.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Hepper.

No sooner written, than done!

Token silly letter

Dear Judith,

What a con Fisher Hall Security is! Only the other day, a crack squad of Gauntlet spies, cleverly disguised as a Re-ap and two first years, obtained entry. Using the unlikely excuse of wanting to borrow one of their recently purchased barbecues, the door was opened to the Rhino Club's lair.

With an innocent and unknowing smile the inviting maidens gave us a tour of some of the more sensitive areas of the establishment. But the reconnaissance came to a halt when he encountered a second Subwarden and used our Trojan Horse of an excuse again.

We wondered if we'd been rumbled as he refused the request claiming that he didn't have the authority to lend out the barbecue, and the Warden was out.

A likely story, but tactically he withdrew. Knowing as ever that there is always another day.

The Gauntlet Club.

Letters

Sabbatical credibility

Dear Judith,

Thanks for your full page editorial of last week. It does serve to explain a little of why you do things the way you do. It does not however absolve you from what a number of people feel you have been guilty of, which is unfair and biased reporting.

I agree entirely that FELIX should 'inform, entertain and criticise'. FELIX has been informative. FELIX in certain editions has even been entertaining. Above all FELIX certainly has been critical. Congratulations, Judith, you've achieved your aims, but what good has it done?

In answer, none whatsoever! You know as well as I do that the Union without the support of its students is almost powerless within College. In fact at this point in time College dictates to the students how they should live, what they should study, what they should eat, how their money is spent etc. Can I take it that all the students are happy with this because they don't voice their opinions? Or is it that the students don't have the interest or the confidence in the Union to support it fully? My guess is the latter.

It's not only inside of College that the Union has to have some kind of credibility. Potentially, with the facilities and resources it has available, ie rooms, trading outlets, vans etc, the Union could almost be self-funding. To compete it has to appear professional and organised. In future, with the introduction of Gerbill, the Union may cease to get funding from College, isn't it wise that somebody should be trying to ensure the future of the Union. The aim of the new job descriptions and the employment of the new Union staff is to try and portray an air of professionalism and organisation. Against a lot of inertia from people who would like to discuss things year in, year out, before anything is done, Sydney Harbour-Bridge (ne Howgate) has finally got the ball rolling. You may feel it's going in the wrong direction, it's up to the students to direct it.

You have been very critical of the Union and especially of Sydney but has this criticism been at all constructive? Has it hell! You've taken relations between the Union, FELIX and the students quite a few steps backward and in so doing have made the Union a laughing stock within College. Now, I believe that you're only trying to point out the many things that are wrong with the Union by your criticism but the manner in which you've criticised has been totally destructive. Your criticism has been levelled on quite a personal basis, it has been quite often unfair, though not always unjust, and it has been too selective. Why is it that Sydney's received all the shit for not having written to FELIX when Alan Rose has written just as little and has received no 'criticism'? This is one but long-standing affair.

I agree FELIX should not be solely a mouthpiece for the Union but it should be aiming to promote the Union as a body of students with the potential to twist the arm of College so that actions are taken to benefit the students as a whole as those students feel fit. You're right the President is a puppet but he's a puppet of the students'. A puppet is useless without the right people pulling the strings, ie the students. A puppet is also useless without the right character and personality to perform in every sense of the word.

Judith you are the biggest mouthpiece in College (and by that I mean through FELIX). You may not have a vote

on any committees but that's because you have to be seen to be impartial as an editor. Please use the opportunity wisely and criticise constructively. You know full well that Sydney has the ability to sway meetings to his favour. Why not coordinate the students into using this ability to express their views to the College? It's true Sydney does have his own ideas about things and he does get a little upset when people disagree or dislike his ideas, doesn't everyone. But, Sydney does open himself up to suggestions and advice. I'm saying to you and to all the students, it's OK trying to correct the faults of the Union but it would be a lot more beneficial to use the potential within the Union. The students should start to use the Union and the sabbaticals instead of allowing College to use and abuse them.

Yours sincerely,

Neil McCluskey, Internal Services Officer Elect.

Mega-objection

Dear Judith,

I must object to the suggestion in your mega-editorial (FELIX 804) that The Baron was dropped because 'it is the letters page that should be used to point out inaccuracies'. It is clear to anyone who read the 'official' last episode, printed in Broadsheet on March 21, that you scrapped The Baron because it ridiculed your election results editorial. You rightly defend your editorial freedom to 'point out the mistakes, inadequacies, dodgy dealings and dirty tricks' of Union officers and College administrators, but place yourself above this. Whether you are technically a Union officer or not, why should FELIX staff not have the freedom to criticise you?

There was never any question that The Baron should be scrapped while it ridiculed Ian Whygate, Derek Dash, Chas Takeiteasy, or anyone else, but as soon as it featured Judith Largeamounts unfavourably it was out.

This is the most blatant act of censorship this year.

The Baron was always intended to be mainly humorous, whilst making caustic observations about life at College. It was never meant to be offensive. In re-interpreting the events of the previous week, the obvious source was FELIX, otherwise most students would not have understood it. I could have written about Councils or UGMs, but that would have made The Baron truly cliquey, something I tried to avoid. On the day of the election results FELIX the overwhelming topic of discussion was not the results themselves, but the cynical treatment given to Mr Goodwin in your editorial. Hence, it was natural that The Baron should reflect this feeling among the student populace. It was not a personal attack on you.

In the last issue before Easter you said that you would conduct a straw poll on whether the readers wanted The Baron or not. Was this poll every carried out? If so, what were the results?

If The Baron is every resurrected, then I hope that the next author will be able to entertain FELIX readers without censorship.

Finally, The Baron's review of the year will be available for the last issue of term. Do you dare print it?

Yours, name withheld by request.

PS. Point of information: You have not printed every letter that you have received this academic year.

PPS. Point of information: Yes I have to my knowledge—Ed.

Small Ads

ANNOUNCEMENTS

● **Riverboat Disco**—Saturday August 6, 8pm to midnight. Loads of food and fun. £7.50 per ticket from Michaelia, Room 434, Sheffield or any queries phone ext 3119.

● **Helpers** wanted for wine festival in London. Further details phone Robert Joseph 01-851 6070 (Wine Magazine).

FOR SALE

● **Canon EOS 620** camera plus 28-70 Canon lens. Mint, unboxed, 1 yr full warranty. Contact Farliid (int 4879) Civ Eng. Both items £500.

● **Gold Master** DD/DS soft sector 96TPI 5 1/4 inch disks. Certified 100% error free. Will sell at £1 each or less, otherwise negotiable. Interested? Contact Abbey at 0-9421 (int) or 589 9207 (rm 214).

LOST & FOUND

● **Lost**, Zippo lighter, silver with floral etching, engraved with initials S.R.I. Lost in Southside, £5 reward offered. Contact Stuart Ingram Chem Eng pigeonholes.

PERSONAL

● **New** showpiece hall contraceptive revealed...

● **Bonkers** are bunkered.

● **Are IC** Accommodation Office after Mary Whitehouse's approval or just loadsamoney?

● **Rachael W.** I lust after your mind and your body. Your secret admirer.

● **Join** the real ConSoc. Beit NH101.

● **Why** does Rakesh read the New Testament at 3am.

● **Young**, open-minded man with fetish for small, pink shoes, wishes to share the company of busty lady. Contact Beit 2nd Floor.

● **Intelligent**, beautiful lady required. Must be able to buy a one-way ticket to Rio de Janeiro. Contact Patrick, Beit Arch.

● **Ping**—it should be 18 inches long! (From the guy who does the 'zippy' impressions).

● **Holbein** House's new satirical character—Bugger All Work.

● **What does** a compulsive gambler do, pray to Mecca? Ask Prick.

● **Tavor**, you're back! xxx.

● **Who** is this Chris Toumazou? Branmir.

● **S.L.**—Fluid Mechanics and Thermodynamics will be no problem but I think the Stress Analysis could do with a little more work! Good luck. Remember I want an A this time. S.K.

● **Congratulations** Ann and Chris!—Yishu.

● **Why** has Chas got the biggest room, yet sleeps alone?

● **Join** Fridge-fill Soc, see NH88.

● **Is** Manoj going to get into trouble after bursting a condom?

● **Jane Sub-warden**, beware of the wrath of the Phantom Soaker.

Editor
FELIX

IMPERIAL COLLEGE

IMPERIAL COLLEGE, London, SW7 2AZ

Letters

● **Is Mike Plummer really mad or does he just need to be?**

● **Q.** How are you, Khalid? A. F**k off!

● **Q.** What is worse than a sexually-deprived, immature and cheeky bastard? A. Next year's DP.

● **Dear lads**—11 days and still on the wagon—Shan.

● **Congratulations** to Ed and Ali.

● **My first** is in Baron, which I write, My second is in boring, which is its plight, My third is in blunder, which I regularly make, and my fourth is in friendly, which I often fake, My fifth is in nasty, full of hate, and my last is in petty, for its own sake.

● **Bill Goodwin**—A legend in his own tardis.

● **What** do you mean I can't shoot him at dawn, I'm the President aren't I?

● **Money** for nothing, and a quiche for free.

● **Remember** the Tacoma Bridge.

● **Who pays** rent in Hamlet, but lives in a single room in Weeks?

● **What** do you get if you cross a ferret and a Baker? A cosmic bun in the oven!

● **The SFSoc** committee is getting cosmically inbred.

● **Rhino Club**—It's hard to get the staff these days—yag yag baggle snurf—Gauntlet Club.

● **Holbein House**—Losing a basement, but gaining a son.

● **Falklands** war/Gatwick airport north terminal with cabletrain transit/Caterham 7—latter is automobile sold and assembled by kit with office in Caterham—are all demonological fabrications. Zev—Green Jacket—FELIX, Newspaper of London Imperial College, June 3, 1988.

● **In** the last decade over 10,000 individuals were killed and replaced by doubles to have me framed as demonic. True; some were the result of my 'Village Voice' ads 'Silence on CIA doubler', attempts by me to force an exposé which failed, but most were simply those I watched on TV or read about in print. The mass murder is a diabolical projection, to have me the Kaposch from Yom Kippur Day if Atonement in the scheduled genocide of blacks/hispanics by US and Falashes/Sephardim/Palestinians by Israel. Zev-Green Jacket—Gatwick News May 28 1988, FELIX June 3 1988.

● **Falklands** only kind of war to have never occurred—subterfuge was to be followed by multinational occupation, precursor for same for Saudi Arabia by Shultz or Carloti, for Israeli oil cartel via Trans Arabian pipeline by Special Mideast Envoy. Precluded by my Village Voice ads. Chernobyl only kind of nuclear disaster-fiction is hype for US/Russian/Israeli scenario to A-bomb Berlin then International Herald Tribune May 29 1979. Zev-Green Jacket, FELIX, Newspaper of Imperial College June 3 1988.

ACCOMMODATION

● **Single room** required for 30th June. Anything considered. Contact Pippa Salmon c/o FELIX Office.

Cold War

Dear Judith,

I am saddened by the depths to which the 'Cold War' between FELIX and various Union representatives has sunk. The animosity, the immaturity and above all the pettiness do not befit those who have been elected to positions of responsibility in the student body of a renowned academic institution. Let us leave such behaviour to the likes of Ronald Reagan and 'The Sun' and show ourselves to be worthy of greater respect. The ability to rise above the level of personal bickering and conduct truly objective arguments is a rare but highly desirable quality. We are perhaps influenced too much these days by advertising and party politics (a rather cynical form of advertising) to realise that the most convincing disputant is the one who acknowledges the other's point of view, whilst still believing theirs is more valid. Maybe we suffer from a lack of History and Law students but scientists should themselves know more than a little about 'truth' and the deduction of 'facts' from evidence.

At the start of the year my dealings with both FELIX and the Union, mainly in connection with the Music Room saga, left me with a positive impression of competent people doing a good job. Now it seems that the obsession of both parties with a personal dispute has left them blind to their own faults and incapable of clear judgement.

Yours disgruntled,

Alan Downie.

I totally agree with everything you have written. I also regret that everything has been so 'personal' this term. I don't believe that it has clouded my editorial judgement. My only obsession is to produce the best FELIX possible each week. ← Yuk!

Ya, boo, sucks!

Dear Judith,

It is with regret that I must write to complain about the content of last week's FELIX. I refer, of course, to the letters page, notably the two by Mr Neil McCluskey and Mr David Clements.

Mr McCluskey: I'm not aware of any anonymous contributions I've made to FELIX, short of the odd small ad. If you do know of any, however, please don't hesitate to contact me, either via 'UGM Chairman 88/89, Union Office' or 'Editor's Floozie, FELIX Office'.

The reason I quoted from Council is because it was both current and topical. If I had to wait for the production of minutes, then I'd be waiting till eternity.

I do not doubt Mr Bridge's (name changed in aid of Comic Relief) enthusiasm for one moment, however misguided it may be. What I object to, is the way he persuaded Council to adopt a particular view by feeding them half-truths and half-baked logic.

One final note: Charisma is a rare quality and a term that should be used sparingly. I do not feel that a President who alienates 99% of the student population possesses such a gift.

Mr Clements: Item one: As mentioned by Judith last week, Mr Bridge made no objection to the amount of social colours awarded when they were originally brought before

Publications Board—a meeting he was present at. His objection was only made at Council when he saw who had received colours. As I mentioned in my original letter, this list included those who had been critical of The Bridge in the past year. This is where I believe the deception lies (sic).

Point of information: Less social colours were awarded by Publications Board this year than in any year since 1984.

Item two: You miss the point. Council decided to add not only preparing papers to Council/UGM Chair but also *updating policy*. This is a decision that was previously thrown out by a UGM—a higher body than Council.

Request for information: What right has a Council—total maximum membership 50—got to alter a decision made by a UGM—total maximum membership of 5000?

The main point of both your letters, I gather, is to point out that a majority decision made at Council means that it is a correct one. Question: How can Council members possibly vote on a motion if they are not presented with the full facts and are told porkies by the Union President and/or his minions? The expression 'blind faith' springs to mind.

Oh and Sydney, remember the Tacoma Bridge...

Cheers, Paul Shanley/Shan the Man/Judith's Floozie.

P.S. Which is better—to be Judith's floozie or Zev-Green Jacket?

Legal eagle

Dear Judith,

I have always been reluctant to criticise FELIX because, on the whole, it is extremely good. 'Blackmail', however, has become so unpleasant recently that I feel I must write.

Firstly, 'Delator' is breaking the law in threatening to publish names if money is not received. Section 31 of the Larceny Act, 1916 states that it is an offence (punishable by up to two years in prison) to: 'Threaten to publish, or propose to abstain from publishing libellous or *other matter* with intent to extort.'

If Delator's allegations are true then FELIX would certainly have a defence against Libel but not (it would appear) against blackmail!

Secondly, I am concerned as to the accuracy of the information 'Delator' receives. Generally such information would be second or third-hand and difficult to check. I cannot see what is to stop unscrupulous people anonymously using this column to get at those they dislike.

Lastly, I strongly object to 'Chris Jones' smarmy apology on page five of last week's edition. (In case anyone still doesn't know, Chris Jones is a pseudonym.) Even if the allegations about Mr Motteram were true (which I doubt) FELIX has still broken the law on blackmail, as described above. If the allegations are inaccurate then FELIX has libelled Mr Motteram as well! 'The 'apology' published by 'Chris Jones' was thus as unwise as it was unpleasant to read.

I have asked several students for their view on 'Blackmail'. The overwhelming feeling was that 'The Baron' had been much better. Please could we see his return in place of 'Blackmail'?

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Stokes.

Thanks for pointing it out, Nigel. I have decided to drop Blackmail for the time being for the reasons you state. The Baron will be appearing in the last issue.

New mayor appointed

Mr Ernest Tomlin was appointed mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea last Wednesday.

FELIX staff shot



It was all smiles yesterday in the FELIX Office when an official photographer took pictures of the busy FELIX Office as Judith Hackney and her staff worked to get the front page together for today's issue. The photographer, John Whitfield, had already taken pictures of various Professors and Union President Sydney Harbour-Bridge, and was going to St Mary's for a further shoot.

Mr Whitfield, who has in the past photographed the Queen and Vera Lynn, was shooting for the new College Annual Report, due out in October.

Peck's Dodgy Tips

All selections run tomorrow

2.00	Haydock	In Dreams (nap)
4.05	Epsom	Sudden Love (nb)
4.40	Epsom	Marbella Silks
3.15	Epsom	Native Flair (e/w)

Hairdressers given the chop

The hairdressers who worked in the Union Ents Room each Wednesday will no longer be visiting Imperial, following moves by the Union Manager to regulate the scheme.

The Manager, David Peacock, asked to see the hairdressers last week in order to work out some room hire arrangement and agreed to a meeting the following evening. Mr Peacock waited for the hairdressers for half an

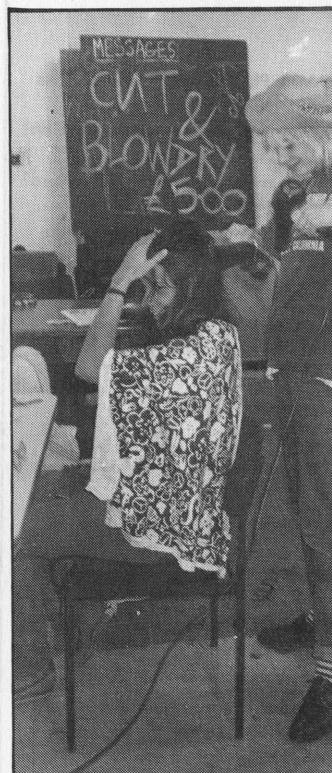
hour before having to leave. The next day a strongly worded note was found inside the locked room.

The hairdressers first started to operate in the Union last year when they were asked to by last year's President Christine Taig.

Mr Peacock told FELIX that he had suggested an hourly rate but this was negotiable; his main priority was to formalise the arrangement to ensure that students were not being charged an excessive rate, as well as to improve security.

One of the hairdressers told FELIX last week that the Union had asked for £5 per hour for rent of the room. She said that the venture would no longer be viable under such circumstances.

It is not known where the hairdressers, Kate and Phil, can be contacted.

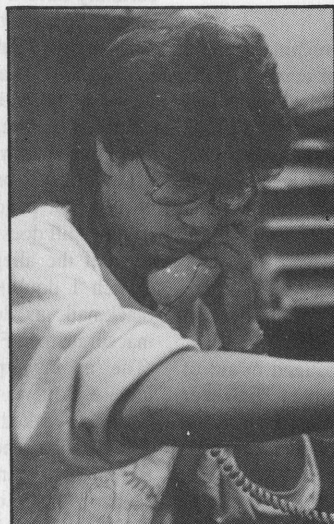


Wanted

Willis Jackson House in Evelyn Gardens is looking for a new Subwarden. The successful applicant should be available from the summer to assist Warden Jan Bradley with the day-to-day running of the House.

IC man gets ULU post

ICU External Affairs Officer Neil Motteram has been returned unopposed as an Executive Officer of the University of London Union. The post has still to be ratified by General Union Council at its next meeting on 7th June.

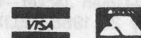


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TWO DAYS IN THE LIFE

The story starts on a Saturday morning, and it starts badly, as for once my body clock failed me, and I didn't wake until almost eleven—disgracefully late. This, and the recent demise of an affair of the heart which had been inconclusive from day one left me bleary, and rather depressed, so after breakfast I decided to go to Camden Market to cheer myself up, and for the sake of the exercise I decided to walk from Fulham. As an additional pick-me-up, I put on my new leather jacket and black 501s, as dressing in glad rags usually helps my moods.

All went well until somewhere near the top of Oxford Street, when my mind wandered and my feet followed it—I wound up in the Aldwych on the steps of St Clement Danes. This part of the City is very quiet and lonely on a Saturday afternoon, and did my mood no good at all; I couldn't help thinking of the unfortunate Dane who got nailed to the door of the then St Clements. I expect he didn't like the Aldwych either.

With the directions of a passing copper I found Camden, and went for a wander, finally ending up in the Zipper store on the high street where I spent too much money on a rather nice tee-shirt with a very sexy man on it, and the message, 'I can resist anything except temptation'. Then began the sequence of events which led to my downfall. I remembered a friend I hadn't seen for a long time who lived close by, and decided to pay him a visit. He was pleased to see me, and after a few drinks he and his boyfriend asked me out for the night. The booze made me careless—I agreed.

The evening started well. We did the rounds of the gay pubs in Camden, and towards eleven we headed into the West End, and to a club called Napoleon's. This is very exclusive, and very expensive—it is the place where well heeled, middle aged City Queens go to drink the night away. Being the youngest man in a gay club is rather exhilarating, and oh boy did I live it up. I danced like a dervish until 2am, drank enough to rupture my liver, and got chatted up by the pianist, an engaging

man in his thirties who called me Darling.

I finally left Napoleon's at about 2.30, woozy and alone, and set myself to walk back to Fulham. My memory is perfect until I reached South Kensington, but after that there is a blank, at the end of which—to my utter self-disgust—I woke up at 4.30am in a strange bed with someone I didn't know, and had to ask him the worst question of all: 'What's your name?'

I got home at dawn, still drunk and feeling physically and mentally soiled, had a bath and went to bed.

My body clock has an odd sense of humour—it woke me punctually at 6.30. Sober at last, but completely ashamed of myself, I dressed and walked up to Hyde Park, and spent the morning smoking and watching the geese on the Long Water. It was early in the afternoon when I got up to leave, still feeling lousy. I turned toward the Albert Hall, and saw something which stopped me in my tracks, and made me forget all my troubles as if they had never existed.

In front of me stood an old man, shabbily dressed. He could only mumble at the passes by, and my heart went out to him, living in his lonely world for one. As I watched, he extended his arms above his head, and spread his fingers apart, giving an odd little chirruping whistle, and to my complete astonishment sparrows started to appear and perch on his hands, first by ones and twos, and then in tens, until he looked like a large impression of a scarecrow. A small group of people gathered to watch him, at first completely silent until a little boy gave a gurgling laugh, and clapped his hands in admiration. The old man turned his face to us, a king crowned with sparrows, and slowly broke into such a gentle, happy smile that it made you grin to see him.

Even in the lowest days of my life to come, I know I will remember that moment. I don't think I can ever be depressed again without seeing the vision in my head of the old King of the Birds, and the little boy that laughed.



WINDOW SHOPPING



Manikin model—positioned perversity,
manikin model—ecstatically nude.
Manikin model—erotism suggested,
manikin model—immodest extrude.

Plastic thrift.
Clothes grafted;
senses censored—
shapely soulless nothings
created and destroyed
at inforced public taste's demands.

Manikin model—serene sociology,
manikin model—painlessly posed.
Manikin model—society's acceptance,
manikin model—painfully closed.

Expressionful pout
Breasts moulded
Limbs jointless—
shapely soulless nothings
sparsely clad in merchandise
as inforced fasion markets demand.

Manikin model—supreme sensuality,
manikin model—silently burn.
Manikin model—arsonist's daydream,
manikin model—murderer's year.n

Molten plastic
Jewellery stained
Clothes charred—
shapely soulless nothings
beauty innihalation
as inforced madman's will demands.

T.H.P.M.

SOMETHING BREAKING

I look outside. The sun is shining brightly; I feel its warmth on my back, an invitation to enjoy life. The heat is rendered bearable by an occasional light gust of wind, and the refreshing coolness of the grass. I am sitting on the edge of a cliff. Below me, seabirds whirl and dive and climb on unseen currents of air, their cries all but drowned out by the rumble of the angry deep blue sea battering against the rocks. At the base of the cliff the waves are flecked with white foam; further out the swell is unnoticeable, and the water is just a uniform carpet of blue-green. Near the horizon two yachts are sailing. At this distance only their sails are visible...fleetingly I wonder what the people on board them are doing at this moment...what they are saying, thinking...

The sky is an immense ceiling of azure blue; in it, the sun stands alone. The clouds have fled elsewhere. The grass around me has been cropped short by rabbits. It appears lifeless, but behind me grasshoppers chirp occasionally, and further off a lark sings. The day is serene; everything welcomes me. Nature beckons to me, inviting me to become a part of it. That I cannot do...I do not belong here, with this grass, with this sea, with this sky. My ancestors shunned nature many ages ago, creating an artificial world of houses and streets and shops...that is where I belong, with my fellow people. If I had a choice, I would turn away from them, and become a part of nature. Because nature makes no judgements; nature accepts things, beings, as they are...it scorns nothing and no one. Nature welcomes anything that chooses to follow nature's way. If I had a choice; the decision has already been taken for me.

I am sitting on a clifftop. The

geographical location doesn't matter...it could be Cuba, New Zealand, Canada, Easter Island or the UK...it's just a clifftop like any other in the world. And I don't belong there.

I look inside. There is turmoil; inside me everything is twisted up...it's been like this a long time and it hurts. I feel like an outcast inside. If I go back to the place I call home, no one will notice I am back because no one will have noticed my absence. I know people, but they do not know me. I have friends, but they would not call me their friend. Nobody cares for me; nobody cares about me; nobody recognises me. When I am with people I feel invisible, because no one sees me. All I want is to be accepted by the society I was created by...and even if that is not possible, then at least let me know why I am not acceptable. For I see no difference between myself and other people; yet other people are accepted, and I am but tolerated...I am a stranger to my own kin. I ask myself why. The question burns deep inside me like a fiery coal, night and day, causing an aching pain that grows and grows until only tears can extinguish it...for a while. I watch other people talking, laughing, and I am jealous. What I say does not interest them; when I laugh I can only laugh at myself. I am an island in a sea of despair. My life is a desert visited only by the harsh winds of the thoughts in my mind.

My world lies in the direction of the sun that beats down on my back. It is a world of people. It is a society of which I am not a part. It refuses to acknowledge me. I don't belong there.

I look down. The gun rests in my hand. It is heavy, smooth, and warm

in the heat of the day. It feels like a friend...something that will do me a favour...something that will selflessly give a part of itself to help me in my predicament.

There is more to life than just staying alive. Life must have a context; if life and environment are not in harmony then the life is futile, a simple squandering of resources that could better be used by others, or an interminable journey with no goal in sight. My life is out of context with my world.

This is not the first time I have come to the cliff. Many times before, with the pain welling up inside, I have come to this place to seek the reason. Sometimes in the face of harsh winter gales, carrying the sting of salt spray; sometimes in the quiet of night, with only the moon as a witness. The cliff is a lonely place, always providing me with the solace I needed to decide that I could give my world one more try. And so I would stare out to sea for a long time, and then wend my way back down the path to the town. But not this time. This time, something is different; something, that would previously stretch but then relax, is breaking, about to snap. Inside, the fires of loneliness have almost consumed me now, leaving the shell with no desire to live.

I am more at home on the lonely clifftop than I am with the few people I see in the town. But if I live, I have no option but to live in the town, in the world that I am supposed to be a part of. If I live.

I close my eyes. The gun, my only true friend, lightly touches my temple. I feel happier than I have ever felt before. Inside me, something has broken.

J.D.

The teachers were the same as ever. Perhaps slightly greyer, and more tired looking, more furrows on the brow, but bearing welcoming smiles and being sure to remember everyone's name. 'How are you, Stephanie?' 'How's it going, Melissa?' They proffered glasses of wine on trays. This recognition of our passage into adulthood, since leaving school three years ago, concerned us. Alcohol was not a thing associated with school common-rooms, except under giggly secrecy at end-of-term parties, and the notion of the teachers actually condoning our alcohol consumption was a curious one. Needless to say, we didn't refuse, sat back on the fading, jaded Habitat furniture, so pristine and new in our memories, and, sipping wine and munching sausage rolls, observed the friends and enemies of bygone days.

'There's Fiona, Doesn't she look a sight?'

'I wonder if Rosalind'll turn up?'

'I think Danielle looks nice. I wish my hair would go like that.'

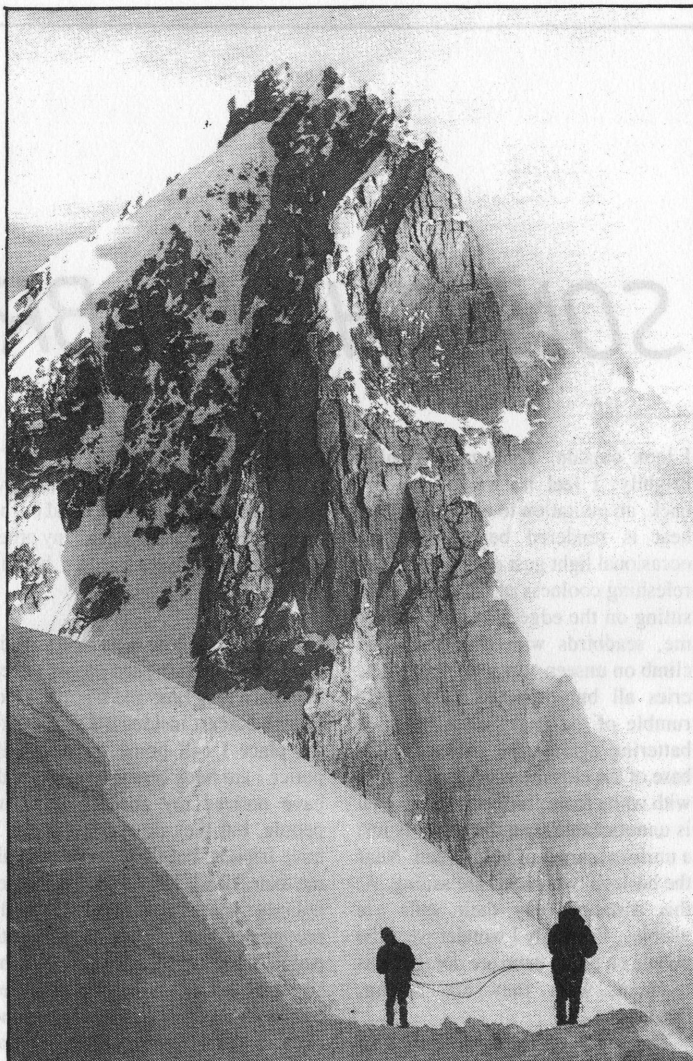
'Corinne hasn't changed—just as tarty as ever.'

'Do you think Andrea'll come with the baby?'

The arrival of a teacher, smiling ingratiatingly and hovering apologetically as if not wishing to intrude, yet desperately desirous of our conversation, forced us to break the knot of sharp cynical observation. We exchanged pleasantries, yes, yes, we'd loved being at university, well, yes, we were sad to leave, no, we were glad we were not continuing with postgraduate studies—and then, well, it had to come, the dreaded Question—what were we going to do now?

Kate piped up first. It was fairly easy for her. 'I'm having a year out and going to Australia,' she said. 'I'm saving up for my air fare.' This was a lie from the start. No doubt she would accrue about fifty pounds, the rest to be paid by her father. 'I'll get a job when I get there, and I've got some relatives in Melbourne...' She chattered away happily and we seized advantage of this to move away from the kind yet inquisitive approaches of another staff member.

They were all there, the tall, the short, the thin, the fat, the pretty and the ugly, in the same cliques as ever. I suppose we were just the same, but whereas the others held court in the centre of the room, we clung to the walls, content merely to observe before we in turn had to be observed. They all had their futures mapped out, this great clan of smartly-dressed, pearl-beaded young ladies, with their striped shirt collars upturned,



THE QUESTION

perching on the edge of their seats, ignoring all the free food and drink that was the prime reason for our presence. 'Sindy dolls'—that was what we used to call them, and I despised them still, with their excessively pretty names—Lucinda, Anne-Marie, Corelia, Francesca, Yvette—and their silly, affected manners—'Jo-Jo! How nice to see you!' and lots of hugging and embracing. The fact that Jo-Jo and Lu-Lu were bosom companions and had probably seen each other virtually every day since the end of term was irrelevant. But their futures were certain—they had chosen sensible degree courses, and were to be dentists, lawyers, physiotherapists, economists. They knew how to answer that dreaded Question.

There were others, of course, but they weren't here, most of them. The 'failures' and rejects, the office-girls and shop assistants, Liz who worked in a printer's, Louise who was a cook in the Army, Pauline who worked alternately in a pub and chippy on the seafront, and, of course,

Andrea with the baby.

They couldn't satisfactorily answer the Question, so they hadn't come. But, to the school, they *were* failures, they hadn't gone into higher education, or, if they had, they had dropped out. We weren't failures, we'd got our degrees—but what else? We couldn't answer the Question. What would we do with our lives? At least most of the 'failures' drove smart cars and could afford to go out most nights.

'Of course, some of the people here must be lesbians, you know.'

'Well—girls. According to the national average, there should be three lesbians from our year.'

'Three?'

'How do you know?'

We'd never really considered this possibility before. Of course, there was the Home Economics teacher who shared a country cottage with the Games mistress; our adolescent minds had concluded that homosexuality was therefore rife in their household, and that the Games mistress, who made us run once round the hockey

HIGH COUNTRY

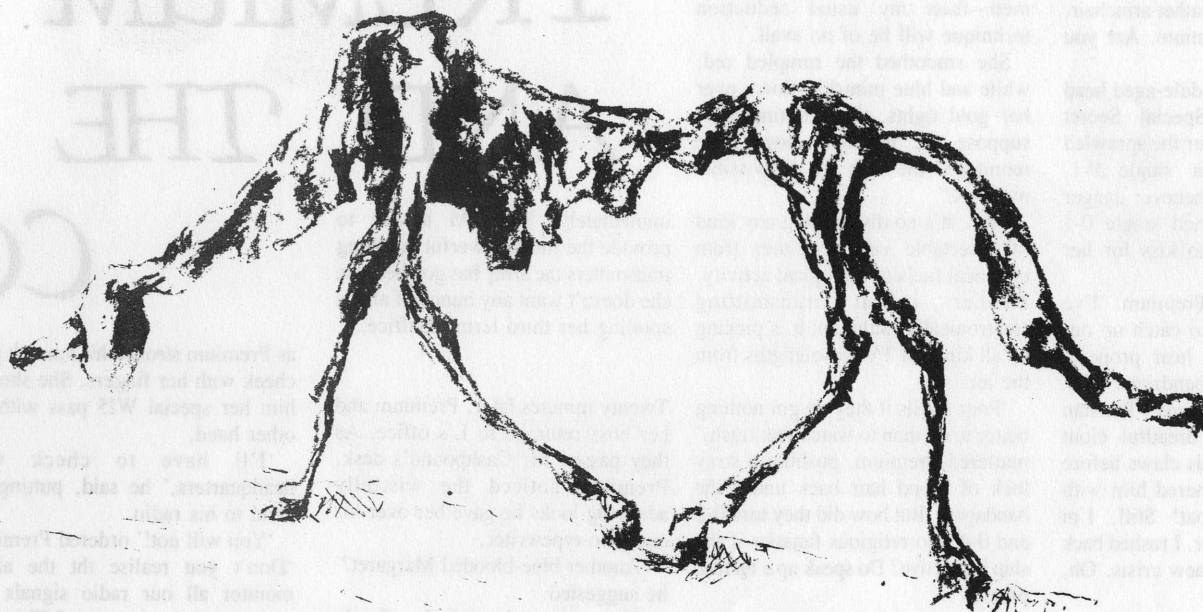
The wind has teeth
And in its bite I feel my folly
Ahead, far in the cloaking mist,
Far, as my faint heart tells me,
The hill men go;
That special lucky breed
As if by right race up
Forbidden crags, and little dream
That some
Feel every step a privilege
And every clawing hold
A prize hard earned
And proudly count each
Small horizon won.
And yet we have something
In common—the high country
Calls, like the fatal siren
Hiding her peril with her charms.
In truth the hills lack
All the lushness, the easy
Grace of sweet fields rolling
Tame from town to town.
Steep crags, they show; proud rock
That dares the solitary fool
To try his strength.
And deep within me that
Strong lure strikes strong response
So that some crazy part
Of me cries out 'Go on,' though
Muscles creak, and sane mind fears
Oblivion. But on the peaks
With frozen flesh but heart
Flushed warm with selfless love,
I think back to the city's
Press of people and I know
That what I have to fear is not
The high ground, but the low
Keya Schmiechen.

field for every item of kit we left behind, obviously 'wore the trousers'. The possibility that two spinsters might share a beautiful residence for companionship and sound economic sense simply did not interest us.

But the idea that some of our contemporaries could be was a new one. Would it interfere with their career prospects? Was there anything about it in the Hippocratic Oath? What if a prospective client found out?

It didn't matter to us, anyway. The desultory conversation and snide speculation were fun, but the ultimate outcome was the same. They could answer the Question—some were currently doing so, smiling prettily, preening their hair, digging their heels into the carpet and chatting politely—and we couldn't. This wasn't our scene. We decided to leave. Hastily consuming a last pizza square, we delved beneath a mountain of green waxed 'Country Jackets' for our coats, said the goodbyes....then went down the pub.

Madeline Slatford



The Dog. 1951.
(Cast in bronze - 46x97x15 cm)
-Alberto Giacometti.

Alberto Giacometti 1901-1966. b Switzerland

'Why does one paint or sculpt? It is the need to dominate things, and one can only dominate by understanding. I make a head to understand how I see, not to make a work of art.

'No one decides, 'Im going to do sculpture,' or 'I'm going to do painting.' One just does things through mania, obsession, through an automatic need that escapes understanding.'

(Extract from—*The Artist in His Studio*. By Alexander Liberman.)

Nads Qureshi.

SMILE

'I need to go to the loo, look after my stuff will you?'

Smile. Yes, please abuse me. I just love sitting at parties with your handbag and coat. What the hell do you need a handbag for anyway? Haven't you got pockets? I mean look at my pockets. No. Don't look at my pockets. Jammed with garbage, keys, money. God, it's all so useless. Money and parties. What sort of people are these? What have they done to be here? Chatting and dancing and drinking. Twenty-one years and you haven't escaped each other yet, you haven't found anything better to do. Just look at him—slip-on shoes, white socks, snow wash jeans. Where's your personality? Didn't your parents tell you? No they didn't. They probably think you're a real rebel with your long hair and your earring. They sit at home in polyester,

watching the telly, eating meat and two veg. What do they know? They point and gesture, asserting this, advising that, they know nothing. I knew my parents once. They were friendly enough, they tried to help. My mother loved me, she used to cry a lot and bake. My father didn't know what to do. He read the paper, listened to the news, he thought he knew what was right, but he wasn't sure. They never told me about handbags. Or about sex. Drink. They knew about drink. They didn't tell me, but they knew about it. They probably knew about sex too, but they said nothing. Perhaps it's best. Better than spouting bull like these fools. Opening their mouths to put somebody else's tongue in or let puke, verbal or otherwise, out. God, I've drunk too much. God. What use is he? Probably wears slip-on shoes. He

never told me about handbags, never told me anything, never even spoke to me. Bet he's just a big con, something invented by the Pope or someone to keep us all quiet, stop us asking awkward questions. Mind you, judging by this crowd they couldn't think up an awkward question if they clubbed their braincells together. So grey and wet. Them and their braincells. Why am I sitting here, looking after a handbag, watching people I'd rather see dead? Why do I bother going on living at all? In the hope of finding something good, love or something? I've been around for about a third of my life, the best third they tell me, done all those things like getting drunk, getting laid, getting stoned; maybe I don't know what's going to happen next but I don't really care, I see no prospect of anything worthwhile happening. Flogging a

dead horse. Sex, that's why we're alive, we have no choice. Programmed into us by our genes. Our parents' genes. Our parents who never told us anything. They must have had sex, but I can't picture it, all that excitement and writhing. I wonder if they've had oral sex. I wonder if they can picture me screwing. Screw my parents, they don't know me, I haven't seen them for six months and I don't....

'Hey, earth calling. Can I have my handbag back now? You alright?'

'Yeah, just thinking.' Smile.

'My God!' exclaimed L, as the bandaged figure burst into the room and collapsed in the leather armchair.

'Oh, it's you. Premium. Are you alright?'

L, the elegantly middle-aged head of the Women's Special Secret Service WIS, bent over the sprawled figure of top agent single 0-1, Premium Blonde. Whenever danger threatened, the coveted single 0-1 prefix licensed her to kiss for her country's honour!

'Not really,' said Premium. 'I've got a week's sleep to catch up on. And it's difficult to hear properly through these head bandages. That Red Rostov—the randy Russian bear—caught me a dreadful clout across the ear with his claws before I killed him. I smothered him with Raisa's best fur coat! Still, I'm recovering by the hour. I rushed back here because of the new crisis. Oh, but I'm tired.'

'Thank heavens you've back alive,' said L. 'I want to her all about Red Rostov later—but the new problem has already defeated single 0-2 and single 0-4.'

'Don't tell me Ursula and Brigit are dead?'

'No, Premium. Not dead, but they've been turned into religious fanatics, like thousands of other previously sane people. And they're quite irrational. By the way, did you order the usual resorative on arrival? Good. Ah yes, do come, in Mr Cashpound. That's right, two blue-blooded Margarets. That will be all, thank you.'

L picked up a large tumbler for herself and gave Premium the other.

'How well the Parfait d'Amour goes with gin,' said L, relaxing for a moment. 'And such a pretty mauve-blue colour—it matches your eyes, Premium. Now, what have you heard of our latest troubles?'

'With these bandages, hardly anything. But I got the RAF boys at Brize Norton to fill me in when my plane landed this morning. It seems that a fairly large spaceship of unknown origin touched down in Hyde Park yesterday, while I was still in Moscow. As it went undetected by our defence systems, its technology must be way ahead of ours.'

'Yet no one—or nothing—has emerged from it since it landed. Or nothing visible. I should say,' added L.

'The Russians were as surprised as the British,' Premium informed her. 'They do not believe that any nation on Earth could have launched a spaceship undetected by their satellites, or landed one here without triggering all the early warning

systems. And if we're up against little men from space—and I hope they are men—then my usual seduction technique will be of no avail.'

She smoothed the rumpled red, white and blue miniskirt down over her gold tights, then continued: 'I suppose the technical boys have monitored the ship by all possible methods?'

'Yes, it's no discharging any kind of detectable vapour, either from chemical fuels or biological activity. Neither is it transmitting electronically, although it is picking up all kinds of TV wavelengths from the air.'

'Poor devils if they've got nothing better to do than to watch that trash,' muttered Premium, pushing a stray lock of blond hair back under the bandages. 'But how did they turn 0-2 and 0-4 into religious fanatics if the ship is inactive? Do speak up a bit too, please.'

'Ah, we didn't let the media transmit, this, but just before the ship landed, it ejected a whole lot of small packages over London. Each contained a Walkman-type portable cassette player, complete with batteries and tape. Not realising that they came from space, people picked them up and used them. They play some kind of percussive pop music and turn the listeners into zombies.'

'What's new about that?' asked Premium, finishing her bloody-Margaret with an appreciative swig.

'Have we had one of these tapes analysed?'

'Several—they are all the same, but one of the Q Branch girls, Cathering Goodeve, was converted while listening druing the analysis. She's under close observation and keeps talking abot the second coming!'

'The second coming?' Premium exclaimed. 'Christ!'

'Christ is not known to travel by spaceship,' said L drily. 'These zombies don't seem dangerous yet, but that might be part of a careful plan to fool us, and to divert attention away from the spaceship. The converts preach a sort of low-grade, simplified Christianity—the kind of thing an American Bible-puncher might broadcast to less educated people. But it is all rather garbled. The oscilloscope analysis of the tapes shows interesting high and low frequency subliminal signals amongst the pop music, but no one can see how they work.'

'Can I interview Christine?' asked Premium.

'Yes—not if you like. The converts don't seem able to recruit others directly, fortunately for us. If the spaceship starts to broadcast such signals, we're ready to jam them

PREMIUM BLONDE AND THE SECOND COMING

immediately. The PM agreed to provide the most powerful jamming transmitters the army has got, because she doesn't want any bunch of aliens spoiling her third term of office.'

Twenty minutes later, Premium and her boss returned to L's office. As they passed Mr Cashpound's desk, Premium noticed the wistfully admiring looks he gave her over his crypto-type-writer.

'Another blue-blooded Margaret?' he suggested.

'Yes, please,' said L, firmly ushering 0-1 into her office as Premium blew a kiss to Mr Cashpound.

'Well,' asked L. 'What did you make of the convert? She said more or less the same when I saw her earlier. What on earth does she want pictures of pale roses for, and why does she ask how much money we gain? And what has it got to do with religion?'

Premium hardly seemed to hear L's deep contralto voice, as her mind grasped at straws.

Suddenly she raised her head and asked:

'Do you know what homonyms are, L?'

'No—something to do with men if it starts with "homo" and interests you. Perhaps men's names?'

'Wrong this time, L. "Homonym" comes from the Greek *homos*, alike, not from the Latin *homo*, man.

Homonyms are words having the same sound but different meanings. They may be spelled the same or differently. It those aliens intercepted TV and radio signals from here as they approached Earth, they might know only the sounds of our words, and could easily confuse words of the After a short visit to Q section, who fitted a small two-way radio under her head bandages, Premium was driven in an unmarked car to Hyde Park Corner where she joined the crowd of curious onlookers. She worked her way up Park Lane, which had been closed to traffic, until she reached the cordon of soldiers and police surrounding the alien ship.

'Strictly no one to be allowed through, that's our orders,' said the harassed young sergeant. He blushed

as Premium stroked his smooth pink cheek with her fingers. She showed him her special WIS pass with the other hand.

'I'll have to check with headquarters,' he said, putting his hand to his radio.

'You will not!' ordered Premium. 'Don't you realise tht the aliens monitor all our radio signals and understand our language? This pass permits me to go anywhere, without question.'

The sergeant draw back in confusion as Premium's carmine lips same sound and different meaning. Being more advanced than us, they have probably got rid of such confusions from their own language and might not expect them in ours.'

'Ah, then they could have put the wrong message on the tapes prepared for use on Earth? Good thinking, yes do come in, Cashpound, just leave the tray there please. Thank you. Go on, Premium.'

'With these wretched head bandages, I've misheard quite a lot of similar-sounding words in the lat two days. That made me think about homonyms and near-homonyms. Religious fanatic's obsession with

pictures of pale roses could arise if the aliens instructed he to seek out the prints of peace, the rose, instead of the Prince of Peace, meaning Christ. Similarly, she could have been told to worship the profits, instead of the Prophets. That mind-numbing pop music could stop the listeners from finding these errors for themselves.'

'That's so absurd that it just has to be true, Premium! So what do you think the aliens are after?'

'They could be trying to raise religious consciousness, to make sure of a friendlier rection when they emerge—my instincts tell me it's not an unmanned probe. Perhaps they aim to use religion as a tool of power, as many humans have done before. If they can turn people like Catherine into zombies with one tape, you can imagine what more thorough conditioning could do. Then again, it really could be Christ's second coming, in a form appropriate for 20th century man—but I doubt it.'

'And what do you suggest we do next, single 0-1?'

'When I've finished my drink, I think I'll pay a social call on those aliens. These mental efforts exhaust me—I'm a woman of action at heart.'

approached his thin moustache.

She dashed past, vaulting the metal barrier in one easy movement. Ignoring the shouts from behind, she darted ahead towards the sleek cylinder, which stood vertically on its four tail fins near Speaker's Corner. Its smooth surface gleamed in the pale April sun.

The crowd watched in awe as she slowed down, walking casually but gracefully towards the two hundred foot high space ship.

When she was only a few feet away, she raised her open hands in a friendly gesture and called out:

'You are welcome here, aliens. I salute the prints of Peace and worship the Profits. I come without weapons to talk to you, to find out the purpose of your mission and how we can help. We know that you understand spoken English and come from a very advanced civilisation. Let us talk peace together, face to face, if your bodies and mine can live in the same atmosphere.'

A gasp went up from the astonished crowd as a panel near the base of the ship slid noiselessly back. A shimmering silver ladder was lowered to the ground, emerging from the darkness within.

Keeping her two-way radio switched off in case its activity was detected by the aliens, Premium scrambled nimbly up the ladder. Her red, white and blue miniskirt fluttered gently in the breeze.

She strode boldly into the dark hold, peering into its gloomy recesses. The door closed quietly behind her, cutting off any retreat.

'Greetings,' she called into the utter darkness. 'Greetings and peace. Welcome to our visitors from outer space.'

Her heart hammered at her ribs as she waited for a response. His now clammy hands toyed with her bandages, through which she could just hear the distant hum of machinery.

'Greetings, single 0-1!'

Premium looked up, startled by the deep yet mechanical voice. It came from a long way up, in the total blackness.

Suddenly a screen lit up brightly, a few feet above her head. The image faltered for a moment, then focussed in brilliant colour.

The image was of herself.

Aghast, Premium watched a slow-motion replay of herself addressing the police sergeant. The frame froze for a moment as she flourished her pass. A zoom enlargement showed every word crystal-clear on that pass.

'I'll have to check with headquarters,' she heard the

policeman say.

The film showed her almost kissing the officer, and even she had to admire the graceful way in which her image vaulted the grey metal barrier.

'Yes, Premium,' said the alien. 'Our vocal and visual monitoring all round the ship is quite effective, at least where we have direct line of sight. You have now been checked from all angles.'

She blushed, pushing her skirt closer against her thighs, as the film ended with her ascent of the ladder. Darkness returned.

'I think you might prefer some light,' continued the metallic tones. 'so let there be light. Our purpose is peaceful, not hostile. We admire you for approaching us so openly, even against the wishes of your government's police force. Any military threat against us would be very foolish, as our weapons and defences are infinitely superior.'

A soft pink light suddenly suffused the ship's interior, revealing fixed ladders ascending the smooth metal walls. There were no aliens in sight, to Premium's disappointment.

'May I come up and meet you, face to face?' She called. 'I have no hidden weapons, and doubtless your detectors will already have told you that my concealed radio is switched off.'

'I admire your honesty, Premium, and it would be foolish to try to deceive us. We know more about you than you might think. In space we intercepted part of a film about your father, the celebrated secret agent, James Bond. You are like him in many ways. Now you can climb the ladder on your left, to the conference chamber—it is the third room up, the one with the open door.'

Premium eagerly climbed the softly shimmering ladder, he inquisitive fingers probing every surface as she did so. Inwardly she laughed at the alien's simplicity, his naive assumption about her ancestry, when the two names, Bond and Blonde, were only homonyms! She thought fondly of the days gone by when the ageing James had been one of her earliest lovers. Poor clumsy James, but he had never, never been her father!

The small, curved conference chamber was bathed in a gentle amber light.

'Please sit down,' said the central alien. He was flanked by four similar figures with hexagonal metal heads and hexagonal metal bodies. The central alien had two arms and two multi-jointed legs, ending in magnetic

clamps. The other aliens had two, four or six arms, and an incredible array of legs. Premium stared at their lower limbs, which varied from one, ending in the caterpillar-track movement, to six jointed, flexed, metal rods, like legs on a fly.

Each alien had what appeared to be a pair of eye units in each of the six vertical head facets, perhaps with others she couldn't see. It seemed to Premium that the aliens stared back at her legs as she crossed them high on the thich, after sliding into the soft but transparent glossy chair, she was quite used to being stared at, but not by more than one pair of eyes per head. At least the film replay hadn't shown any tears in her best gold tights!

'May I know your names and mission?' she asked confidently, after the initial mutual survey.

'We have no names, only call signs, which I will endeavour to represent in your language. I am A1, the first among equals. Let me introduce A2 here, B5 there, E3 and H7. Please note my care to speak English to you, not American, though so many TV programmes monitored seemed to be a confused mixture of both.'

'As to our mission, that is very simple. We have the science and the power to dominate the Universe, to colonise millions of worlds, to develop huge numbers and to acquire infinite wealth. In the past, our ancestors tried to do just that. But we have learned philosophy. We understand the utter futility of great wealth, and the pointlessness of great numbers, which only means more potential rivals and competitors. Numbers and wealth do not satisfy our inner cravings.'

'Do you seek immortality then?' Premium asked A1.

'We more or less have that now, through replaceability and functional duplication. We may look about the same size as you, but by molecular miniaturisation we are vastly more complex, with plenty of room for duplicate parts. My head, as you would call it, has a replaceable alloy exterior and my six brain units are in constant communication with each other, with my colleagues and with the spaceship's master memories and processors. If one brain unit fails, it is easily replaced, with the new unit quickly acquiring knowledge and my personality from the remaining five. As you clearly noticed, we have many kinds of upper and lower limb units and can interchange or replace them at will, depending on our immediate task.'

'And how do you reproduce?' probed Premium keenly.



'By building new parts and assembling a new individual,' said A2, taking over the conversation. He had a lighter, softer voice than A1.

'We can design and build an individual for a particular job, instead of relying on the hazards or biological chance like you primitive Earthlings. We do not waste energy and time on sex and love as you obsessed people do.'

'It's not a waste of time!' Premium protested vigorously. 'It's great fun. And with your mechanical lives you miss the fascination of individual development from babyhood to youth and maturity. You miss the superb variety of unplanned human personality and appearance. How can you do without love, the centrepiece of my existence?'

E3 answered her gently.

'We avoid its pains as well as its pleasures. We were organic like you, millions of years ago, but that is fragile, unreliable and unstable—no basis for prolonged survival. By becoming electro-mechanical we became masters of ourselves and of the Universe.'

Premium thought how dead they all looked, with no breathing, no fidgeting, no moving lips when sound emerged from the invisible loudspeakers. With eyes in six directions, they did not even turn their heads to look when another alien spoke. Only their eye units swivelled occasionally, and she was still a little unnerved to have so many eyes trained on her from different angles. She recrossed her legs, smoothed down her skirt, the continued her questioning.

'You still have not told me the purpose of your mission,' she reminded them sternly.

'I was coming to that when you interrupted me,' said A1, moving a little closer on his multi-jointed legs.

'In our enormously long history, we have learned to succeed materially. We have philosophy to give us judgement, but philosophy is sterile: it is analytical and destructive, rather than constructive. Always we have felt that something was lacking from our existence, some higher purpose. Or some aspect of being which cannot be reduced to equations and sub-molecular particles.'

'I knew it!' exclaimed Premium. 'You lack a soul. That's obvious from your attitude to love.'

'Yes. We lack a soul,' agreed A1, as his companions at last moved their heads in agitation.

H7 spoke for the first time.

'We had great difficulty in monitoring your broadcasts as we came through space. Our radar stealth-shield interferes to some extent, but the main problem is this: As the Earth spins on its axis, so the TV signals beamed up your geostationary relay satellites also rotate in space, so we only caught a tiny fraction of each programme. And very few of those programmes mentioned souls.'

'What is worse,' interrupted B5, 'your multiplicity of tongues and dialects confused our language decipherment computers for a long time. Normally on a planet, a dominant language eventually extinguishes all others. Yet we learnt on landing yesterday that a single TV wavelength from London carries programmes in English, Welsh, French, Gujarati, Bengali and Urdu!'

A2 now continued: 'Not only was there the intermittent signal problem and the different languages, but you even seem to have different religions co-existing, with quite different views about God and the soul. There was one American religious broadcast which we were able to analyse in detail two days ago, with a fairly simple message. It told us about Christ's second coming, and about the profits. When we first monitored you in the crowd, we hoped that your strange white headdress indicated a head nun, or a high priestess of religion. We would like you to bring each of us a soul, if you can obtain them.'

'That is our purpose,' agreed A1. 'Give us a soul, and we will leave your planet in peace.'

Using all her powers of self-control, Premium just managed to suppress an outburst of laughter at being mistaken for a head nun. She thought deeply for a while, bent over in the glass chair, then sat up straight.

'Your stay here is causing great worry and disruption of everyday life,' she admonished. 'The people feel afraid in the presence of such superior beings and such advanced technology. At his first coming, Christ did not seem a threat to the humans around him. He was born of a woman; he looked like the people and seemed humble, sharing their troubles. Your spaceship seems alien and hostile.'

'I will make a bargain with you. I will take me a day to accomplish what you want, but tomorrow I will bring you five of the best souls available. In return, I ask that you leave as soon as you receive them. You must also take off without harming anything.'

You must unconvert those religious zombies, too. I should warn you that any attempts to examine the souls I bring could easily damage or destroy them—just reverently put them in your heads, unanalysed. They will not all look alike, as they are very individual. They will not harm or attack you.'

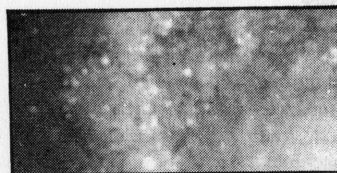
A1 advanced smoothly to within a yard of Single 0-1's chair. 'We are not used to hearing inferior beings telling us what we must do, but we are desperate for souls, your terms seem fair, and we think that you are honest. H7 will prepare a de-conversion tape for our recruits whom we shall no longer need after take-off. If we had required them for military purposes against your armies, you would have found them supermen and superwomen, not zombies, once activated by our signal.'

'As for our take-off tomorrow, we will use our anti-gravity shield, so there will be no radiation or flame hazard, though you should keep everyone well clear. You should stop the tube system below and empty the underground car parks near here. Does that satisfy you?'

'Almost,' Premium answered.

She stood up, put her mouth near his head and whispered briefly.

A1 drew back sharply, then stopped. After a moment's thought, he said: 'Why not? It sounds harmless enough. So we will see you tomorrow, Premium, without fail. We shall not see you again after that as we are planning the difficult transition to a new and better Universe, but the souls you bring will give us fresh confidence for such a task. You can leave now, by the way you came up.'



After Premium's brief visit to the spaceship the next day, she waited with L in the crowd to watch the expected take-off. Knowing that the aliens would be watching her especially, single 0-1 waved and blew a kiss as the tall metal cylinder began to rise. Perhaps they might even replay the film one day she thought. Soon the spaceship had completely disappeared from sight, ending its monitoring of the crowd.

Thus on the third day of their mission to Earth, the visitors from space departed as promised. They ascended into the heavens almost noiselessly, except for a great rushing wind.



'Mission accomplished L,' said Premium wearily. A tear spilled down her cheek. 'You know, I was growing quite fond of the simple-minded aliens.'

'Don't tell me that you made love to them just now?' her boss asked sharply.

'No—but I did kiss them all, by mutual agreement. The first aliens I've ever kissed. And dear old A1 even pinched my bottom!'

'What did you take them in that stainless steel casket, Premium? The Prime Minister and I were furious that you wouldn't take us into your confidence yesterday. We have to report immediately to the PM's Office for debriefing. But why are you laughing now, single 0-1?'

Premium was giggling almost too much to answer.

'I was just imagining those poor deluded aliens solemnly sitting in their spacecraft with their souls stuffed into their brains! 'is so funny!'

'Kindly explain to this less perceptive mortal just what bargain you struck yesterday with those all-powerful aliens, with absolutely no authorisation from me or the PM?'

'That's easy,' Premium replied.

'You remember the miracle of the leaves and fishes, and my little lecture on homonyms? Well, I gambled on those much too logical aliens still not having solved the problem of our illogical language. I'm sure that A2 said profits, not prophets, yesterday. They wanted souls, so I gave them souls—or at least soles, as that is what I actually promised.'

'Premium—you didn't—you don't mean...'

'Yes, L. That casket I delivered thirty minutes ago contained three of the best flat fish and two expensive leather stick-on soles. And they just stuffed them into their brains as I watched! Isn't that priceless?'

L turned even more scarlet.

'So you mean that you gambled the entire safety of this planet on a stupid pun, Premium?'

'Well, it worked,' said the unrepentant secret agent. 'They departed happily for a better Universe, and I'm still enjoying this one. Let's take that taxi over there to Downing Street. If the PM's private secretary can make one, I could do with a stiff bloody Margaret!'

Dr Bernard Lamb.

A PERPLEXING DREAM

It was morning. The sun was shining through chinks in the drawn curtains, bright beams of sunlight were landing on my bedclothes. I lay in bed lazily, half asleep and half awake.

Then I heard someone at the front door. Bobby answered it. I could hear talking; then footsteps, two pairs, mounting the stairs up to my attic room.

There was a knock, and my door swung open.

'Here is somebody who has come to see you' said Bobby and he withdrew.

At the door was a young boy of about four years old. I made no attempt to rise from my bed because the child was happy to jump on it immediately he saw me.

Needless to say I was very charmed by this ingenious young visitor. He seemed absolutely content to play about on the bed for a while; between the sun beams and the shining sheets. I'm always good with children. They like me—and I like them very much too. I don't know why it is but I've noticed how a young child will almost immediately start treating me like an older brother.

This was certainly a nice way of starting the morning. Now the child was at the end of the bed next to my legs. We looked in a friendly manner towards each other.

'So who are you?' I asked.

'I'm playing the part of Jane Eyre,'

he said, obviously a little embarrassed at having a girl's part, even if it was the title role, for his cheeks shone brightly and he began to go shy.

'Oh yes,' I said, then encouragingly added 'It's very good to have such an important role. It means everybody looks upon you highly, and values your contribution.'

The child hugged my knee in a childish gesture of gratitude for my reassurances; and I said again how good was his part. Whilst saying so I thought how nice it would be to watch this angel of a boy in the play when it was performed.

I slid round on the bed and upset the child playfully from my knee.

'So why have you come to tell me all this,' I asked with a smile.

'Because you're playing the other lead role' he replied, crawling towards me and being careful not to slip off my bed.

'What? I'm playing the other lead role?' I exclaimed in surprise. 'But how could that be?'

'Because you are the one who has written a play,' he replied.

'Yes, but you see I haven't written a play,' I began. 'Well not a proper play anyway...just a small thing, a long time ago...you can't mean that can you?' I was genuinely surprised.

'So who says that I have written a play,' I finally asked.

'Everyone,' said the child, withdrawing a little. 'Everyone says

so.'

The child could see that I didn't understand it.

'Everyone says it is you who has written a play,' he repeated, this time pleading for me to understand, and looking as if he might become upset at any moment if I didn't.

'Oh well...that's odd,' I said at length. I leant back on my pillow, I really couldn't understand a thing.

The child started crawling about again, like a little beetle: Up and down the folds of the white sheet, his small legs sometimes being caught in the rays of the morning sun; and it was nice enough for me to lie back and watch him. Presently I was falling back to sleep...but I jumped up with a start when I realised he was crushed underneath a rind of honey. I could just see his legs wriggling weakly. I freed him from the wax. At first he lay on his back and didn't move. There was gooey honey caught between the segments of his body. Then he began to wriggle again and gain strength.

'I'm sorry' I said, as if it was my fault, forgetting that it wasn't I who had crushed him underneath the honey rind.

'Are you alright?'

'Yes' he said shortly.

I said nothing more, then it suddenly occurred to me that I knew nothing about beetles.

'Good Lord,' I said to myself 'Here

I am with a beetle and I don't know how to look after one or anything. I don't know how heavy that rind of honey seemed to the poor fellow. I don't know how long he'll live, or what he eats...

Dear, dear me...I don't know a thing.'

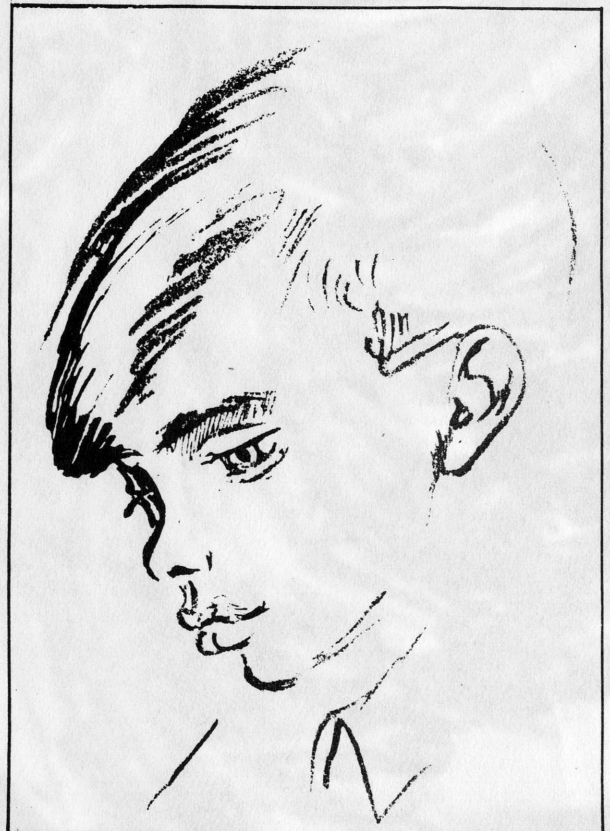
I resolved to exercise great care and to be on the alert for all sorts of unexpected incidents. Then I leant forward on all fours in my pyjamas to have a closer look at him. When my nose was almost touching I began to hear something. It was very surprising. From inside him was coming the broadcasting of one of those taxi-cab operators. I could hear lots of crackling and interference, and a voice giving instructions for a cab to go to Hope Street.


'A radio,' I said aloud and got to my feet and drew the curtains.

It was a nice looking day. I started to dress. Then I remembered the radio.

I went over and picked it up: I tried to get it to make some sound again. There were holes, with matches poking out. I tried twisting the matches, or pressing their heads. I couldn't get a sound. Then I idly realised it was just an empty matchbox I was holding, so I cast it aside...and I don't remember anything else...and I suppose that was the end of the dream.

Adrian Francis Wells.





My mind spins in a whirling of confusion and blurred visions. The screaming inside my head spirts out growths of its own accord. Things blacker than the night spill past the

cracks of my mind into a world gone spin mad. A speeding crash of colour splays from the light, soaks into the distorted surrounding of the rainbow range. Gaps appear in the shimmering image as the ghost and banshees of sound break through, tearing tear drops of colourful words that splash and sparkle in the curses and screams

of unthought. A bird like a fiery seagull skull and skeleton dodge madly across the windswept froth of the dreamsea, diving and sagging beneath the weight of a key glistening and golden in its bloody claws. Close by a monster iridescent fish leaps skywards and flashes and snaps, the bones cracking in an explosion of red, descending into a wind of wild water. Below, the wounded bird shatters and disintegrates.

A scream rips a huge crack in the grey; blackness widens and before my dreamscape is overwhelmed I see a

sear fill with blood and death and blackness consumes all-engulfing. Something old and dark is coming, its presence weighs heavy and pregnant, its breathing resounds above the dull solidity of the void. Nothing is discernable. Then, as I concentrate on the summoning the black concedes and a figure evaporates from its centre. I begin my commandment whilst the dream bides its time, white eyes blinking slowly in eternal gloom, tongue licks, fear congeals in long icy shards on the dark sythe of the night. A word breaks up on the horned skin and the spectre slowly acknowledges and recedes.

I have commanded the gifts of future and sight to know what will be and why. Now the servant obeys and he opens up the gateways and rays of tomorrow stream through, blinding. In the black night at the void a fiery apocalypse melts people in the sun, bacteria extend their spores of venom across the land and dead smoke veins, the veins and arteries severed, and leaking a view from mask of plastic. Wheezing life lies heavy yet precious in the tasks of things not recognisable, the machines patrol with no mercy poison and fire.

The dream snaps shut. Words slide back through the door, seeking a new route between now and then. A new door smashes open, pure antiseptic light streams through and before me are the cannibals of another future, brainless and unemotional.

In bold metallic, a world of light and cold beneath. Through a window lies a shattered, dry world, spinning slowly and empty as fiery exhausts steam downwards and towards the imager, shimmering and fading. The dream folds inwards and outwards until I emerge from the river of time and hover.

Beneath me are the meandering decades, filled with interwoven strands of chance, splitting, falling forever downwards, small fishes at events occasionally jumping out, splashing worlds of droplets into different parts of the stream. I catch a fish, it starves in my hand leaving a shrivelled stretched skin framed and decayed eyes. I throw the famine away from the river, it revolves slowly, lost in freefall.

I have found a purpose. I became the fisherman, but the task is difficult, the fish slip through my fingers. Although I fight I realise that I am being pushed towards a great waterfall.

A roaring noise destroys all as image after image flows over the edge and plummets into unseen depths below. I fight the current but finally succumb with a scream. My spirit lets go and falls in a revolving unconscious. I blank out. When I come to, my mind spins in a whirling of confusion and blurred visions. The screaming inside my head...

Poems by Arun B Samaddar

THE ETERNAL CYCLE

I walk carefully
through the leaves of autumn,
in a compassionate reverence.
Sporadic wind sheds flocks of wizen leaves,
raises them in sibilant whirls,
and splashes against me;
I listen in their husky whisper;
their pain of separation.
How many leaves dropped over the ages!
Are they all different,
or coming back again and again?

I follow the dancing cascade,
find it growing as a river,
meandering on the plane,
rushing towards the sea, and losing its self.
Vapour climbs the sky from the sea,
travels as clouds,
drops on the earth as rain,
forms glacier, and melts down again,
in the journey in the nonstop cycles.

I tremble as does a last leaf in the autumn,
at the edge of a tiny branch,
counting moments, days, or years
before I cease to live embodied.
Where do I come from, and where do I go?
Am I too in a cycle?
I can see only this life, rest in oblivion;
is this life a simple broken line,
a semi-circle, full circle,
or mere a dot on it, or?

I dip into the depth of the quantum physics;
why a particle light years away,
resonates instantly with my heart beats,
defeating the speed of light; the relativity!
Am I omnipotent?
Are you, me, it, and that, all the same?
Have I just known just enough,
yes, God may exist.
My ego pulls me back.
I rename God as the Truth, or as Quanta.
My ego reconciles, yes, I believe then.

WHEN I TRAVEL FASTER THAN LIGHT

I wander with great wonder,
in the galaxies beyond the distant quasars,
in the mind boggling infinite,
where I hit the blind end of my imagination,
and travel down (or up, or!!) in a split second,
billions (!!) of light years, to this earth,
in the darkness of my bedroom.

I wonder on this earth; why
on the equator where
the man incepted from the ape,
millions of years ago,
thousands wither away of food,
under the same noble sky witnessing,
the elixir of the earth's resources
squeezed into bottles of champagne,
or into the mini harems in jumbo jets.
My pinching monkey pinches,
how meagre a part of these
could be enough, if deviated, to save
those pathetic, sparkling, dimming eyes?

'Bravo comrade!'
.No, I do not sing your song.
I grapple in the missing link,
*in the history of races, the religious theories,
in our volatile sympathy, snobbish compassion,
and in our boisterous aid programmes.
Could I write poems, if I were one of them?
Please do not crown my poem as a poem.

The 'woman' is escaping from more women, and
inharmonious pleasure opens Pandora's box;
occult bastard-virus springs out,
we succumb before our helpless eyes.
Doctors of philosophy lost their spines,
and philosophy; create
catastrophic weapons and deadly drugs.

We create computers in our image;
when the Supreme Computer (some say God)
will implement in us;—the soulful computers,
that happiness is different to pleasure,
while peace is further different?

A WINTRY MADRIGAL

When the snow falls
and embellishes the shrubs,
I like to extol the flowers of camellia,
to my heart's content.
In fact, I like almost all the flowers,
but admiringly love those
which remain tender
in the extreme climate; as do
the snow-patched camellias
smiling in the freezing winter,
and the resplendent flowers of cactus,
blooming under the scorching sun,
on the singed rocks and shifting sand,
in dehydrating desert air.

Much after the snow fall has stopped,
in a holiday morning,
when the lives around are still asleep
under the spell of the polar wind,
and the crystalline flakes slide silently
from the tearless weeping willows,
I like to watch
at the foot prints of blackbirds
in my snow covered back yard, and
weave the cobwebs of life and time,
with my past, present, and
the imaginary future.

In the dead of a frosty night,
when all the noise has ceased,
but the incessant crickets,
I like to gaze at the full-circle rainbow
around the veiled moon
behind the transfixed cirri,
and ruminate over my tropical holidays
where in a sweaty dark night, once
your soul came out from under your fiery flesh,
and wondered with me,
at the sky studded with stars,—
'where would we be placed,
if we become stars when we die;
side by side, or far away!'

At the earth's aphelion,
in the languishing sunny day,
when the shadows tallen fast,
the pale rays leap to the tree tops
no sooner than the day has begun,
I need to bury my face in your lap.
Please, hold me tight,
guard my eyes from that fathomless blue
beyond the dispersed nimbus
above the tireless wings
of the thirsty skylark,
the incarnadined horizon, and
the swinging pendulums
on the leafless plane trees.
They will drive me mad, my dear!
Please, press my head
in the warmth of your pulsating bosom,
under your inebriating, yet reassuring eyes,
and let me slumber,
recluse in your affection,
in the tranquility of your love, perhaps,
after I have planted an entozoon in your womb,
in the extreme desire to imitate God.

DREAMING

I woke up in the night with
 A smile from the dream
 Burning sweet in my mind for
 A few precious moments.
 I stirred, but my searching
 Hand touched empty space
 And cold silence closed in
 When I called.
 Where has the dream gone?
 Why must I wake
 To remember the void
 Where bright passion once was?
 Now I pay for those
 Seconds of trust when I left
 Peace of mind in the hands
 Of another. 'Betrayal!'
 The quick, hurt heart cries;
 But the voice in my head
 Whispers hauntingly clear—
 What more could I ask than
 The spell of illusion,
 So brief but so dear,
 That said even for me
 There was love.

Keya Schmiechen



Editorial

Thankyou to everyone who helped with this issue of 'Phoenix'; all the contributors, Judith Hackney, Rose Atkins, Dean Vaughan, Corn Deign, Paul White and Kamala Sen.

If anyone is interested in editing 'Phoenix' next year please get in contact with me via the pigeonholes in the FELIX Office.

Liz Holford.

