

# Felix

THE NEWSPAPER OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

## College gamble on new hall



The college has purchased a new student residence in Earls Court to house about 40 students next term. College Secretary, John Smith exchanged contracts last Friday for the former Girl Guides Hostel, Olave House.

Mr Smith hopes that part of the £1.6 million cost of the purchase will be met by the Sherfield Trust, with the balance of around £1.3 million to be financed by a loan. The Sherfield Trust is legally independent of the college and is administered by a group of trustees, mostly made up of the college's governors. Mr Smith is the secretary of the trust.

The £1.6 million bid was referred to the Charities Commission a month ago since the Girl Guides Association is a registered charity, and was returned last week. The purchase has been described as 'a gamble' by Mr Smith and Senior Assistant Finance Officer, Malcolm Aldridge.

Mr Smith told FELIX that students living in the new house would have to pay £100 per week to cover the loan interest and this was not feasible. Rents will be set at around £55 per week, with interest accumulating upon the original loan. Mr Smith hopes to reduce the

loan by securing funds from other trusts. Mr Aldridge told FELIX that if this fails the loan capital will continue to increase at a hopefully lower rate than the property value rise. The £1.6 million bid for the property was tendered when interest rates were lower than at present and property values in central London were rising at a higher rate.

The contract for the purchase of Olave House will be completed on 30th September, after which the hostel will be ready for immediate use by the student accommodation office. Mr Smith stressed that the cost of the purchase would not be transferred to students outside Olave House, in line with the college's agreement with former ICU President, Christine Taig. The College agreed not to transfer the cost of any further purchases to the overall students residence account after the purchase of Fisher Hall.

The new house is made up of two

*continued on back page*

## Geology slams UGC review

Following their review of Earth Sciences, the University Grants Committee have instructed Imperial's Geology department to reduce its quota of staff and students. The department has been told to lose 10 academic staff and 13 non-academic staff and to reduce its annual undergraduate intake from 45 to 32. As part of the UGC's requirements, the department has been 'reorganised' into teaching and research divisions. The UGC's decision has come under heavy fire from academics within Geology.

The academics are critical of the UGC's alleged use of the Science Citation Index as a means of assessing the quantity of research carried out at Imperial. They argue that the index does not take into account many of the journals which publish the work from applied Geology Departments such as Imperial. They also point out that much of the work carried out by the department is for industry and hence is not available for open publication.

Head of the Geology Department, Dr Richard Selley told FELIX that the department was amongst the top two or three in the country in every criterion assessed by the UGC Committee. 'We were told by a member of the UGC Committee that we were subjectively assessed,' he said. He is critical of the fact that the Chairman of the regional Earth Sciences Committee spent only two hours at the College before the assessment was made. This is in sharp contrast to the current UGC review of Petroleum Engineering during which the whole committee visited the department for two days.

'The reviewers were basically pure academic Geologists and were

reluctant to accept Imperial College's international status,' he said.

The UGC's stance that the Geology Department carries out too much consultative work has also

FELIX spoke to Professor McConnell, regional chairman of the Earth Sciences Review Committee. Professor McConnell told FELIX that the UGC's decision was based primarily on a 'bid' made by the department outlining their plans for the next ten to fifteen years. 'The UGC made a complete analysis of the figures but they weren't specifically used,' he said.

The bid was made by the department as part of a detailed dossier which the Geology Department submitted to the UGC at the beginning of the year. The UGC were unhappy with the bid and asked for it to be resubmitted twice. The first draft of the bid called for moderate increases in staff and student numbers and equipment. The revised version outlined the planned 'restructuring' of the department into teaching and research sections.

According to the Department, the UGC declined to say why they were unhappy with the bid. 'We didn't know what we were bidding for,' said Dr Selley.

The Rector Professor Eric Ash, told FELIX that the cutbacks would be softened by support from industry. Following a press conference given by the Rector in June, industry has sponsored two lectureships and it is hoped that more will be forthcoming. 'It is not at all certain that the numbers of staff and students will be decreased,' he said.



## Silwood Blues

Dear Bill

Two statements in your lead story about Silwood Park in FELIX of 12 August surprise me. The College has not announced its intention to convert Silwood House into a conference centre and the Biology Department has certainly not been moved into new buildings to make room for the centre.

At the time of the 1980/81 reduction in Government funding of universities the College had to decide whether to dispose of Silwood Park or develop its potential. Governors decided on development which involved a long negotiation with the planning authorities. The first stage of the programme was the technology transfer centre to meet government objectives for the universities, to enlarge the scientific community, to share the heavy overheads of huge parkland and to produce income. With the same motivation, arrangements were made to provide a site for the Commonwealth Institute for Biological Control and the library of the Commonwealth Institute for Entomology. With this boost it was possible to realise the long felt needs of the Biology Department to bring together its own two groups, one based at Silwood House and the other at Ashurst Lodge. Governors agreed

to the sale of Ashurst Lodge to finance the new Garden Wood Laboratories which will be fully occupied by the end of the autumn term. Sandyride House, which provided accommodation for eleven students and their families, has also been sold and replaced with a block of six flats and a block of sixteen single rooms alongside the Southwood Halls.

With the successful completion of these developments the next need is the improvement of the catering and recreation facilities for the enlarged community. This larger community provides the opportunity because there is no public fund support for catering or residence. What we are now doing is looking at the main Silwood House to see how it can be refurbished to provide the focal social point for Silwood Park. With the freeing of space formerly used as offices and laboratories there is the possibility of transferring the refectory from the wartime huts where it is poorly housed at present. Company tenants are looking for a boardroom type lunch service for which there would be room. This kind of service provides a subsidy to the student side of catering which cannot be provided at low prices just during term time without other business to help cover overheads.

Apart from improved catering facilities, common rooms and teaching space Silwood House will also be able to provide bedrooms to improve existing conference accommodation. There is nothing new about conferences at Silwood Park. Space pressures have made it much more difficult to mount them in recent years and some, like the student Touchstone weekends, have long since gone altogether. We now have an opportunity to build up the business alongside providing better accommodation for both full-time students and short course students.

The College has asked Martin Parsons to transfer to Silwood Park to provide professional skill in developing the social and recreational facilities. No work can be undertaken without a business plan which shows that a loan financed project can be effectively serviced. At the end of the day everyone there, not least the students, will enjoy far better amenities than at present. The price which has to be paid is the good management of resources, which has enabled recent development to take place. Those who hanker after the good old days of rustic calm with research being carried out in wooden huts and South Kensington as remote as another planet need to recollect that but for the changes which have taken place there would be no Silwood Park.

Yours sincerely,  
John Smith, College Secretary.

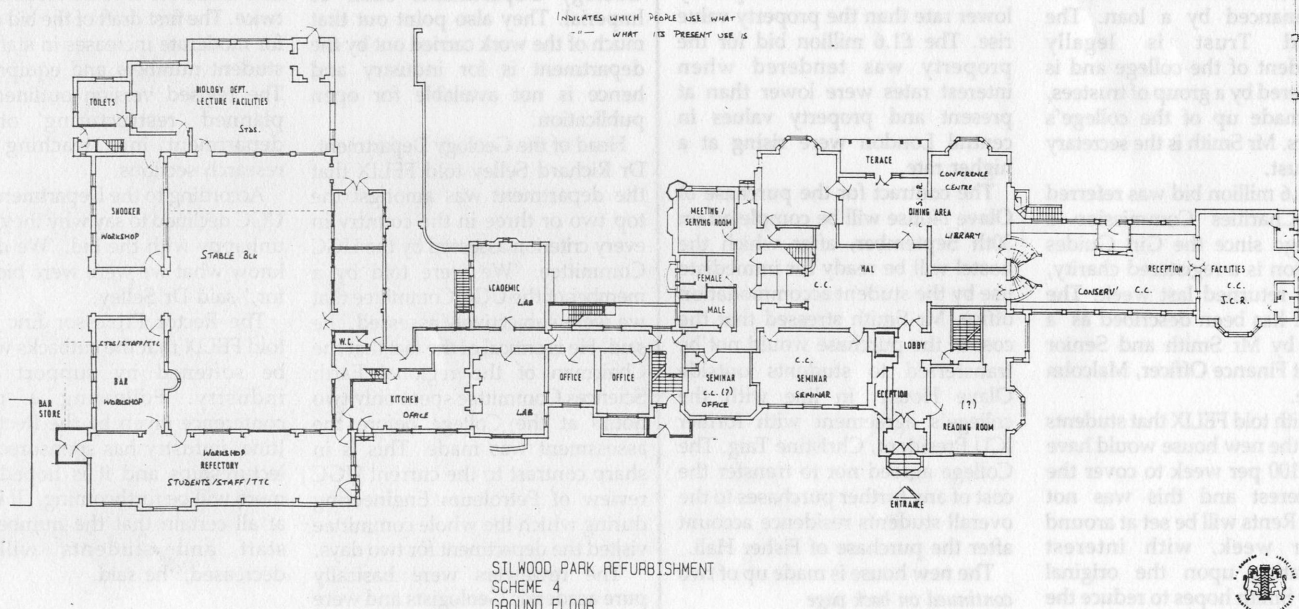
## Film Review

### Rambo III

Set against the backdrop of the Pakistan/Afghan border, Sylvester Stallone proves that there is still life after Rocky, albeit slightly brain-damaged. Drawn out of retirement in a Buddhist monastery by the capture of his lifelong buddy and ex-commanding officer, 'John' takes on the whole Russian army aided only by an obnoxious Afghan rebel called Hamid.

The film is based on a Rambo vs Russia game of hide and seek. Rambo breaks into the crack Russian fortress, imparts some gratuitous violence, then breaks out, only to break in again when the Russians are looking for him in the desert. With his diminutive ally he shows that Americans firing stolen Kalashnikovs are far superior to trained Russian commanders with the same weapon: if this is how the Russians shoot, World War 3 will be a walkover for NATO. Rambo 3 is exactly what you'd expect Rambo 3 to be. See it if you want some light entertainment. It's a shame Perestroika made it even more incredible than it was meant to be.

## Plan of Silwood Park Refurbishment



## Editorial

**Silwood.** The College Secretary, John Smith is quite right to point out the error in FELIX's coverage of the Silwood Park Conference Centre in issue 808. The College have not announced their decision to build a conference centre at Silwood. Far from it, the matter has been kept as quiet as possible.

The Students at Silwood have every right to be concerned about their future. They have been told little or nothing officially and the rumours and half truths which have been circulating offer little consolation. They are not the only one's who have been kept in the dark; the College's Trade Unions have been trying to find out the facts for a long time, with little success. I spent the best part of a week trying to weedle out the truth about Silwood.

I am not suggesting that there is

anything sinister about the Silwood development, but I think that the College ought to ask itself whether its Colonial closed door style of management is appropriate to a modern institution. Does the College really have anything to fear by being open?

**Happy Birthday.** Congratulations to Clare McErlane on her 21st Birthday. Drop in to the office for a drink, Clare.

**Next Issue.** Unfortunately this is the last PG issue, but we will be starting work on the freshers issue (October 3) next week. Contributions, letters and articles are welcome.

**Thanks** to Dave, Steve, Nigel, Kamela and special thanks to Chas, Amin, Dave and Steve for staying up all night to get the last issue out on time.

## Food & Drink

### Traditional Guinness Pie

To serve 2 large appetites, 3 medium ones or 4 very small ones:

*½lb steak (sirloin, braising or stewing depending on what you can afford) cut into 1 inch squares.*  
*4 carrots, peeled and cut widthways into rings of about ¼ inch width.*  
*2 medium or 3 small onions, chopped up small.*  
*¼lb button mushrooms, peeled.*  
*1 small can Guinness.*  
*2 large garlic cloves.*  
*1 beef stock cube dissolved in ½ pint water.*  
*2 teaspoons brown sugar*  
*2 large squirts of tomato ketchup*  
*1 teaspoon chopped sage.*  
*Salt and pepper to taste.*  
*Oil or butter, for browning the meat.*  
*½ packet of frozen puff pastry.*

This dish tastes best when it can be left to marinate for a couple of hours or, preferably, overnight. So, mix together everything except the fat and puff pastry and leave in a large casserole dish, cover and place in the fridge.

After marinating, remove the meat and heat the oil in a frying pan until very hot. Brown the cubes of

meat for about 4 minutes until sealed. Replace in the casserole. Cook in a cool oven (150°C) for about 3½ hours, stirring occasionally. More water may be needed towards the end of the cooking time, the liquid in the casserole should be the consistency of thick gravy.

Roll out the puff pastry and cut into the approximate number of pieces and bake in a hot oven (200°C) until golden brown—follow the instructions on the packet. Spoon out the casserole into bowls or onto plates and place the pastry on top just before serving. Potatoes and a green vegetable such as runner beans or mange tout make a pleasant accompaniment to Guinness Pie.

A full red wine such as Cabernet Sauvignon would be suitable to drink with this dish.

#### Glossary

**Marinate**—to steep meat or fish in a mixture of wine, vinegar, oil, herbs, etc.

**Seal(meat)**—to brown and cook the surface, leaving the meat red (rare) inside.

### The Wines of Burgundy

The Burgundy region embraces six easily identifiable and separate regions: Chablis; Côte de Nuits; Côte de Beaune; Côte Chalonnaise; Mâconnaise and Beaujolais. Local conditions (weather and soil) give rise to a great variety of wines.

Chablis is made from the Chardonnay grape, and is relatively expensive due to the small quantity of it actually produced (compared to other wines.) Much of the available produce is exported to the UK or USA. A good fine white wine, this is recommended!

Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune together form the Côte d'Or a first class region producing mainly red wines. These, especially wines from Côte de Nuits, are regarded as amongst the finest in the world. Famous names include Chambertin

and Richebourg. Côte de Beaune also produces a small quantity of first class white wines. These are amazing, but correspondingly wallet mangling.

Côte Chalonnaise produces powerful red wines, lighter than those of Côte de Beaune. The white wines are firm and dry and many of them are sparkling.

Mâconnais principally produces an agreeable white wine made from the Chardonnay grape. However, Mâcon Rouge, produced from Pinot and Gamay grapes, is a magic wine, and thoroughly drinkable.

The most sizeable region of Burgundy, Beaujolais, is a truly prolific one. The Gamay grapes produce a wine that should be 'guzzled' within the year...sounds good to me!

## ULU travel



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Victorian houses with three floors, accommodating around 40 students. Mr Smith told FELIX that the property was ideally suited to the college's needs since it has been used as a hostel and offers immediate occupation, although some work will be required in the kitchen areas. The work will take a month or so, during which students will be given meal vouchers for use in the college refectories. He went on to say that he had discarded several other properties, which were not suitable for immediate use. Mr Smith added that the college is also planning to purchase a further property for £400,000 on a similar financial basis, in time for next term. The hostel on Chelsea Bridge Road is part of a converted nurses home and will house 12 students. Mr Smith hopes to have exchanged contracts by the end of this week. He said 'People are always accusing me of not taking risks, and now I'm taking one.' He hopes that the financial situation for the new purchases 'should look reasonable' after three to five years.

## New mag

'London Student', the magazine of the University of London Union will be relaunched this October.

Its new editor, Jane Headon, promises a completely redesigned, thicker publication with wider and fuller News, Sport and Arts pages and Travel pages designed 'much more with the student traveller in mind.'

## New loo

After a break-in at 9 Princes Gardens the college has decided to rethink its security arrangements for the Northside of Princes Gardens. The house contains postgraduate flats, one of which had £200 worth of jewellery and camera equipment stolen from it on Tuesday night. Two other unoccupied flats were also broken into. Security Officer, Terry Briley told FELIX that workers from Nightline had left a basement door in 9 Princes Gardens open that night.

The college plans to install a separate toilet for the West London Chaplaincy. At present, members of the Chaplaincy use the Garden Hall facilities. The new toilet will allow the rest of the hall to be isolated from the basement.

## Juke-box jury



A new juke-box has been installed in the Union Lounge Bar and Snack Bar area and the Imperial College Radio speakers have been removed. The move has been a cause for complaint from Imperial College Radio. Station manager, Nigel Whitfield, said 'It would have been nice if we'd known something about it.'

Mr Whitfield told FELIX that the loss of the snack bar as a broadcasting area would lead to a reduction in the number of listeners and a fall in their complimentary record income.

IC Radio received 300 free records from companies last year but the figure has been declining for several

years.

Chas Brereton, ICU Deputy President, told FELIX that he felt IC Radio should be able to broadcast in the snack bar 'under the control of the Snack Bar and Bar Manager'.

ICU Hon Sec Ian Morris admitted that the Union had 'been a bit stupid' and had not entered into talks with IC Radio before the move. He went on to suggest that the juke-box could be converted to allow IC Radio to broadcast when the juke-box is not in operation. He added that the juke-box will be re-stocked with four or five new Chart singles per week which could go to IC Radio.

## Computer thefts continue unchecked

Further computer thefts from departments around the college have continued to baffle the college security forces, despite an outside police presence.

Two computers were stolen from the Mechanical Engineering department on Wednesday night. Later that evening, two people were challenged in the Royal School of Mines and fled leaving a computer box from the Mechanical

Engineering department. They are described as a Filipino or Italian male accompanied by a thin female.

More computer equipment valued at £5500 was stolen on August 31 from the Mineral Resources Engineering department. Security Officer, Terry Briley told FELIX that a computer had been left unlocked after a late evening's work. He went on to say that 'We probably have

more than one suspect. This is a two man job.'

The college central administration has put forward funds for better locks and hopes departments will add to this. Mr Briley told FELIX that he hoped to install magnetic locks on fire doors throughout the departments and added that a lock was due to be installed upon the fire door to the Royal School of Mines. The locks are of a type which releases in the event of a fire and cost £1000-£2000.

The college had arranged for a small squad of police officers to patrol the college over a two week period. The plan met with little success however, since the squad was called away three nights out of four. Mr Briley hopes to be able to arrange further police surveillance in the future.

## Obituary

Prof Alan Bishop 1920-1988  
Dept of Civil Engineering 1946-1980

Prof Alan Bishop died suddenly at his home in Whitstable on 30 June 1988, while recovering from heart surgery.

He graduated from Cambridge in 1942 and joined the College in 1946 from the Metropolitan Water Board, the first recruit to the Soil Mechanics School started by A W Skepton. He became Reader in Soil Mechanics in 1957, and Professor of Soil Mechanics in 1965. His early retirement in 1980 followed a prolonged period of ill-health.

He made a notable contribution to the subject of soil mechanics particularly to the understanding and use of the principle of effective stress. An expert experimentalist, he designed and, in the early days, made his own soil testing apparatus. Equipment of his design was used worldwide and still operates in most laboratories.

As head of the soil mechanics section he took a keen interest in the welfare of his staff and students, and was Dean of City & Guilds College from 1970-73. He was a well known international figure in his subject, being the third Briton to give the annual Rankine Lecture on Geotechnical Engineering at the Institute of Civil Engineers. He was consulted on many engineering problems, and led the team of investigators into the causes of the Aberfryn disaster in South Wales in October 1966.