



1 March 1991 Issue Number 896

Felix



12 pages of travel features from the island of Mull to the depths of Indonesia, from inter-railing to desert driving a car built from scratch, in our...

Travel Special



The War Comes Home

The Home Office has given an Iraqi student at Imperial College twenty-eight days to leave the United Kingdom. The student in question sent his passport off in October, for what should have been an automatic renewal of his annual visa. He heard nothing from the Home Office for four months until last Saturday when he received notice to quit the country.

The letter from the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Department read as follows, '... your stay has been extended to 28 days after the date of this

notice. If you do not wish to appeal, you should leave the United Kingdom by that date.' The letter was stamped '20th February'.

The student has made the decision to appeal, and has sought legal advice. The College Authorities have pledged their full support. Mr Peter Mee, the College Registrar, has written two letters on his behalf, one to the solicitor, co-ordinating the appeal, and the other to the immigration department at the Home Office. In the letters, Mr Mee demanded

an explanation for the apparently unjustifiable deportation action. On behalf of the College authorities, he said 'We will support him as strongly as we can.'

The student said that the whole affair was having 'a severe effect on (his) work' and that he wanted 'to stay in the Country long enough to finish (his) degree'.

Felix respects the anonymity of the student, for reasons of family and personal security.

CCU Results

The results of the CCU elections are as follows. The new City and Guilds President is Tim Proctor (by only two votes), the vice-President is Lucia Clipstone and Honsec is Naill Davies. Angela Criesson is the new RCS President, Richard Murray is the vice-President and Simon Gibbons is Honsec. The RSM hustings are not until the 12th March. The RSM is currently riding a high after their surprise victory in the Bottle Match, the annual rugby match with the Camborne School of Mines. The RSM won the football and ladies hockey but lost men's hockey and squash, also against Camborne.

President in Court

Westminster Council has summoned Union President, Paul Shanley, to court for the non-payment of his poll-tax. Mr Shanley said he was not sure what course he would pursue but was particularly unhappy about the £26 court costs he would incur. He did not feel that he was prepared to go to prison over the matter.

Mr Shanley added that he felt 'gutted' and exclaimed '..long live Lady Porter!'. Lady Porter is a staunch Conservative and heads Westminster Council.

ICU Elections

Candidates presently standing for the Sabbatical posts of Imperial College Union are as follows:

President

Zoë Hellinger
Spenser Lane
Michael Newman

Deputy President

Jonathan Griffiths

Honorary Secretary

Steve Farrant

Felix Editor

Adam Harrington

Papers come down at 5.30pm today, and any additional candidates must have a proposer and twenty seconders by this time. If you are not satisfied with any of the candidates, you may vote 'New Election' for any of the posts.

Hustings will be at 6.00pm on Monday 4th March in St. Mary's Union Bar and 6.30pm on Thursday 7th March in the JCR.

Voting will be on the 11th and 12th in all departments.

Goodbye Mr Chips

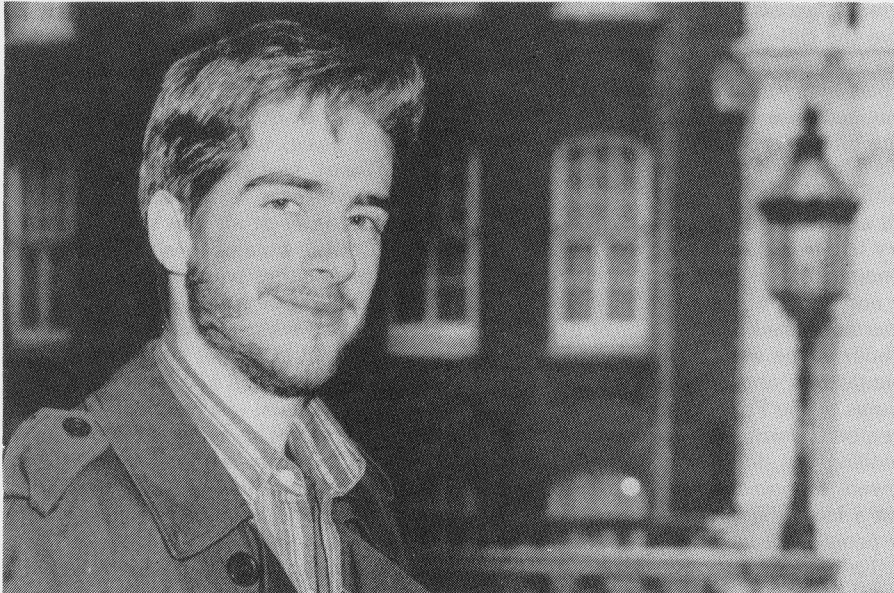
Refectories Manager, Mr Robert Northey, yesterday left the employment of the College. His five year contract having expired, Mr Northey tendered his resignation before Christmas, saying 'I've enjoyed myself very much.'

The vacancy will be temporarily filled by Mr Simon Westerman, following which there will be a permanent appointment. When Felix tried to contact Mr Northey, at 4.00pm on Thursday, we were told that he was '...at lunch'.



Monday 25th February - Kuwait Independence Day. Police descend on South Kensington in force, but there is no trouble.

New Editor



Adam Tinworth, Felix's Arts Editor, has won the election for editor of 'Cub', the student newspaper of Queen Mary and Westfield College (QMW). Adam started a Physics degree at Imperial last academic year, but in the words of his senior tutor was '...hampered by a lack of mathematical insight'. After a first term which Adam describes as 'disastrous', he decided to change course and college. He spent the rest of the year working on

Felix, and since the start of this academic year has been studying English at QMW, whilst continuing with Felix.

When asked about his reaction to the result, Adam said 'I'd feel pretty damn good if I didn't have the flu...'. He plans to make Cub more regular and increase its quality, drawing on his experience at Felix, and is in the process of arranging for Cub to be printed by the ICU Print Unit.

Adam has done a huge amount of work for Felix this year, despite having to travel for an hour and a half to get to the office. Andy Butcher, Felix Editor, said of Adam 'He's a total super hero, and deserves a medal. Besides, he reads the same comics as me!'

The Felix staff wish Adam all the best for the coming year.

Cancellation

The Gulf War debate has been cancelled. The debate was being organised jointly by IC Anti-War in the Gulf (AWG) and ICU Youth Peace Through NATO Society (YPTN), on the left and right of the political spectrum respectively.

AWG had already collected the one hundred and fifty signatures necessary to call a Union Extraordinary General Meeting. At the suggestion of the IC Union President, Paul Shanley, the AWG decided to hold Union Extraordinary General Meeting at the end of the debate. AWG could then propose a motion to be adopted as the official ICU line on the 'Gulf Issue'. YPTN said that they found it '... unacceptable that ICU should officially support any single view on the Gulf War...'

YPTN have withdrawn their goodwill from the debate and have cancelled the appearance of Conservative MP Terry Dicks who was due to speak.

Resignation

Geoff Reeves, Head of College security, resigned this week. Mr Reeves, 64, planned to retire next year, but felt that he would have too little time left to see through changes in college security that are currently being mooted.

Mr Reeves recalled that when he took up his post eleven years ago, after thirty-three years with the Metropolitan Police Force, he inherited a newly changed security system. Mr Reeves said that he did not want his successor to inherit 'half-baked change'.

Apology

Last week's report on the arrest of man in Garden Hall on suspicion of a bicycle theft was inaccurate. We stated that Mr Wong was happy to purchase what he suspected was a stolen bike. Mr Wong claims that he was part of a 'set-up' that he and another student had organised to trap the man suspected of other thefts in Garden Hall.

Mr Wong had been approached by the man who was trying to sell the bike in question. The hall authorities contacted the police who instructed Mr Wong to go head with buying the bike, as this would incriminate the suspected thief. The man was duly arrested but because the police were unable to prove that the bike was stolen the man was released without charge.



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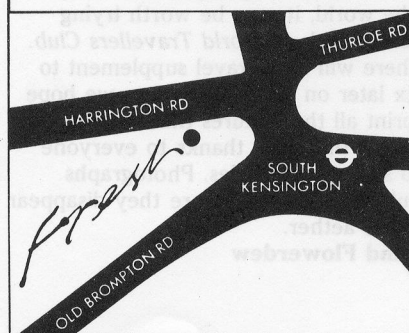
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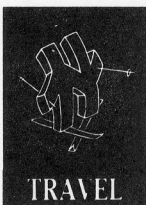
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You don't have to go abroad for variety

Staffa, Mull & Iona

The island of Mull lies just off the west coast of Scotland, and forms part of the Inner Hebrides. It is one of the largest islands in the UK, and is relatively undiscovered by tourists, who usually come on one-day coach trips. Lying to the west of Mull are a whole series of islands. Two are mentioned in this feature, Iona and Staffa.

Staffa is a small island off Mull, and is stark and uninhabited. Yet this island is famous for two things: its rock structure, and Fingal's Cave. The rock is volcanic basalt, and has formed into tall vertical 'crystals' with a regular hexagonal cross-section. The same rock structure is found at Giant's Causeway, in Northern Ireland, and, as legend has it, the two places are said to be the ends of a causeway built by the Irish giant, Finn Mac Cool. He decided that he was going to fight his Scots contemporary, Fin Gall, and to do this, he had to have a means of getting there. After driving each column into place, he went back to Ireland to rest before he attacked.

Meanwhile, Finn Gall crossed to Ireland to spy out the land, and, so terrified by the sleeping giant, fled back to Scotland destroying the causeway behind him. Fingal's Cave is named after that same giant. It is a large sea cave, stretching back more than 60 metres into the cliff face. The walls and roof are all part of the hexagonal rock formation, giving it as light cathedral-like look. In good weather, boats can go right inside the cave, but

normally, access to it requires a climb down the cliff-side. Boats run to Staffa from Mull and Iona, and the routes used go past many uninhabited islets which are populated by a whole variety of birds. Quite often, seals can be spotted, sunning themselves along the shore.

Although many people decide to 'do' Mull and Iona on a single coach cum ferry trip from Oban, it is well worth spending several days on Mull itself. In the north part of the island is the capital, Tobermory, said to be the most beautiful harbour in the world. The island is mountainous, and a lot of the land belongs to the Forestry Commission, and is rented to farmers. Fences are few, and, providing you do no damage, you are allowed to go nearly everywhere. If you want a hill-walking holiday, knowing that few people will have been where you can go, this is a place to visit. There are several large lochs which can be fished, and the whole place abounds with wildlife.

The road system in Mull is slightly different to the rest of the UK: all but about 12 miles are single track road (with passing places). Despite this, getting about on Mull is not difficult, because if you come up behind a slower-moving vehicle, they are expected to move into let you past. With experience, roads on Mull can often be traversed faster than their single carriageway mainland equivalents: you are rarely blocked. Traffic and population is light; this is one of the few inhabited

places in Britain where you can go out at night and not see a single artificial light source, even over an extended period of time.

If you are a historical Britain fanatic, then Mull boasts two castles open to the public, Duart, seat of MacLean, and Torosay. However, Iona will probably have more interest for you since it was the seat of the Columban church, from where missionaries weresent to convert the pagan Picts of early Scotland. Iona was the place where Columba, the Irish prince and abbot, came, in the sixth century, and founded an abbey from where the spiritual affairs of Scotland were governed. The abbey itself (which is not the 6th century original) is too subservient to the tourist trade, but the rest of the island is visually stunning (when the sun shines).

It is worth leaving the abbey to the tourists, and going out to explore the rest of the island. One of the reasons Columba decided to settle on Iona was its beauty, and this remains, largely unspoiled, even to this day.

Ferries run to Mull from Oban in Strathclyde region, and from Lochaline, Highland region. Oban is about 100 miles from Glasgow, and about 500 miles from London. Costs are, what you make of them: bed & breakfast with evening meal on Mull is well under £20 per night. Taking a car over to Mull is not cheap, but it is worth it in terms of flexibility.

Travel Editorial

Fed up with exams and the stress of college life? Go on holiday. Much can be done on a limited budget, and if you are devoid of ideas, one of our features should provide you with some inspiration.

When I came to edit the travel features, I was impressed with the range and variety of places students visit, and things students do, whilst on holiday. No transport? Build your own car and take it to Africa (but do take better maps than the pilots of Boris, page 11). Like trains and value-for-money travel? Try inter-railing, page 19. No money? Go and stay with a friend somewhere in the UK - there's plenty to see without having to pay to get out of the country. Think Sherfield's bureaucracy is bad? Try the genuine version in China or the Soviet


Union (pages 8 and 9). When things go wrong? See the account of surgery in the field on page 10. Want to see what Europe was like a century ago? Visit places like Prague (page 18).

Whatever your holiday plans, it is well worth going to see people like STA to bounce ideas around, and get them costed. If you are going to another part of the world, it may be worth trying schemes such as *World Travellers Club*.

There will be a travel supplement to Felix later on this year, where we hope to print all the features that we had to miss out this time; thanks to everyone who submitted articles. Photographs should be collected before they disappear into the aether.

Roland Flowerdew

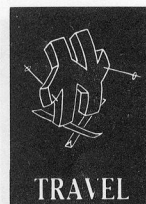
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Help at Hand on the Australian Adventure



Travellers taking time off to see the increasingly popular sights of Australia can join a unique new club to provide them with a helping hand in their first tricky weeks.

The **World Travellers Club** was set up by two seasoned travellers in response to the Australian tourism boom which is fast making the country the world's number one long-stay destination. Since 1983 for example, the number of British and Irish travelling to the land 'down under' has more than doubled from 126,880 in 1982-83 to 256,454 in 1988-89.

Leigh Harris and Amanda Galbraith, the co-founders of the WTC, have developed a safety package which assists travellers of all ages both working their passage and simply holidaying to have a more enjoyable hassle-free experience.

This system allows travellers to organise a free airport pick-up and book accommodation in their Australian destination before leaving home. This is followed by a complimentary orientation tour or Sydney Harbour Cruise. Once in the Sydney WTC office, travellers are assisted with tax file number registration—essential for

working holiday makers and medicare cover. WTC staff also help with job and flat hunting and provide a long term luggage storage facility. For people on the move, the WTC offers a permanent postal address and telephone number from which mail and messages can be held in our office or forwarded to the travellers next port of call.

The first of its kind, the World Travellers Club, has been operating for over a year in Australia, ten months in Britain and will shortly be networking throughout Australia and into Thailand and New Zealand.

Life membership can be obtained in Britain for a fee of £30 for a single person or £50 for two people travelling together. Members are also entitled to reduced rates for secretarial services, complimentary introductory drinks in local restaurants and even free surfboard rental!

For £52 per person or £101 for two the WTC will include the first three nights accommodation—in a budget hotel owned and operated by the WTC—in our membership package.

In Sydney the WTC has a travel agency and information bureau. Here

you can book your rail, air or bus ticket to every destination in Australia and overseas.

At the moment we are the sole agency in Sydney offering car insurance specifically catering for travellers who are non-residents.

The latest addition under our umbrella organisation is the World Travellers News. This is our newly developing free fortnightly publication aimed at both overseas and budget Australian travellers. The World Travellers News is full of information on what's happening 'at home' with current affairs, sports and entertainments news, from Europe, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Asia. Travel features and tips, financial column and classifieds also what's on and where to go in Australia and other features. All in all a good read.

The whole idea of the World Travellers Club is to provide a quality service which travellers want to use, at a reasonable cost. Also to provide some security for travellers without being obtrusive or too much like a 'package holiday'.

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ARTS

Mr & Mrs Bridges

Tilai

F This film follows the course of an American upper middle class marriage during the 1930s and 1940s. Paul Newman plays the part of the old fashioned, 'set in his ways', and sometimes pompous father just brilliantly and is sometimes very funny, purely because he is so stubborn.

His wife, both on and off screen, is Joanne Woodward, who is the typical over-caring and proud mother, plays this part brilliantly.

The film is basically concerned with how their three children, two girls and one boy, grow up.

The son, played by Robert Sean Leonard, (the one who killed himself in *Dead Poets Society*) goes from being the nervous young Eagle Scout through to being in the army air corps due to

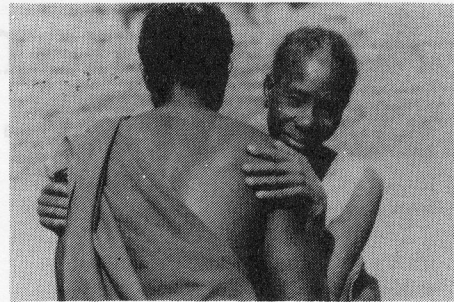
wartime excitement, and finally ending up taking over his father's law firm.

The two daughters Harriet and Ruth, played by Sandra McClain and Kyra Sedgwick, have their own troubles. Harriet meets Glen at University, marries in haste and finds out later that she can't stand her husband. Ruth, a high-spirited, sexually charged girl, departs for the artistic bohemia of New York.

Other noticeable performances were by Dr Alex Saver (Simon Callow: *Amadeus*, *A Room with a View*) and also by Blythe Danner as Grace Barron the best friend of Mrs Bridge.

All in all the film was enjoyable, but not something I would deliberately go and see—my parents would love it—enough said?

Hix.



F Burkina Faso's Idrissa Ouedraogo first came to the attention of the British cinemagoers in 1989 with the highly acclaimed *Yaaba*. He has followed it up with *Tilai*, which won last year's Grand Jury Prize at Cannes.

The story centres around Saga, who upon his return to his village after a long period finds that his fiancée has been married to his ageing father. Saga feels betrayed by his father, his fiancée, his brother and, in fact, the whole village. He then sets up his hut close to, but separate from, the rest of the village. However, Saga and his former fiancée later meet again and make love. The villagers soon discover the 'incestuous' relationship, ultimately leading to tragic results.

Tilai actually means 'the law'.

Ouedraogo is interested in the codes under which society must live in order to survive and the consequences for an individual when he or she breaks those rules. Saga's brother for example recognises that Saga must accept their father's decision and continue life as best he can under the new circumstances. Both father and son will allow no room for compromise—their egoism in fact threatens any order that has been created by the notion of 'village' or society. The ties of honour which hold the characters together are also very strong in the film.

This is of course classic material for tragedy (one may consider the similarities with the Oedipus story). Nevertheless this is a very African film—as Ouedraogo says, 'Perhaps the great Greek tragedies are not the only ones in the world...But we have not had the chance to put ours in writing.'

But don't worry, the film isn't half as dry as I make out. The film is very funny in places, and extremely beautiful. The film makers persuaded the brilliant South African jazz musician, Abdullah Ibrahim, to compose a highly evocative soundtrack for the film. Ouedraogo himself communicates superbly through the medium which he operates. Image and sound combine wonderfully, always it seems with the minimum of effort or fuss. It all seems so simple, yet has been brilliantly fabricated to produce a visually stunning window on a very rich world.

I.H.

F —Film

Meet the Applegates

F Dick, Jane, Johnny and Sally are a blue-eyed, blond haired all-American nuclear family. Johnny (15) loves baseball and science. Sally (17) is fond of Chicken McNuggets and kisses on the second date. Dick and Jane are the perfect couple, and keep a wonderfully average house. They even live in Median, Ohio.

All is smiley faces until decadence takes its toll; Dick begins to practise with his namesake on his secretary and Jane finds out about the joys of plastic. Not to be outdone, Sally and Johnny get a bun in the oven and turn into a dope-crazed metal freak (respectively, of course).

While this may sound like small potatoes (as opposed to the gargantuan rooters of *Die Kroppe*) compared to an average episode of *Neighbours* the above scenario takes on a happy turn for the worse/better when you discover that the Applegates are in fact amiable six foot cockroaches bent on cracking the cooler of the local nuke plant.

Thereafter much chaos ensues; Sally's one-night stand is alarmed to discover that not only is she unprotected but also invertebrate. Johnny's dope suppliers are equally alarmed to find just how high you can go and bodies start to pile up like extras in a Charles Bronson pic. As for dear little Spot the dog..

To add new joy to the concoction the mustachioed Queen Bea (bad pun) shows up in the unlikely guise of Dabney Coleman (what is it with him all of a sudden?) and proceeds with an all-out entomological assault on the nuke plant in the hope that all the humans make way for the more resistant bug population.



Hooray! Japanese monster, movie mayhem! Cooling towers glowing green! Banks of coloured switches exploding! Giant subtitled insects wading through the debris in a desperate struggle for the future of the human race! Etc!

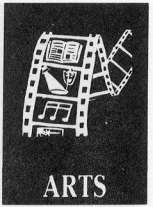
Meet The Applegates is a nice little ecological satire from the director of *Heathers* (if you haven't seen it you ought to), offering the rarely seen insect perspective on the human way of life. Have you ever stopped to consider the difficulty of obtaining insect pornography in a small American town? Or of the problems involved in concealing a mummified secretary in a drinks cabinet? On the vicarious side it's nice to see innocents succumb to every one of the major categories of vice (donkey buggery excepted) and the insects are very cute.

Especially Sally.

The Amazing Flying Gerbil Machine

The Slow Moving Snail presents more thoughts...

Tonics for the Tube



Twenty-one floors up creates a wonderful view of sunrise over London. Yet there is a sense of being boxed. Caged above London one and a quarter hours from college gives me a sense of nausea as I start each new day. To spark-up my mind from this doldrum I resort to the book.

The first book leans against the wall of the toilet. As my yesterday's meal plummets twenty-one floors - does it behave as Galileo suggests? Well, I suppose it is a far cry from balls off Pisa - I read a light tonic. A dog that flies a Sopwith, is terrified of the local cat, goes into 'rejection' state as his first novel cannot find a publisher. There is only one cartoonist who can create such a psychotic character, Charles Schultz. I re-read these cartoons every day, empathising with Charlie Brown. No one else could persuade themselves that they are needed by arguing with a tree that eats kites, or be so bored with life and so unable to talk to the girl he fancies. Charlie expresses my feelings in a world of pool-playing beagles and ice-hockey-playing little yellow birds, a fantastic world in which the sad and frustrated become a cause to smile. I have a book that psychoanalyses the characters in Alice in Wonderland, has anyone done it to Charlie Brown?

James Thurber was in many ways a

again leaving only a girl, a boy and the last flower. The flower becomes a symbol of love that is needed to create hope. *Thurber - Volumes 1 and 2* are great books for the morning throne. Sadly they are too heavy for the tube.

For the long tunnel of the underground I recommend a John Steinbeck book, or some poetry.

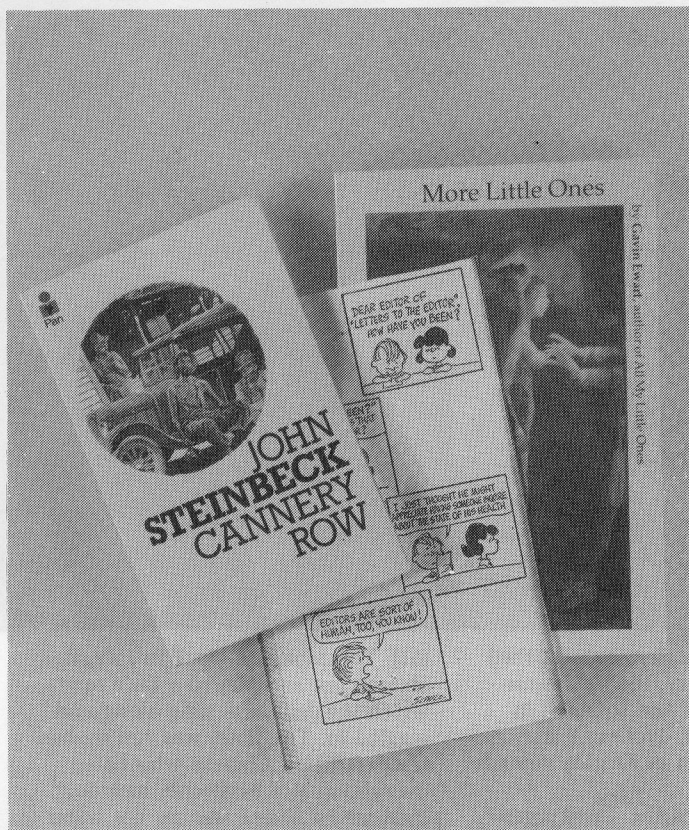
Steinbeck has recently been republished, a good thing as some of his novels were becoming scarce. *Cannery Row* is a place in which 'whores, pimps, tragic figure, blind in one eye due to a childhood accident, and slowly going blind in the other, always worried about being run-over while wearing dirty underpants. His cartoons, short stories and fables are coloured with sharp irony and an everyday sense of the absurd. His Red Riding Hood blows the head off the wolf. A seal lies on the headboard of the bed as the husband dismisses his wife's claim to have heard a bark.

As a writer for the *New Yorker* he doodled cartoons at unbelievable speed, these jokes eventually got printed and made his reputation. His favourite cartoon was a story he drew while depressed during the second world war. It is called *The Last Flower*, the world being destroyed by politicians and religious fanatics, being rebuilt and destroyed

gamblers, and sons of bitches,' become 'Saints and angels and martyrs and holy men', at least through the meticulously detailed images that celebrate life and express a love of his characters.

Steinbeck's world is powerful enough to lose your sense of reality whilst hanging onto those back handles as you wind through the tunnels. A must for those of us that otherwise close our eyes to escape from the inhuman world of London Underground.

Gavin Ewart can now be read on the tube. He is one of several poets celebrated by the national Poetry Society using posters of their work. This month Gavin is launching a new collection, of his poems over the past decade. He will be reading and talking about his work at the Poetry Society, 21 Earls Court Square (just by Earls Court tube) on 14th March at 7:30pm. Gavin has been writing poetry for many years giving his work great breadth and interesting historical developments. His war poems contrast, and thereby confuse, the fantasy of the cardboard cut-out target with the breathing human. His short funny poems are medicinal tablets against feeling too serious. Take these books and don't let the world get you down.



AMNESTY! on display in the JCR 5-7 March

Your chance to find out about Amnesty International, its work and what you can do to doop. Plus letter writing stall and sale of Amnesty goods on Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes. Organised by Imperial College Group.



Escape from China along the Karakoram Highway

A Passage to Pakistan



It was a better bus than I'd hoped for. Men with rugged macho faces, wild but shapely beards and well established moustaches mooched amidst acres of luggage. Their heads were crowned with weather-beaten turbans and they were dressed in baggy cotton suits and long woollen waistcoats. Vacuum tea sets, pots and pans, sacks of tinsel and other Christmas decorations burst from cloth bags. It took almost three hours to balance it all on the roof and fight out the seating plan. There were three Japanese, two Swiss, one Nepalese, two British and twelve Pakistani passengers. Everyone wanted a window seat. During the two day journey we were to cross the highest pass in the world. At 16,540 ft the Khunjerab pass traverses the highest concentration of lofty peaks anywhere in the world. The Karakoram, the Pamirs, the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush all meet in a uniquely chaotic jumbled splendour.

One hour into the ride, and as we approached the outskirts of the oasis, the driver stopped, abandoned the bus and took up residence on a solitary wooden framed bed at the road side. As he dozed we all ate cold noodles nearby.

Three hours out of Kashgar we hit the Ghez valley. An undersized stream trickled through an oversized wide basin of glacial moraines and convoluted sandstone layers. Under precipitous overhangs we sped, on round lumpy corners suffering from rock fall debris. 'Wooden' knots and grains spiralled through the rock. The cliffs rose up at such an angle that even by craning my neck as far as possible the sky was not in sight. The first check-point and grumpy official came an hour or so later and from here the road grew gradually worse; in fact it seemed a miracle that any road could exist at all.

Snow-covered, shattered peaks replaced blue skies and distances could no longer be judged. Everything seemed so close, whether one or fifty kilometres away. The road climbed steeply and the engine adopted that whining monotone drone of mechanical strain. Periodically the track disappeared and the bus swayed off into the desert careering over rocks and boulders and through streams to rejoin the 'road' a little further on.

It descended the roller-coaster stretches of corrugated kidney-bashing channels at breakneck speed, seemingly out of control. The Pakistani passengers sat huddled on their seats like Antarctic penguins, feet and limbs tucked into layers of blubberous clothes and scarfs, blinking eyes squeezed between turbans and veils.

We passed road side workers camps and tiny collections of flat roofed single-storey square mud dwellings, sporting

waving kids cocooned in multiple layers. At 196 kilometres from Kashgar and at an altitude of 3,900 metres we passed Karakuli Lake, with horses, yaks and camels in scattered dots, grazing the fertile plains. The horizon was dominated by the massive Muztagata Mountain, its 5,000 m vastness overwhelming and its glaciers slowly spilling forth.

We stopped for a brief toilet stop at the cold, numbing height of 12,000 feet. As

who acted as if this was the first bus they had seen, it probably was! In ruffled, baggy uniforms, brains numbed with cold and boredom, they gave a cursory glance at the paper work and ushered us on.

At ten pm Beijing time, we reached the little frontier outpost of Tashkurgan 260 km and ten hours drive from Kashgar. We stopped here for the night. The rooms were clean and cold for 10 yuan



the sun sank, prematurely extinguished by the rugged scenery, the Pakistanis threw off their robes and squatted in rubble-filled drainage ditches. A staring, contorted camel train of Kirghiz nomads passed us by.

At dusk we reached the Tashkurgan checkpoint with its two bemused guards

(£1). The Japanese clock in reception chimed ten and played a little tune, which the Japanese sang along and giggled to. The hotel was run by bad-tempered Han Chinese who hated everything and everyone, including themselves. There was no hot water for tea in the dining room, and beer (our last

for a while) was twice the normal price. The rice, vegetable and egg dishes that we ordered took forever. It didn't help their mood that we were keen to get rid of our change and paid in one, two and five fen notes, (0.1p). I filled my metal drinking bottle with hot water from a boiler and put it in my bed for an hour or so, praying for it not to leak. The duvet was thick and my sleep was deep.

It was hard to get out of bed at 8.30am. The restaurant was closed so we stocked up on little hard flower-shaped frozen biscuits from a man with a boxful on the road outside. The bus pulled out at 9.00am and we sat shivering. I peeled an apple out of the window and lost the sensation in my hands. We sat and bit on the hard biscuits and I stamped my numbed feet on the floor.

After half an hour we broke down. The driver opened the doors and fiddled with the engine. We sat and shivered. He didn't bother to fix it - we drove on all the same. The mountains were more spread out as we crossed the wide grasslands, spliced by a vivid blue river. We chewed biscuits and hurt our teeth on those that were still frozen.

At mid-day we reached the Chinese border post of Pirali, a ten building, nowhere place, about 200m long, with a bank, a customs check point and a passport-stamping room. A karky tent boasted 'Foreign Friends Rest Place'. How Chinese, how meaningless, how final. I was weary of this country and of my three month continuous struggle with baffling and pointless bureaucracy. The end was now in sight.

The effort to unload the bus was hardly worth the hassle. Customs was a joke, and we went in search of food. In the passport-stamping room they sold bottles of Coca-cola, duck-shaped biscuits, tinned fruit and tea sets for 'Foreign Friends'. We squatted in the middle of the road and wolfed down some tinned cherries before they froze! Two hours after arriving, we were waving the Chinese soldiers and China bye bye.

No-mans-land was bleak and Scottish. The road climbed higher from the river bed and across a bog-land. Lakes and brooks lay frozen and white in the tundra. Yaks and buffalo grazed and stared and people looked up from their toil with shell-shocked expressions. By mid-afternoon we had reached point zero at 16,000 feet. Pakistani and Chinese soldiers stood and chatted at the monument and the bus whizzed past.

A steep, nerve-fraying descent followed, fraught with double hair-pin bends. Tall narrow gorges like huge doors ajar revealed tantalizing glimpses of other kingdoms, shining bright snowfields and jagged, carnivorous, toothed peaks. It was like being lowered into a deep well, straining ever more to see sky. Huge

hang-glider-sized eagles swooped and spiralled below, and big black rooks flapped by in formation. Yurts (a sort of tent) lay sprinkled around the river valleys and streaky cold waters gushed by.

Late in the afternoon we reached Dih, the Pakistan check-point, a little 'garden' nurtured painstakingly to life, a little oasis germinated in the rubble. The barrier was raised by the invisible gardener. Someone got on and the door refused to close. A passenger kicked it and wedged it fast. The Chinese driver tried in vain to repair it. The screwdriver had no effect on the door and was instead turned on the passenger.



'Foreign Friends Welcome

Resting Here'

We pressed on under over-hanging gorges which turned the road into a tunnel. The driver dodged fresh landslide material and the bus pitched and yawed like an overloaded camel. The snowy

grey peaks rose up as far as you could imagine and then twice as high again. The Kunjerab River flowed into the Hunza River, shining white and dazzling. In the afternoon sun the canyon walls swirled immiscibly in different browns like an oil-painter's pallet, below the awesome, steely-grey, dog-tooth tombstone peaks. The sky was a vivid unnatural blue. Around each corner, as I marvelled at the overpowering enormity of each spiky peak another even greater, more rugged, soaring spotlight summit came into view.

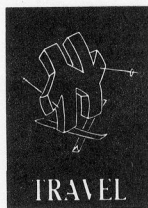
Below it was Sust, the Pakistan border and immigration post. The town itself is just a jumbled collection of single storey shacks, with names beyond their status; 'The Khunjerab Hotel', 'The Sust International Hotel'. Customs and immigration are some equally shabby wooden huts in a courtyard on the left, fenced off by a dry stone wall and a barbed wire topping.

I had only eaten frozen biscuits and tinned cherries all day. The restaurant signs protruding over the wall were too much. After queuing to wait for passport formalities I could wait no longer. Out of the compound Sust had the atmosphere of a large airy Alpine camping site. I enquired where the toilets were. 'This is an open area...you crap in the desert'

The 'desert' was a stony glacial moraine affair with a gurgling meltwater stream gushing southwards. A real toilet with a view. The bags were being unloaded when I returned. Just out of the 'town centre' was the Mountain Rescue Inn. It was a small collection of holiday camp terraced chalets. It was clean and pleasant and the people were friendly, quite a novelty - a curious blend of British colonialism, Islamic hospitality, and Muslim fundamentalism; of cricket pitches on pristine lawns and jostling horizons of village church spires and mosques, crescent moons and wind vanes.

With a pot of sweet milky tea I settled down to read the visitors book. There were Belgian writers, Polish geologists, a convention of milk-men from all over the world, British thieves, vagabonds, astronauts, space travellers, Australian milk maids, Afghan warlords, grave-diggers and martians. I never read such frivolities in Chinese visitors books.

It was only after leaving China that I realised what was missing, how backward and abnormally stifled it was; how artificial and synthetic the public friendship was, and how oppressed and frantic the people were beneath their lampshade hats. We had slipped through the Karakoram curtain and escaped from the China's suffocating suppression. I was glad to be free.



Travelling on the cheap isn't always fun...

Istanbul Blues

Easing the weight off my injured foot, I leant on the reception desk. A weather-beaten biblical face peered up from his paper.

'Dormitory...', I began. The stubbly face remained blank. '...kac lira?', I continued. 'Bes bin...' came the muffled reply barked through his thick black moustache.

I paid in advance, and left my passport as requested. The moustache ventured out from his desk and beckoned as he headed for a battered, handle-less door in the corner. Kicking it open, he descended into the gloom of a Tolkein style dungeon. A solitary sky-light illuminated the flaking, rancid walls which curled down to the hotel cellar. The stairs flowed into an irregularly-shaped grotto swamped by a slag-heap of black dusty rubble. My guide stepped off the final stair into the filth. I hobbled in his wake.

He opened the door in front of him. It revealed a room that would comfortably have held one double bed, but was crowded by the four double bunks which lined the walls and windows. A shredded, green, cobweb-coated mosquito mesh

hung limply across each tarnished pane. Two millennium of Constantinople grime caked the glass and tainted the twilight.

'This one... or this one' mumbled the moustache, gesturing to two bunks which already had rucksacks strewn over them.



'They move out today,' he assured me. The little dungeon master scuttled back upstairs to lie in wait for some more budget travellers.

The squalid appearance of the little

room was eased by its inmates. The bunks were home to a bunch of backpackers, modern-day explorers trading traveller's tales of hash-hazed felucca trips down the Nile, of pre-Tiananmen China, and of Top Deck travel throughout Eastern Europe.

I sunk onto a soiled sheet and released my throbbing foot from the scuffed baseball boot. The insignificant blister of three weeks ago had turned septic. Now the hot anger of infection throbbled through my weary nerves. The swollen festering foot intrigued my room-mates. Something else to record in their travel logs, no doubt!

In impeccable English, a Swedish medic volunteered his services. After some painful prodding, he offered to lance it. An Australian graphic designer donated the scalpel and some antibiotics. The foot was bathed, the scalpel burnt, and the Swede scrubbed up.

I lay back on the lumpy mattress, a towel gripped between my teeth. Gazing up at the sagging, stained mattress above me, I stifled my first scream...

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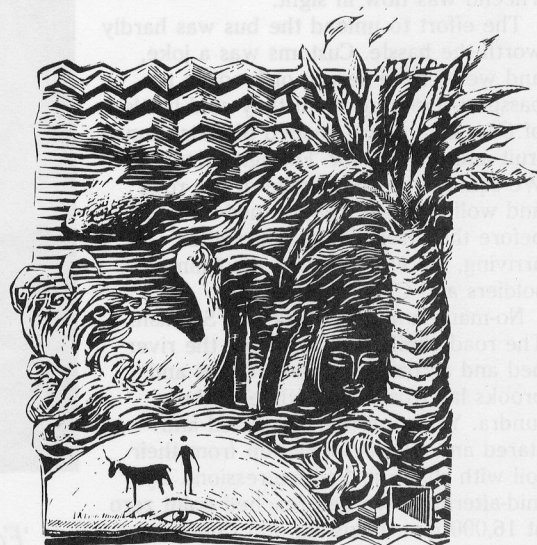
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ULU TRAVEL

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The Adventures of Boris



This is a story of everyday mechanical engineering graduates who decided to do something different. They wanted adventure, and one of them, Mark Sealy, wanted to build a car. A plan was hatched to attempt the drive from Birmingham to London and on across the Sahara in just three months.

The team of eight included graduates from Imperial College such as Martin Baker and Trevor Power who apparently gained a reputation in City & Guilds Motor Club, but had never before designed or built a vehicle for such a demanding journey. Mark used mainly Lada mechanicals in a custom tubular steel chassis but incorporated a Jaguar rear-axle and a novel cross-linked suspension system to help ride the dunes. The four-wheel-drive vehicle, christened 'Boris', was completed and set off on its first journey through France without proper trial, along with two production Ladas.

Birmingham to Nairobi

Crossing into Morocco via Gibraltar, the lure of the Sahara became real. In Algeria they stocked up with 156 gallons of petrol and 37 gallons of water. After a final bath and game of cricket, they set off, navigating by dead reckoning using 1:1 million maps. This technique is neither accurate in distance nor direction, but following the tracks of other Saharan traffic led them to a French Foreign Legion fort where the local gendarme

claimed he was the one who had found Mark Thatcher!

At Tamanrasset, in the lunar landscape of the Hoggar Mountains, they camped with a guard by the vehicles. Thorn trees provided shade on the way to Agadez but also caused many punctures. Reaching Niger offered the chance to replenish supplies and witness a camel race. From Niger they headed through war-torn Chad, crossing fast across the powdery crust of Lake Chad to the capital Ndjamena. Here there is a crossing to the Central African Republic and a 'road' to its capital Bangui. Crime is rife and the Catholic Mission offered a haven to camp and enjoy a Christmas meal. Meat is generally avoided by travellers but a feast was prepared with some very fresh chickens. The trans-African highway through Zaire is impassable during the rainy season and many roads are only open six to seven months of the year. They suffer badly through heavy truck traffic—some pot-holes are reputedly deep enough to swallow a truck when they fill up with rain. Through this terrain the team often had to drive 12 to 14 hours a day to keep on schedule and sleep out in Mosquito nets in makeshift camps.

Despite losing a number of teeth in the rear differential, Boris provided a match for the most demanding roads and the Ladas disproved their many critics.

The prize at the end of this stretch is the beautiful Ruwenzori Mountains and from Rwanda it is literally downhill all

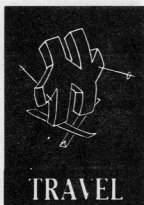
the way to Tanzania and the Masai Mara plains on the floor of the Rift valley in Kenya. The final goal of many overlanders is to climb Mt Kilimanjaro. At 5,895m it is one of the highest peaks that can be climbed without oxygen. However, you do need guides and to pay about \$100 to enter the surrounding game park—the team having to auction some of their equipment. In five days they completed the climb and then headed for the coast where Boris was shipped back in a container to be overhauled after the 8,000 miles for the next adventure.

Rally of the Pharoes

Not content with proving the design, Mark set about fitting inboard disks, hybrid suspension and a 230 bhp 4.3 litre V8 into Boris and getting him ready for a more competitive test of endurance, the Pharoes Rally—3,500 miles through the Egyptian desert in ten days. They were the only British entry, the only soft-top and the only special, others possibly dissuaded by the £6,500 entry fee. The race proved eventful, Boris crashing on the second day and the chase vehicle later hitting a donkey, but a brave finish on the tenth day proved that the team could compete with the best.

The Boris team will be presenting their adventures at future meetings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. Check the *Engineer's News* for details.

FELIX HEALTH WARNING:
CROSSING THE SAHARA USING THIS METHOD MAY
SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH.



Richard Lyle writes about the delights of

Intriguing Indonesia



Stone relief of Ramayana, Borobuder

I can distinctly remember it was not until the aeroplane touched down at the Sukarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta, that I thought 'this is it—the point of no return!' As I took a deep breath, my heart was definitely pounding faster than usual—partly due to fear of the unknown and partly with excitement as to what lay ahead of me in the next seven weeks. As it turned out I had the time of my life!

The charm of travelling anywhere on a budget is the contact you have with the indigenous people. Nowhere is a better place than Indonesia in this respect for the people are extremely friendly and courteous—they also love the sight of a traveller. In some of the more remote places that I visited I became an instant sensation with the local children as they all chanted their 'hello misters' and energetically waved at me. Some of the more mature people that I encountered were eager to practice their coarse broken English on me. On one bus journey the first few words of a young man who had placed himself by my side were, 'Gary Lineker, World Cup, England team very good!' I had a very enlightening conversation with him on the World Cup much to the amusement of a captive audience of onlookers.

Whilst travelling in Indonesia on a shoestring, the primary mode of transport available to the traveller is the bus and this is an excellent place to view and come in contact with some of the native people. The bus may come in many shapes and sizes from modern air-conditioned coaches down to beaten up

three-wheeler bemos that are found in cities.

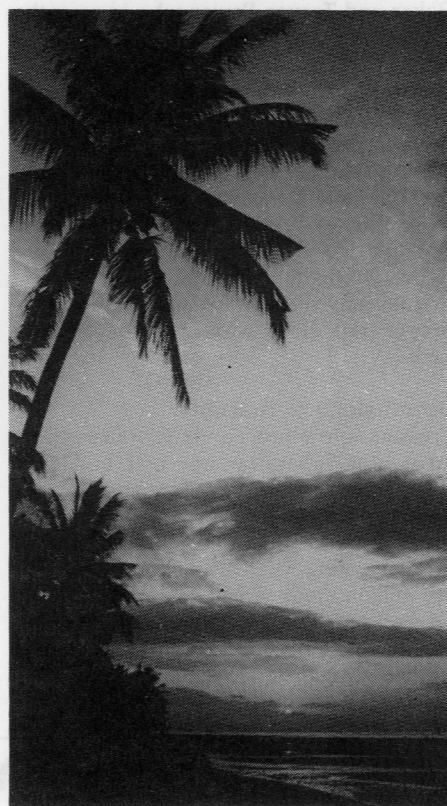
After just a few short rides on the bus network I got the distinct impression that whenever I chose to take the bus so did the rest of Indonesia as well! These crowded vehicles carry hordes of people, of all ages, complete with their shopping and produce as well as many of their animals. I clearly remember being rudely awoken, in the early hours of the morning, by an extremely vivacious cockerel hailing the start of a glorious new day—just one of the many perils of travelling on an overnight bus! You also need nerves of steel too! All Indonesian bus drivers seem to be equipped with lead-lined boots to ensure that they can press the accelerator fully to the floor as they take part in the Grand Prix that daily adorns Indonesia's network of roads. As their buses hack at full speed through the countryside they pay very little regard to pedestrians and even less regard for other traffic on the road. Countless are the number of times that I glanced out of the front window only to be transfixed by the sight of an equally fast and large bus streaming towards us on the same carriageway only to pull in front of the vehicle it was overtaking right at the last moment—and when I say last I mean last!

Java happened to be my first introduction to the Indonesian way of life, the cheap, diverse and very tasty food and fruits and, as with most Southeast Asian countries, the system of bartering for many items, such as souvenirs and travel. I also saw many spectacular

ancient stone temples, such as the one at Borobudur which has been acclaimed as the eighth wonder of the world. It also contains some of the most beautiful scenery in the archipelago.

Gazing out of the bus window, as I did on numerous occasions, I would be confronted with a sea of green terraced rice paddies bordered by tall majestic coconut palms. Every now and again a smoking volcano, its tall towering cone reaching for the sky, would loom into view providing something else for me to stare at.

Having manically rushed through Java trying to see everything and anything it was time to spend a few relaxing days in Ubud, central Bali. I especially wanted to sample some of the renowned Balinese culture and my first introduction came in the form of a Temple ceremony. On arrival at the ornately decorated temple I could clearly see where the other tourists had gathered, all wearing their batik sorongs and temple scarves (as a mark of respect to the Balinese people). I settled myself down in amongst them and feasted my eyes on what lay before me. Decorations hung from every available space and Balinese women, immaculately turned out were to-ing and fro-ing, carrying on their heads tall stacks of beautifully arranged fruits and flowers. After a short while, the festivities kicked off with a dance known as the Topeng (literally mask dance). The musical accompaniment was in the form of a



Bali

Gamelan, the instrument of which consist mainly of drums and cymbals, which give the music a distinctly crashing sound. As the night progressed I wandered to different corners of the temple to witness other events such as offerings being laid out to the gods. All in all it was wholly unlike any other religious ceremony I had ever seen anywhere in Europe, but it was a most interesting occasion. My evening was rounded off by a brief encounter with one of those much-loved and ever-ubiquitous tropical creatures—the cockroach. On the bemo home I was sitting in my seat minding my own business when I felt a tickling sensation on my leg. As I looked down to investigate my worst horror was realised—peering up at me, seemingly grinning was an enormous orange and black cockroach. From that point on the journey was marked by sudden jolts of my body and subdued screams every time I felt a tickling around my legs, much to the amusement of some Australian girls who were seated behind me!

Penelokan, situated in the Northern mountains of Bali, has to be the place where I have witnessed one of the most awe-inspiring sunrises in my life.

I had met this English bloke whilst travelling on the bemo up to Penelokan. When we arrived at the village, situated on the crater rim of an ancient extinct volcano, the view was breathtaking. Looking down into the valley from our cliff-top terrace, the crater floor spread out before us marked by two distinct features—a serene volcanic lake and adjacent to it Mount Batur. We were approached by some local boys, who wanted to guide us to the summit of Mount Batur the following morning, assuring us that the sunrise was not a sight to be missed. We decided that we would see it but did not need to pay for the services of a guide to find out way to the top—how wrong we were!

By evening time we had managed to recruit a couple of Dutch girls to join us on our expedition the following morning, explaining to them that we would have no problems climbing Mount Batur.

At 3.30am, my mind and body still not sure what was going on, I found myself sitting in the back of an open-top VW jeep, the cold night air rushing through my hair, speeding down into the crater valley. Whilst preparing to set off for the two hour uphill hike in the dark, it materialised that I was the only one to have brought a torch—to find our way in the pitch darkness. As we began the climb we soon realised how disabled we were with 'one eye' to see where we were going. Not surprisingly we soon lost the right path and ended up clambering up a very steep valley of loose volcanic rock.

When the sky began to lighten the peak was definitely out of the question as we were only a third of the way up. As we perched our weary bodies on the steep scree we settled down to a magnificent light show hosted by nature: out of the darkness came a faint orange glow which gradually became stronger and more intense. Suddenly the sun inched out from behind a rocky slope to our left. As it did so, a bank of thick white mist flooded in front of us, only to be brilliantly illuminated a fluorescent orange-red by the sun. Further cloud enshrouded the sun until it took on the appearance of a moon-like disc. All too soon this light fantastic show was over and it was time to head back down to the hot springs in the valley. What bliss it was to soak away our aches and pains in the hot clear water, as the fresh morning breeze washed across our faces.

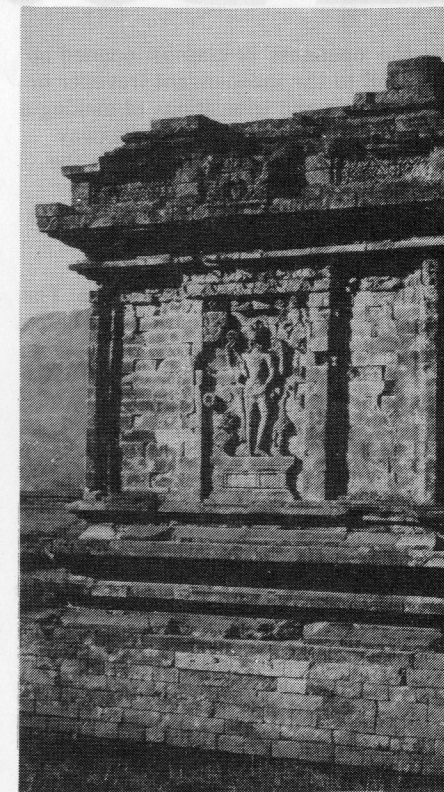
Once I had explored the beaches, mountains and temples of Bali it was time to seek rest and solitude, thus ten days of my trip were spent on the tiny secluded desert island of Gili Meno. Situated about 5km off the, north-west coast of Lombok, it is the middle of three tiny coral fringed islands (each no bigger than 3.5 square kilometres) and can only be described as paradise.

If good weather, empty golden beaches, gin-clear water and exotic coral reefs with a myriad of marine life are what you seek it can certainly be found here.

I had met up with four other travellers and we had decided on Gili Meno because through the traveller's grapevine we had heard that it was the quietest and most unspoilt of the three islands. On arrival we were not disappointed as the place had a most enduring charm. We checked into our bamboo beach hut at the aptly named Blue Coral, and at 7,500 Rupiahs (\$2.50) per night including three meals a day, we were set to have a great time.



Balinese statue

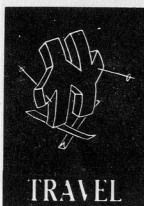


Stone Temple, Java

We soon slipped into a routine—after a day of sunbathing, slumbering and snorkelling, the perfect way to round off the day was to head off to the bar (a bamboo shack) at the western end of the island. As we sat around chatting and sipping the cool Indonesian-brewed Bintang beer, the sun would lazily sink to a watery grave, silhouetting the palms on the adjacent beach as it did so. On the horizon, the distinctive cone shape of Mount Agung, on Bali some 50km away, would provide the backdrop to a magnificently lit sky of many different pastel-shaded colours.

Unfortunately all good things must come to an end. For me that meant heading back to Bali to catch my flight home. On my flight out of Bali I was presented with a most wonderful spectacle. As the aeroplane rapidly gathered height, moments after leaving Denpasar airport, we flew above the volcano, Mount Agung. As I peered out of the tiny window, below me lay a gigantic cone rising up to a pin-like opening which was the crater of the volcano. There was a definite feeling of melancholy in my heart as my mind went through the events of the last seven weeks. After flying by this enthralling feature we headed out to the Java sea and back to England.

Whatever it is you seek, be it the rich and diverse culture, the spectacular sea- and land-scapes or the exotic food and fruits somewhere in Indonesia it is likely to be on offer.



What is it like to travel on the Trans Siberian Railway? What can be found on the way? Chris Riley found out last year...

Bottom Bunk to Beijing



Has the 'openness' of glasnost opened up the USSR to the independent traveller or are the trials and tribulations of making a journey on the Trans-Siberian Railway still as great than those of living in the country?

The Trans-Siberian railway proper runs from Moscow to Vladivostok in the Soviet Far East. Travellers crossing Siberia have a choice of three trains. The first follows a route due east to Kakhodka on the Pacific coast, for ferry crossings to Japan. The second and third routes both run to Peking, one via Mongolia and the other taking the longer route through Manchuria.

Accounts of the trip range from the classic work by A.I. Dmitriev-Mamanov *Guide to the Great Siberian Railway 1900* to a few pages in Bob Geldoff's autobiography *Is that it?* More informative guides on routes, costs, bookings and things to take include Bryan Thomas' *Trans-Siberian Handbook* (£8.95) to Robert Strauss' *Trans-Siberian Rail Guide* (\$6.95). Watch for the out-of-date information on Intourist in both books.

Travel prices range widely from country to country, depending on where you are prepared to embark. Intourist, the sole Russian travel agent, sell one way tickets from Moscow to Peking for

reported for as little as US\$10, less than the cost of two London day travel cards.

Intourist operate a telephone booking service from their London offices in the Isle of Dogs (General Enquiries on 081-538 8600). However the 50 years experience of arranging travel in the Soviet Union that they boast on their booking forms has taught them little about customer relations. They really know how to put the hassle into travel. Their suspicious, unhelpful attitude to independent travellers was perhaps suited to the Brezhnev/Andropov Russia of the 70s and 80s, but not Gorbachev's glasnost of today. The 'have a nice day' approach practised in the newly opened Moscow MacDonalds is not necessary. However a little encouragement and advice about the daunting bureaucracy and paper work, which such a trip still demands, would be appreciated.

The attitude of the Intourist staff in Glasgow and Manchester is apparently more conducive to booking, but they still prefer to handle group travel. For the independent traveller the packages and service offered by the Finland based Scandinavian Student Travel Service (SSTS) are more appropriate. They can be arranged through British travel agents like STA travel. Don't be put off by the

to make the booking through Intourist, but they eliminate the frustrations experienced by booking direct. All this help comes at a price. Their Helsinki-Moscow-Irkutsk-Peking tour taking 11 days and 10 nights costs US\$1045 to share a 4-berth 'hard' class compartment.

The price includes all meals between Moscow and the Chinese border, a one day tour of Moscow with a compulsory night in an expensive Intourist Hotel and a two day tour round Irkutsk and Lake Baikal.

Before embarking it certainly seemed that despite the widespread reforms of the Gorbachev era, the paranoid fear and suspicion of the independent traveller still existed. Who would be controlling the USSR, Intourist or perestroika?

It was a stiflingly hot afternoon at the end of June when the Rossiya slipped silently from its siding at Yaroslavl station on the east side of Moscow. The Intourist guide assigned to escort us to Irkutsk was Peter, a meek, slender, bearded man with worn out mournful eyes. He had endured the Trans-Siberian Railway ten times in as many years.

'Nothing has changed...' he sighed. 'The train is the same... the service is the same...and the food...no the food is worse...our economy is bad.'

along deeply rutted tracks, wooden huts steamed in damp forests and *Jail House Rock* warbled through the speakers.

Outside the clattering train for the first three days was a repetitive wallpaper of undulating silver birch trees. Where the train crosses the Urals in the south, they are barely 500 metres high and pass like a bad join in the pattern. The entire history of Russian architecture is spread along the line; from concrete condominiums and filthy factories of Perm and Novosibirsk, to neglected weather-blackened houses made of planks and split-log huts with ground-scraping window ledges.

Air on a G string echoed down the corridor as we crossed the mighty Kame River and passed through Perm. At 1777 kilometres from Moscow we rattled past the unobtrusive obelisk and entered Asia. When I woke on the third day the air was thick with dandelion seeds. The train had stopped at Omsk (2716km) with its strawberry sellers and water melon stalls and 'gift shops' selling wedding invitations.

It was going to be a hard day. Peter said so. We were crossing the Siberian Steppes, an area larger than France and resembling the Fens. It was over 30°C and the thick black soils of the steppes turned to a fine soot, sucked up by the passing train and injected in through closed doors and windows. It was drawn magnetically to clammy skin. Faces, hands and legs turned black.

Clumps of dead white 'ghost' trees stood alone in the swamps and small herds of dairy cattle grazed the plains. Webs of criss-crossing taut telegraph cables framed the shanty towns along the track. We were running three hours late, Peter said it would be seven hours by Vladivostok, (not bad for 10,000km). The long Ob river on its 4000km journey north to the Arctic Sea signalled a welcome end to the Steppes. On the platform in Novosibirsk we jostled with the locals to buy over-ripe, deep red plums.

Irkutsk loomed large and damp on a dark drizzly Siberian Summer evening 5191 km from Moscow. The Rossiya slipped into the drizzle and on to Vladivostok four more days down the track. A broken bus splashed through the floods and took us away.

A damp day in Irkutsk allowed a sailing trip on the misty waters and a tramp through a valley village on the shores. Lake Baikal with its thick fir-tree forests washed in cool mists resembled a large Scottish loch (larger than Scotland). The lake is the world's oldest and deepest, accounting for one fifth of the world's fresh water. Back in town and for just



over 15p that night we had front row seats for a Siberian performance of Swan Lake.

The Moscow-Peking train, number 19, scooped us up the next day as it trundled through Irkutsk and round the southern end of Lake Baikal. As twilight came we headed east and into the Khrebet Khaman Daban foot hills of the Mongolian frontier. The Chinese border drew ever nearer on the second day out of Irkutsk. The silver birch were gone and the 'Canadian Rockies' appeared, sporting Swiss style Chalets, and wobbling over the imperfections in the mud spattered glass.

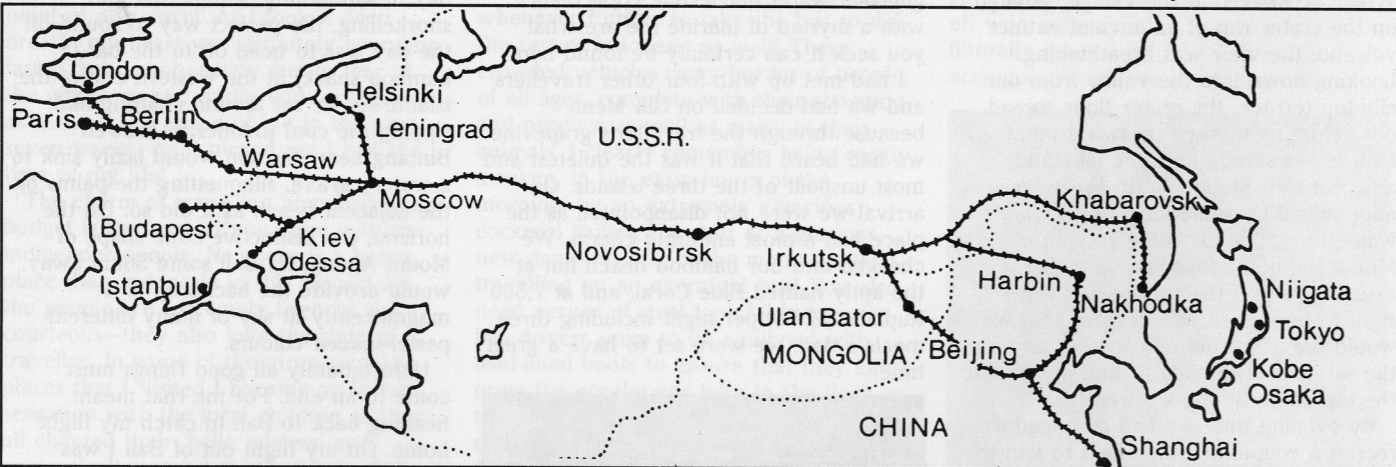
Vast grasslands of the 'South Downs' rolled down to the border town of Manzhouli and a welcome three hour break whilst the wheels were changed. Until last year, photographing this operation tempted indefinite sentences in the hard labour camps to the north.

Today Glasnost had reached Manzhouli, we watched, photographed, made notes and swapped coins with the railway men quite freely.

Once across the border we stepped onto a wall to wall Chinese carpet of cultivation animated by match-stick men with lampshade hats. An entirely man-made landscape met our eyes; flooded golf-green rice fields coating vast open plains and terraced on impossible slopes.

From Manzhouli, Beijing with its prickly heat, seven million bicycles and ten million bustling people is a day and a half away. Suddenly the predictable security of the ten day Russian tour is at an end. Turfed out of my cosy bunk and into an alien world of chopsticks and noodles, mandarin money changers, spitting and staring, brand new old fashioned steam trains and singing bicycle bells.

This article first appeared in *TNT Magazine* issue 839, 11 February 1991



around £325 sharing a four berth compartment in 'hard' class. Intourist does not arrange travel from the UK to Moscow. You can fly for £185 or take the 53-hour train journey for £167. If you are prepared to spend two weeks in Hungary a ticket can cost as little as £27! The trick is to purchase a legitimate ticket in Budapest for about £70 in order to get your USSR travel documents. You then get a refund on this ticket, (losing only about £15) and buy one of the numerous black market tickets for £12.

Travelling from east to west still remains the cheapest direction. Tickets bought in Beijing and Hong Kong are US\$180 and US\$100 in Japan. Winter black market prices in Beijing have been

'Student' name. It is designed to encourage students rather than discourage non-students.

SSTS specialise in Russian and Chinese travel. Through any British agent their faxed response to enquiries is instantaneous. The customer has a choice of three packages consisting of various combinations of stop-overs in Moscow and Siberia. All trains depart from Helsinki. A one way flight from London to Helsinki is about £100. The fifty hour train journey is about the same price.

Unlike Intourist, SSTS offer advice on money, time zones, dining on the train, border formalities, stop-over itineraries and assistance with Russian and Chinese visa applications. Ironically SSTS still have

The food was bad. Each meal commenced with a stainless steel dish of watery congealing soup sloshing up the high sides. You always had to ask what flavour it was. The main course was the usual shrivelled square of boiled meat, splodge of mash potato and scoop of sauer-kraut. Dry biscuits to dunk in your coffee completed each masochistic menu. We were running on 'Peter time'. When he grew bored, once or twice a day he told us all to put our watches forward. Travelling this way avoided any jet lag. We reached Lake Galichskoye, 501 kilometres from Moscow as the mid-night sun glowed low in the sky. I woke 690 kilometres further on to heavy rain in Balezino. Wet figures fought tractors



Throwing Muses

—The Real Ramona LP

Goodbye Mr Mackenzie

—Now we are Married 7"

There is a saying 'if you try hard enough and long enough you will eventually succeed'. Give it another ten years and the *Mackenzies* might get somewhere.

After five listenings I would have great difficulty in remembering a single line save for 'now we are married' that seems to constitute the majority of the track. There is no melody or hook—nothing to stop you wanting for the needle to reach the middle.

On the B side is a track that even I would be embarrassed to release, and I'm about as musical as a deaf lobster.

Please stop trying.

Anna B.



The Melvins & Steelpole Bathtub

—Marquee 22.2.91

Who were they?

Tonight's openers, *Duh*, were not on the bill and all they were able to provide was an energetic wall of sound and plenty of aspirin you would not even have deciphered their name without looking at the t-shirts on display—there really wasn't all that much there.

The disappointments of the evening were *Steelpole Bathtubs*. They successfully managed to lose their finely woven edge apparent on their albums amongst the noise which seemed to prevail from *Duh's* somewhat intriguing performance. If you'd seen them without expectations you may have survived but I emerged with all illusions shattered. The set was so undefined that I was surprised I could recognise anything.

Then the *Melvins*. No illusions here, none at all. *The Melvins* built a 900 foot high monolith and no one knew quite how to look at it. With all superfluous guitars removed they've perfected minimalist thrash metal. The sound is reduced to a 15mph crawl through the remains of the hardcore crossover.

Crunchingly slow and terminally loud *The Melvins* steam on, the bass never stopping. But the drummer set it up. Beating out rhythms suitable for the Gods requiem mass. Dressed only in drumstick adorned y-fronts and grip-gloves which he had taped to his wrists he beat out the tattoo for the apocalypse.

When the end of the world comes *The Melvins* are producing the soundtrack.

Seb

This is the fourth album from this four piece band released by 4AD and there's even twelve tracks on it (three goes into twelve four times?).

It's jam-packed with jangling guitars, energetic drums and vibrant rasping vocals. Each track unfolds like a moth opening its wings. A dull melodic beginning reveals a Pandora's box of delights. Unlike much of today's music the edges are left rough to give extra bite, rather than the stale rounded sound that record companies seem to prefer. I get the feeling that they would be a wonderful and exciting act to see live, relishing in the atmosphere of tension.

The vocals are a maze of riddles and double meanings making listening a challenge, not a passive process:

'I throw an egg against the wall, I watch it break and slide, I see my name.'

Basti

Basti—bit of unknown here. All I know is that I expected more from a band with two drummers—a bit of a rarity nowadays. The album is an overvamped through pseudo industrial wasteland which seems characteristic of much of the music emerging from the London hardcore scene. Although mellower than bands such as *Silverfish* and *Terminal Cheesecake*, *Basti* still manage to fit the mould—grunge/thrash guitars with a mixture of samples and vocals.

The main problem is that for a band with two drummers they seem to produce some singularly uninteresting backbeats. Backbeats which could live up some deadly monotonous tracks.

The first and perhaps best exponents of this musical ideal were the *Beatings* (US

Coming in the middle of the supposed come-back of guitar based bands, this is ground that is well travelled. Fortunately they are big enough to call their mark to show the way for all those groups lost in mediocrity.

In years to come when you put this album on it will still sound fresh and interesting, something to buy and a valuable asset to anyone's collection. One small gripe; they still seem to be planning albums for vinyl uses. Putting a short track at the end of side one to fill space and give you warning to change sides is great, but what if you have a CD player? It does tend to make things a bit disjointed, perhaps different order for different formats? That aside, a great album. So I think I'll give it four out of five.

Anna B.

—B LP

band on AT) who successfully fused industrial and dance music to create a near hypnotic effect without too much repetition. It's difficult to say this about the *Basti* album. Alternating between keyboards and guitars they provide a tune which sits loosely on a bassline which seems the same throughout. The drums rarely rise to the challenge but when they do, the result is worth it, a truly great sound emerges and the combination of various vocal styles and samples make you try to listen.

Unfortunately there seems to be no theme to the album and the whole package sounds too commercial. They have enough good songs to have produced a good single but not an album.

Seb

Gary Clail

— Human Nature 12”

This record follows in the wake of Clail's last effort, the veggie anthem *Beef*, this time propounding love and unity for mankind.

Human Nature kicks off with what appears to be a Martin Luther King sample (always good for a few Brownie points in my book) and goes off in a vaguely trancey tangent until it suddenly collides with the theme music from 'Snub TV' and takes on a loopy swaying quality. King interrupts a little further over a tinkling piano riff and the whole track coasts along pleasantly to an end.

The B-side, *Rumours Of War* draws deep into reggae and dub to bring a semi-spoken word message about the Gulf War; not shy of controversy, it names names and carries off its intent well. Superior dance music.

Stone



Spaceman 3

—Recurring LP



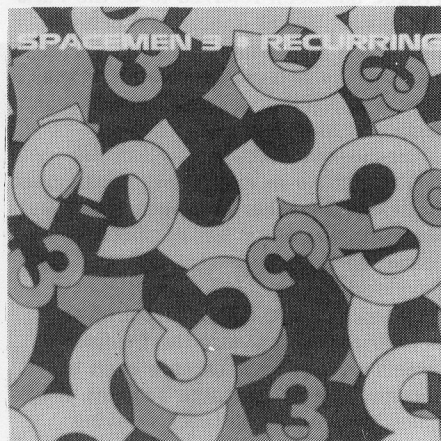
Sonic Boom and Jason have finally gone their separate ways, but as a lasting reminder have left us with *Recurring*, a swirling masterpiece of almost epic proportions. It's hard to imagine that anything so downright beautiful was produced in an atmosphere of loathing and mistrust. Such is the animosity between the two that each contribution was made separately, Sonic recording side one and Jason the other—although there's only a very subtle difference between the two, both weld so well together.

Side one starts with the dance orientated *Big City (Everybody I Know Can Be Found Here)* a well paced, trippy anthem. Bringing some clarity to the haze, *I Love You* steals more heavily from the sixties and the lush *Set Me Free* ends side one with Sonic Boom whispering 'I think it's gonna end now', and as it trails into nothing he laughs, knowing full well he leaves you empty and dying for more.

Side two, in all its tainted glory, takes us through the irrepressible *Hypnotized* and *Feelin' Just Fine (Head Full Of Shit)*. It just makes me want to clear some floor space, lie down and stare at the ceiling all day.

If ever I.C. needed to listen to a record, this is it. 'Let the good times roll.'

Harry.



Carter USM Charity Gig

—ULU 14.2.91

What a treat—a Valentine's Day musical feast featuring the one and only *Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine*, with support from *Th' Faith Healers*, *The Family Cat*, *Bleach* and a 'surprise' act. And all this for only £6, with the proceeds of the evening going to the MacMillan Fund for Cancer Relief. So imagine the scene—several hundred jolly people have gathered outside ULU and have just discovered the identity of the surprise act...

'Oh my God—not EMF!'. Oh my God, yes—the rumour was true. To say *EMF's* reception was hostile would be an understatement. There was a constant shower of plastic pint pots onto the stage and screams of 'you're shit, you're shit' (it was a bit sad really). Poor James, the band's unfortunate singer got so pissed-off—that he did—halfway through the first song. He did come back (bad move)

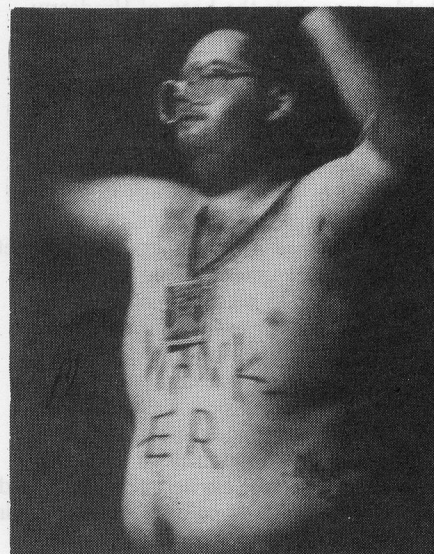
for a few more songs, but gave up completely following the abduction of one of their microphone stands.

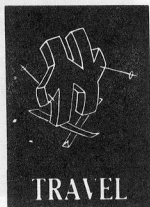
Th' Faith Healers were only discovered by chance while on the way to the bar. The bar was undoubtedly more interesting as they were really pretty uninspiring...erm...yes—see what we mean. Back at the main stage the evening suddenly got a lot better with the appearance of *The Family Cat*. They played a brilliant set, finishing with a wickedly wonderful cover of *Unbelievable*. It must have really rubbed the proverbial salt into the wounds *EMF* who were no doubt nursing backstage.

Back once again to the bar and the other stage where *Bleach* were playing. Their lead singer (female) generated as much interest as their music. Unfortunately for them a whisper began that *Carter* were about to appear on the

main stage, and so they suddenly lost most of their audience. The main hall was by now closely resembling the inside of a recently boiled kettle. Jon Beast, the Fat Bastard kept the crowd well entertained as they waited for Jimbob and Fruit-bat to appear, (mind you we could have done without the brief display of his backside). Whether they performed very well or very badly was totally irrelevant as by now most of the crowd was in a complete frenzy. The stagediving became a new kind of *Bloodsport for All* as you will appreciate if you were within a few feet of the stage. To finish they played a stonkingly good version of the *Pet Shop Boys'*, *Rent*. (Neil Tennant himself had been spotted lurking around earlier in the evening.) Anyway what more can we say—a good time was had by all!

Egor and Hedgehog.





Adam Harrington visited Czechoslovakia...

Prague

Prague has been referred to as the Paris of the East. It has one or two benefits over Paris, one being that Prague's architecture is mostly the same now as it was over a hundred years ago. The second is that it is much cheaper.

Czechoslovakia capitulated in the 1930's, and so its cities were not bombed senseless like other European cities, and since the war there has not been enough money in the country for any development.

Its town centre is almost entirely pedestrianised, because the mediaeval streets are not wide enough even to accommodate the minute Trabant. It has miles of meandering lanes weaving between beautiful houses and churches. The view across the Vltava river to Hradcany, the presidential palace on top of a hill, is breathtaking, especially when it is floodlit at night.

A pedestrian bridge, the Charles' bridge, connects the base of Hradcany with the centre of the city. All along its length there are musicians, generally playing traditional jazz on a variety of battered instruments. Given the surroundings, hours can be spent sitting here, wasting time in a very pleasant manner. On several evenings there were a duo performing what I took to be Czech folk songs. One played bitter-sweet oboe accompaniment to the other man's nasal singing. In all it was highly effective, and these two are one of my most enduring memories.

An entire afternoon can be spent watching a greengrocer's store, where Prague citizens wander past, notice a pineapple, or a grapefruit or something similar and amidst excited chatter, crowd around the window pointing at it and join a queue already 20 people long. The shops are like something out of the 30's. Grocers stores are packed with cans of salted fish, millimetre thickness strips of dry curled up cheese and lumps of stone masquerading as bread. All these are behind counters and have to be asked for, they can't be picked up and bought at the exit. This means that you have to speak Czech, which nobody except the Czechs can do. So give up buying your own food and go to a restaurant. There is one called 'U Prince' in a corner of the old town square (Staromestske namesti) which belongs to the state, as did all restaurants when I was there, though things are moving so fast politically that things may change soon. After a reasonable but not stunning three course meal for three people, we were charged the equivalent of five pounds. We assumed that this was for each, but no, it was between all of us.

The language barrier is a problem, Czechs only speak Russian as well as



A step back in time.

their own language. English and German come a poor third. Czechs are not by nature very helpful; when we were there, a certain amount of money had to be changed every day and entered on the visa (no visa or money change is required now - Mrs Thatcher visited President Havel a few days before we visited Prague. God knows what she did, but he reneged on visas). At every (state owned) bureau de change a different story was given as to what should be entered on the visa, and in theory, if the information is wrong, exit from the country can be barred until large amounts of money change hands. There are a lot of shady characters around these bureaux muttering 'Wechsel, cambio, bureau'. These are illegal money changers, giving a better rate of exchange. Since things are so cheap in Prague, and there is so little to buy, it is damn difficult to get rid of the money before you leave. Czech Koruny cannot be legally taken out of the country, and cannot be changed back into real money once bought. The last day in Prague was spent buzzing around the city trying to get rid of the money. This is a very unusual feeling, as I am more used to stringent economy drives. Prague loves its ice cream - and it's bloody good despite there being no choice of flavours - and most of the excess koruny went on this.

A word of warning. Czechoslovak railways make British Rail look helpful and efficient. Quite definitively the worst

rail journey I've ever had was between Hlavni nadrazi - Prague's terminal station - and Nurnberg in Germany. We were forcibly evicted from the spartan compartment into the even more spartan and very breezy corridor by a collection of overweight and copiously smoking East Europeans who then continued to smoke in the corridor and drop fag ash on us. They were in cahoots with a woman guard built like a Russian shotputter who looked like she would brook no complaint. I emerged at four in the morning at Nurnberg looking like something from 'V'. A rucksack is a general notice of two things:

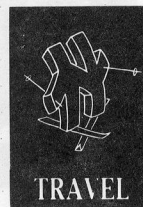
1. You don't have much money and are probably inter-railing and so can be treated like turd, as no more money can be squeezed out of you if you were treated nicely and

2. As there are too many rucksackers anyway, the more difficult your life can be made, the fewer there will be next year.

Conclusion - fly to Prague and fly out, but for heaven's sake see it before it becomes too touristy. It is a beautiful city, and is worth seeing just because it is so utterly peculiar due to its communist past. Flights cost from around £170 return, and cheap accommodation can be booked from Hlavni station hostel offices which only open when trains from abroad pull in. It would be a good idea to contact the Czechoslovak Embassy to check details beforehand.

Mark Richardson toured Europe by

Inter-Railing



Last summer I travelled around Greece and Italy with an inter-rail card. The free ferry crossing offered between Patras on the Peloponese and Brindisi in southern Italy makes this an attractive option for a route through southern Europe.

Our first stop in Greece was the small town of Litochoro at the foot of Mount Olympus. Most of the thousands of inter-railers who visit Greece go for the sun and historical beauty, fewer realise Greece is also a very mountainous country with some spectacular natural scenery. We stayed at the small and friendly youth hostel in Litochoro which is used as a base by hikers who come to climb Mount Olympus. If you want to attempt the climb, you can hire boots and maps and also leave your rucksack at the hostel. We went to Litochoro intending to climb the mountain but decided against it at the last minute. However, it's an experience in itself to lie on a beach with the home of the gods towering nearly 3000 metres above you with its feet in the sea!

After visiting the ancient historical sights in Delphi and Athens, we headed for the island of Santorini in the Cyclades. The night ferry crossing from Athens costs only about £8 if you sleep on deck. Santorini was formed about 4,000 years ago by a massive volcanic explosion in the Aegean sea. The volcano still smoulders on a nearby island. We went out to see it on a boat trip. Our party climbed the mound of black rock and ash to the sulphur-caked summit, then, after returning to the boat, we dived into the sea to swim in the hot springs where water heated inside the volcano wells up to mix with the sea.

On Santorini, we spent one night on the

roof of Kotohori youth hostel in the town of Thira, and three nights sleeping on the black sand beach at Perissa. It's not clear whether you are actually allowed to sleep on the beaches but plenty of people do it.

To cross free to Italy you have to sleep on deck but this is no hardship in the Adriatic during the summer. From the harbour town of Brindisi we travelled across Italy to Naples where we stayed in the excellent modern youth hostel. From Naples it's a short train and bus ride to mount Vesuvius and Pompeii. We unfortunately didn't have time in our schedule to visit Pompeii, but managed to climb to the huge crater at the top of Vesuvius. The walk is fairly easy as a bus takes you most of the way. Naples itself is a busy port which is rather overcrowded and chaotic, but the national museum (which houses many of the relics found at Pompeii as well as a fascinating collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts) is well worth a visit, and the pizzas are fantastic.

Our next stop was Rome where we spent two days admiring the sights of ancient Rome, especially the Colosseum and the Palatine Hill, and those in the Vatican City—St Peter's basilica, the Vatican museum and the Sistine Chapel. Rome has an excellent purpose-built youth hostel, the largest we stayed in on our travels.

From Rome we travelled on to Tuscany and the Renaissance splendour of Florence and Pisa. Florence is very relaxing, and it is interesting to walk between the painted houses near the Duomo cathedral and the Puento Vecchio bridge. There's a restaurant in Florence which is reputed to make the best ice-cream in all Italy (and therefore the

world). We also found a site in the countryside just outside the city where you can sleep for free on roofed wooden platforms.

After a brief stop in Bologna to try the spaghetti bolognese in its town of origin, we went on to Venice. Venice is a good place to wander in, with many winding alleys, hump-back bridges and small squares as well as the famous sights of St Mark's square and basilica and the Doges' Palace (home of the old Venetian government). The town consists of 117 islets and to reach Venice's youth hostel, another of the excellent modern Italian type, you need to take a water bus. Passes available for 24-hour travel on water buses are a good way of seeing Venice.

A route through Greece and Italy such as this one, could be made in either direction and there is also great scope for ideas in your route between home and southern Europe. On the way there, we passed through the German city of Cologne with its excellent cathedral, saw the magnificent imperial buildings in Vienna, from where half of Europe was ruled for more than six centuries, and took a glimpse at life in Eastern Europe in our visit to Budapest. Here we were amazed at the sights and activity alongside the Danube at night. The journey down to Greece—the infamous Belorade-Athens run—was not pleasant but nothing like as bad as any of the horror stories we had heard. The journey from Budapest took 24 hours, but we had seats for most of the time and when we had to stand at least the scenery was interesting!

On the return journey, we passed through the Swiss Alps, stopping in Zermatt at the foot of the Matterhorn, before returning home through France and Ireland (there are free ferries to and from Ireland).

To use the free ferry crossing as well as train services, you need an 'Inter-Rail and Boat' card which costs £180. An ordinary Inter-Rail card costs £155. I ended up spending nearly £500 on the whole month's holiday but have no doubt that it could have been done for less.

Our travels through Greece and Italy were very enjoyable and our activities varied enormously in the time we were there. One day we were exploring the tiny cliff-top villages on Santorini on hired mopeds and only days later admiring the magnificent Renaissance architecture of Tuscany.

If you want a holiday which combines so many natural and historical sights with days lying on a beach and loads of pizza and ice-cream, an inter-rail trip through Greece and Italy is excellent value for money.



A church on Santorini



Scribbler's Corner...

A noble gesture

Dear Andy,

I understand from a friend of mine that a letter appeared in last week's FELIX concerning Reggie the Lion, the mascot of King's College and I'd like to take this opportunity to clear up any misunderstanding and inaccuracies.

1. Reggie's original Wedding Tackle, now mounted on a plaque and being looked after by a King's Engineer at a hall of residence will soon be kept behind the bar at King's—alongside IC's military-dressed teddy-bear.

2. Reggie's present equipment—'he's a very proud lion'—created by yours truly, will remain in place until...well, until further notice!

3. For the immediate future, (Rag Week and Engineers' Ball), Reggie will remain in a B1 security zone at a location in the college known to fewer than ten people. So you lot can't have him! Sorry, lads!

Lots of love from,

Alex Ottway, Defender of Reggie.

The bottom Standards and logic line

Dear Editor,

Is this pseudonym business a private function, or can anyone join in? If so, then I would like to put in my contribution.

In your editorial for Felix 892 you express your annoyance at exams. I too have heard the arguments for exams—that they provide an abstract scale against which to measure people against, et al. This set me thinking about what the College is really for.

After three years here, I have come to the conclusion that it only exists to produce automatons to keep our industry (barely) running; but, primarily, to make money. Exams provide the cheapest way to assess students, so profits can be maximised.

Could there be any other reason?

Yours,

The Wizzard.

Dear Andy,

I do wish Athena would apply the same standards to himself/herself/themselves as she/they/he does (do) to others.

Issue 894 point 2: begins by slagging off Christians for having arguments on a premise that the Bible is fiction. Is either any better than the other?

Now let's say I want to argue something with the premise that there is life after death. Athena would (I presume) allow me to state this (after all, there's no less proof than for—say—the fictional nature of the Bible). But what if I said 'according to St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians...' and then stated 'there is life after death'. Suddenly no good? Hmmm, novel logic.

However, I do agree with point 2—it's nice, ordered logic. So, Athena, practice what you preach, or stop preaching.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Cooksley, Physics 3.

A reply to a reply to another reply

Dear Andy,

A reply, to a reply, to another reply, to yet more replies to a letter which may or may not have been printed in FELIX a long time ago.

1. Athena may not be scared enough not to admit his/her/its name, but how about the others who write in using assumed names? And even if Athena was scared, would he/she/it admit it? At this point for the sake of continuity, I will refer to Athena as the female gender as Pallas Athena originally was.

2) Yes, much logic included in arguments on the letters page is flawed, or two-faced.

Eg. Athena writes that we would assume generalisations about her, (i.e. if she were female, she would be a feminist) if her name was disclosed.

Fair enough.

But in doing so, she too makes a gross generalisation in that the average reader is 'assumptionistic'.

3) With the closure by the editor of a certain topic which provoked much heated argument, Athena has kindly supplied us all with a fresh, new and challenging one to sink our critical teeth into, i.e. the historicity of the Bible.

I hope Athena does more work at her

course than in researching her literature, because if not, she's got quite a bit to do.

Biblical literature is embedded in the foundation of Middle Eastern history and as science moves forward in researching our past, more and more of the Bible is proved to be valid, if not fact.

Fifty years ago, Abraham was thought of as being a mythical figure, but now there is more than enough archeological evidence to say that he lived on this earth. Going even further back, there is an incredible amount of evidence to suggest that there was a flood and that there is a wooden boat-like structure embedded in ice on Mount Ararat, Turkey, corresponding to the dimensions specified by God to Noah when building the ark.

Jesus may or may not have walked on water, depending on what you believe, but Athena, by declaring the Bible as 'fiction', is most certainly walking on thin air.

4) Referring not just to Athena, but many more who have written in, we can conclude that all Christians are unforgiving, self-righteous, judgemental, hypocritical, etc. Thinking of us (yes, I'm one too) as Victorianists is in itself archaic.

Yes, all of us fall for at least one of these quite frequently, but that doesn't mean we are supposed to. There isn't enough time or space to deal with all of them, but taking the subject of forgiveness, Christians are supposed to forgive and be compassionate, but we are also charged (just as we would be morally) to point out to someone when they are doing something blatantly wrong.

There have been some misunderstood and misguided letters on both sides, portraying an uncaring Christian faith, of which this must be the fault only of ourselves.

Another criticism of Christians writing in is not of quoting the Bible, but of not giving a context or a reason for their belief in it, or an interpretation of why the person in question might be telling us to do or not to do something.

5) Agreeing with Athena's views on the prehensile antics of mascotry and the solutions suggested, I ask myself, is it the children who are at risk or the Union funds and recriminations we should be worrying about?

Yours, trying to be Christlike,
Giles Pettit, Mech Eng 1
(A real entity!)

What's On

AN UP-TO-THE-MINUTE GUIDE TO EVENTS IN AND AROUND IMPERIAL COLLEGE



FRIDAY

- Hang Gliding**.....12.30pm
Southside Upper Lounge. Come and find out about weekend training. Weekly meeting.
- Yacht Club Meeting**.....12.30pm
Huxley 413.
- Rag Meeting**.....12.40pm
Union Lounge.
- Huxley Soc Bookstall**.....1.00pm
JCR.
- Friday Prayers**.....1.00pm
Southside Gym. See Islamic Society.
- Kung Fu**.....4.30pm
Union Gym.
- C.U. Prayer Meeting**.....5.00pm
413 Maths.
- Yoga**.....5.30pm
Southside
- Christian Union Meeting**.....6.00pm
308 Computing.
- Swimming**.....6.30pm
Sports Centre. New members always welcome.
- Fencing Club Training**.....6.40pm
Club training.
- Shaolin System Nam Pai Chuan**.....7.30pm
Southside Gym.
- Water Polo**.....7.30pm
Sports Centre. Come along and join in.
- Southside Disco**.....8.30pm
Southside Bar.

SATURDAY

- Picocon 9**.....10.00am
All day in the Union Building.
- Kung Fu Club**.....4.30pm
Wu Shu Kwan in Southside Gym.

SUNDAY

- Sunday Service**.....10.00am
Anteroom Sheffield Building. See West London Chaplaincy.
- Catholic Chaplaincy Mass**.....11.00am
53 Cromwell Road.
- Wargames**.....1.00pm
UDH. All welcome.
- Yoga**.....10.30am
Southside Gym.
- Kung Fu Club**.....4.30pm
Wu Shu Kwan in the Union Gym.
- Catholic Mass**.....6.00pm
53 Cromwell Road, followed by supper.

MONDAY

- RockSoc Meeting**.....12.30pm
Southside Upper Lounge. All abnormalities welcome.
- Basketball Club**.....5.30pm
Volleyball Court. Men's Team.
- Keep Fit**.....5.30pm
Southside Gym.
- Intermediate Rock 'n' Roll**.....6.00pm
JCR.
- Swimming**.....6.30pm
Sports Centre. New members always welcome.
- Beginners Rock 'n' Roll**.....7.00pm

- JCR.
- Water Polo**.....7.30pm
Sports Centre. Come along and try one of the most physically demanding sports.
- Latin American**.....8.00pm
JCR.

TUESDAY

- C.U. Prayer Meeting**.....8.30pm
Chaplain's Office
- Riding Club Meeting**.....12.30pm
Southside Upper Lounge.
- Amnesty Stall**.....12.30pm
JCR. Sign a letter, look at the display, buy some goods.
- AudioSoc**.....12.30pm
S.C.R. for cheap records, CDs and hi fi discounts.
- Radio Modellers**.....12.30pm
Southside Lounge.
- Cathsoc Mass**.....12.30pm
Mech Eng 702. Followed by lunch.
- Sailing Club**.....12.30pm
Southside Lounge.
- PhotoSoc**.....1.00pm
Southside Lounge. New members to join.
- Radio Modellers**.....5.30pm
Student training workshop, Mech Eng.
- Keep Fit**.....5.30pm
Southside Gym.
- Amenesty International**.....5.30pm
Clubs Committee Room. Weekly meeting.
- Wine Tasting Soc**.....6.00pm
Union Lounge. Weekly meeting. Everyone welcome
- Improvers Ballroom**.....6.00pm
JCR.
- Canoe Club**.....6.15pm
Beit Quad store or 8.30pm in Southside Upper Lounge.
- Judo**.....6.30pm
Union Gym.
- Ballroom Bronze Medal**.....7.00pm
JCR.
- Yoga**.....8.00pm
Southside Gym.
- Cricket Nets**.....9.00pm
Lords. Meet at 7.45pm in Mech Eng Foyer. Must bring whites.

WEDNESDAY

- Amnesty Stall**.....All day
JCR.
- Keep Fit**.....12.30pm
Southside Gym.
- Bike Club**.....12.45pm
Southside Lounge.
- Cycling Training**.....1.00pm
Meet at Beit Arch.
- Wargames**.....1.00pm
UDH. All welcome.
- Speaker Meeting**.....1.15pm
Physics LT1. 'Enhanced back-scatter: Beyond the spectre of the Broken'—Prof C Dainty.
- Micro Club Meeting**.....1.15pm

- Top floor NW corner Union Building. Every week.
- Kung Fu**.....1.30pm
Union Gym.
- Huxley Soc 'Coffee & Chat'**.....2.15pm
Physics Level 3, next the Blackett Bookshop.
- DramSoc**.....2.30pm
Union Concert Hall.
- Diving**.....6.30pm
Swimming Pool.
- Shaolin System Nam Pai Chuan**.....7.00pm
Southside Gym.
- Basketball Club**.....7.30pm
Volleyball Court. Women's Team
- Kung Fu Club**.....7.30pm
Union Gym. Wu Shu Kwan.

THURSDAY

- Fencing Training**.....11.30am
Intermediate & advanced coaching.
- Balloon Club Meeting**.....12.30pm
Southside Upper Lounge.
- YHA Meeting**.....12.30pm
Southside Upper Lounge.
- Postgrad Lunch**.....12.30pm
Chaplains Office (10 Princes Gardens). See West London Chaplaincy.
- Amnesty Stall**.....12.30pm
JCR. Sign a letter, look at the display, buy some goods.
- Fencing Training**.....12.30pm
Beginners Training.
- Pro-Life Meeting**.....12.40pm
Union Lounge.
- Third World 1st Meeting**.....12.45pm
Green Room Union Building. 'An introduction to Traidcraft and alternative trading'.
- Huxley Soc Debate**.....1.15pm
Huxley 340. 'This house believes blasphemy is good'—proposed by the Huxley Soc, opposed by Christians.
- Fencing Training**.....1.30pm
General.
- Gliding Club Meeting**.....1.00pm
Aero 266. Come and arrange a trial flight. All newcomers welcome.
- Keep Fit**.....5.30pm
Southside Gym
- Midweek Service**.....5.30pm
Chaplains Office (10 Prince's Gardens).
- New Beginners Ballroom**.....6.00pm
JCR.
- Judo**.....6.30pm
Union Gym.
- Surf/Windsurf Video Night**.....7.00pm
Union Lounge.
- Improvers Ballroom**.....7.00pm
JCR
- Intermediate Ballroom**.....8.00pm
JCR.
- Southside Disco**.....8.30pm
Southside Bar.
- ICCAG Soup Run**.....9.15pm
Meet Weeks Hall Basement.

TOP TEN VIDEOS

ICU BOOKSTORE

1. *Pretty Woman*
2. *Look Who's Talking*
3. *Nuns on the Run*
4. *Leviathan*
5. *Drugstore Cowboy*
6. *Joe Versus the Volcano*
7. *Last Exit to Brooklyn*
8. *A.W.O.L.*
9. *Dark Angel*
10. *Two Moon Junction*

All videos only £1 per night
Monday-Thursday
Special weekend rate 3 nights
only £3
Membership is now FREE

ICU

Sabbatical Hustings

Monday 4th
St Mary's, 6pm

Thursday 7th
Imperial College
JCR, 6.30pm

*Hear next year's candidates' lies and
ask them awkward questions*

ICU Social Cultural and Amusement Board
Thursday 7th March

Cabaret

Night '91

£2.50 advance
£3.50 on the door
Doors open at 8pm

Wednesday 6th March

BAR QUIZ

Union Lounge Bar
£5 per team
8pm start

Saturday 2nd March

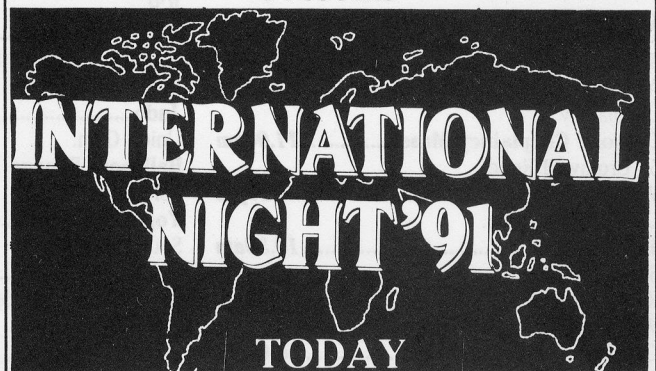
RUGBY

INTERNATIONAL

England vs Ireland

Bar open from Midday

Imperial College Union
Overseas Students Committee
Presents



Friday 1st March 1991

Food Festival—6.30pm, JCR
Cultural Show—8.00pm, Great Hall
Brazilian Carnival—10.00pm,

Tickets available from the Union
Office or overseas society officers:
£3.50 in advance £4.00 at the door
EVERYBODY WELCOME

*Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine
Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7*

Editorial

Apologies, Explanations, and Frustration...

So, here it is, the Travel Special. Roland, the Features Editor, has already given his opinions on the subject of travel in his mini-editorial on page 4, so I'm not going to repeat his wisdom.

I am going to apologise to anyone who submitted anything for this issue that wasn't used. This should have been 28 pages long, but due to unfortunate timing involving us and paper suppliers, we didn't have enough paper. Even worse, it isn't anybody's fault, so there's no potential for a good rant. And that's the bit that's *really* annoying.

Also due to this lack of space several things that were promised last issue haven't been printed. The follow-up to the article about comics (which was excellently written...) will be printed next week, as will the second part of 'Zen Lawyer', and the new columns (the diary and the boring lecture forum). As for that cat, see below...

Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to...?

Yet more new stuff. Starting next week there will be a semi-regular section investigating the views of Imperial students towards important issues, both within college and without. It takes the form of a survey, wherein random students will be asked a question about a specific subject, and the answers will be published. If you are quizzed, you will be asked whether or not you mind having your name and/or photo used, which is totally up to you. The first survey was run with the question 'Are you going to vote in the ICU sabbatical elections?'. Should be fun...

Next comes an experiment. Traditionally Felix does not publish fiction or poetry, as these have been the domain

of Phoenix. However, Phoenix is only produced sporadically (about once a year), and is very under publicised. Thus Felix will now be open to the publication of fictional material. There is far too little emphasis on the arts at this college, and there needs to be more awareness of art and literature. So get writing!

Wanted: More Dwarves...

There are some internal changes being made to Felix, starting this week, in an effort to make the office more efficient, and get Felix out without having to stay up all night! As such there will be a very important staff meeting at 12.30 pm today, in the Felix office.

Staff meetings are **NOT** just for current staff. They are the best time for anyone interested in helping out to come in, as all the regular bunch will be about. Felix constantly needs more help, from *anyone*. We're not a nasty little clique full of hacks, we're human (honest. Well, apart from the odd alien). If needs be I'll get down on my hands and knees: **HELP!!!** In a college of over 6000 students, there must be more than a dozen who are interested in what Felix does!

Over a hundred people signed up at the Freshers Fair last term, so where are you! You don't even have to be able to write, or to spell (as Chris is an excellent example of), Felix can always do with more people. If you've ever looked at Felix and thought 'Well, I don't like that...' or 'Why didn't they do this...?', then **COME IN AND TELL US. PLEASE!!!!**

So there you have it: A grown man reduced to hysterical, last ditch attempts at getting your attention. A sad example of the effects of apathy on a (relatively) sane, idealistic young editor. If you don't want to hear any more of this kind of

thing, then you know what to do: Give us a hand...Please!

Credits

Printing and Typesetting: Andy and Rose

News Editor: Anna

Arts Editor: Adam T

Books Editor: Michael

Music Editor: John

Photo Editor: Richard

Features Editor: Roland

The Gang: Stef, James, Ian, Chris R, the travel writers, and all the reviewers.

The Collators: Phil; political radical, dragged here by Phil; Phil, Phil, Yasmin, and Gabriel, and anybody else who turns up.

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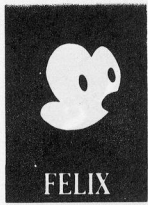
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Bookstore
THE T-SHIRT
of
'Imperial College
Union'
LIMITED EDITION

Staff Meeting:

for all current and new persons in the Felix Office

today at 12.30pm. If you can't make it come along

on Monday lunchtime instead.



Kill the Rooster to Frighten the Monkey

Two hunched, sullen figures were pushed roughly through a curtain hanging across the corridor. They were holding hands—no, their thumbs were clamped together between the knuckles. They were beaten repeatedly until they lay on the floor below my bunk. One thumb-clamp was loosened and their arms were fed through the bunk legs to unite with the clamp the other side. It looked very painful and both prisoners winced when their arms were twisted and their thumbs were bent. The digits were badly swollen and the skin was bloated around their dirty nails. They lay there with staring, guilty expressions.

I established that they had been caught stealing money. Justice in China seems to be dispensed entirely by the police, who also decide the penalty. The ultimate penalty is execution.

The policeman who kicked them when he passed, grinned and seemed pleased with his arrest. They would not be here tomorrow, he said. I asked what their fate was. He replied by miming a gunshot in the head, the standard mannerism for execution. Both figures twisted and contorted their bodies to escape from the kicks beneath my bunk. They lay in the cigarette stubs, melon skins and chewed chicken bones, the whites of their eyes large and bright in the dusk.

Frequently executions are carried out at mass gatherings. The purpose of this is to maximise the deterrence potential, the official reason being that 'it is good to have some people executed so as to educate others'.

It was a hot, uncomfortable night. I slept in starts, waking to brush cockroaches from my face. When dawn came, the convicts were gone, their lives terminated to 'educate others'.



Mass execution.

If you can't make it to the stadium then you can always catch up with the month's killings at the exhibition. In almost all the large cities there are permanent deterrent boards dedicated to gruesome, stomach-churning pictures of the latest executions. The pictures here were part of an exhibition in Kunming, Yunnan province, in southern China. Other subjects covered included particularly gory, fatal road accidents, and decaying genitals—the victims of VD.

It is hard to say how China's crime rate compares with those in other countries. Juvenile crime is a growing problem in the cities. The types of crime committed include murder, rape, and theft of large sums of money. Criminal groups of youngsters are common. The official blame is placed on influence from foreign criminal cliques portrayed in the mass media. Perhaps it is simply that they are

following the example of their 'glorious leaders'.

But the death penalty is part of Chinese culture, an accepted way of life. The general opinion in China is of support for the death penalty and most agree that it is necessary today to maintain the low crime rate. Chinese argue that life imprisonment, favoured by Europe is an expensive alternative which cannot be adopted by China at present. The irrevocable deaths of the wrongly convicted are simply a 'pity'.

Although execution is usually reserved for murder and rape, during the numerous clamp-downs that take place 'execution quotas' have to be met by each province. If the quota isn't reached, the pettiness of crimes which warrant death increase.

In 1984 a village party secretary in Shaanxi Province put 72 villagers into custody for suspicion of stealing part of his bicycle bell. Seventeen were tortured and the another 28 were held for eight days and forced to pay fines to cover the cost of the guards.

Back in Yunnan Province a group of policemen detained 201 people in 1986 for 'law-study class' which lasted as long as eighty days. Many were fined and tortured until they confessed to crimes they had not committed. As a result two people committed suicide, one person died and many were wounded.

Before June 1989 China's last round-up of criminals started in 1983 when 100,000 were arrested. In the last eighteen months the same number have lost their lives in the name of 'education', for crimes no greater than writing this article.

Christopher Riley.

This is an extract from part of an Amnesty Group exhibition on Human Rights, to be held in the JCR next week, between the 5th and 7th March.



A candidate for death.