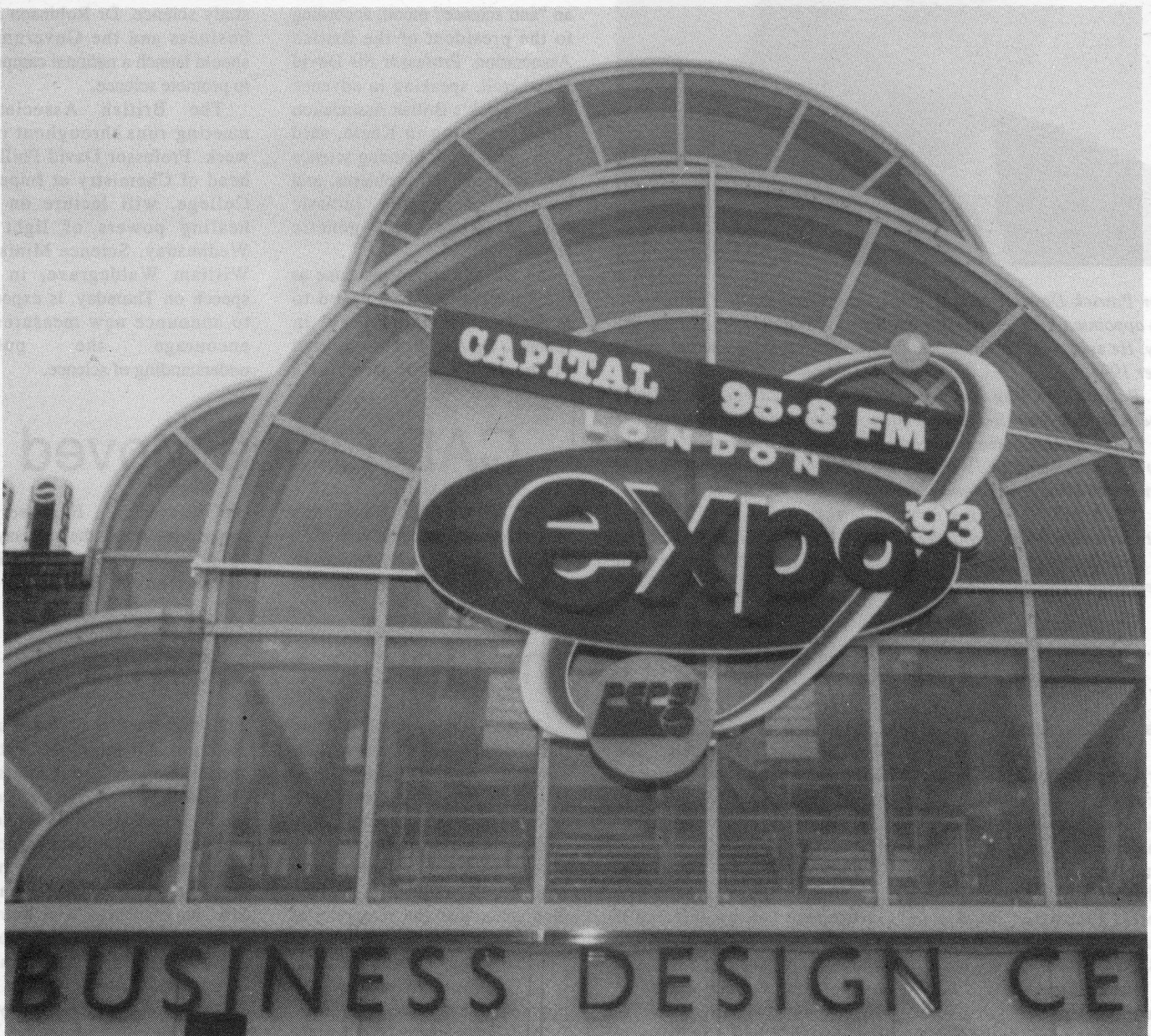


Felix

Issue 972

27th August 1993



See back cover for a photo feature on
Expo '93

Head Off To Surrey



Professor Patrick Dowling, Head of the Civil Engineering Department, has been appointed Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Surrey. He succeeds Professor Anthony Kelly who retires at the end of September 1994.

Patrick Dowling has been at Imperial College since 1968, having been British Steel Research Fellow, Reader and Professor during his time at the College. He was elected a Fellow of Britain's Royal Academy of Engineering in 1981 and is currently the President-elect of the Institution of Structural Engineers.

"I am greatly looking forward to the challenge at Surrey, a University I view as being upwardly mobile. However I shall sorely miss Imperial College where I have spent almost all my life." His appointment takes effect from 1 October 1994.

Suicide Shock

The Physics department of Imperial College is still in shock after the suicide last weekend of one of its students.

Stephen Shaw, 22, died on Saturday afternoon after falling from the roof of the Physics building. He was an Imperial

College graduate who was studying Semiconductor Science and Technology, a joint MSc course with King's College, London.

An inquest is being held, but the police do not suspect foul play.

Science In Decline

BY DECLAN CURRY

Medical research is suffering from an "anti science" mood, according to the president of the British Association. Professor Sir David Weatherall, speaking in advance of next week's British Association annual meeting in Keele, said young people are blaming science for environmental problems, and are frightened by the "Jurassic Park" image of genetic engineering.

Sir David's comments came as the Government was urged to make science 'more sexy' in schools. Dr Ann Robinson, head of the Institute of Director's

policy unit, said Britain's competitive position would be threatened unless more students study science. Dr Robinson said business and the Government should launch a national campaign to promote science.

The British Association meeting runs throughout next week. Professor David Phillips, head of Chemistry at Imperial College, will lecture on the healing powers of light on Wednesday. Science Minister, William Waldegrave, in his speech on Thursday, is expected to announce new measures to encourage the public understanding of science.

CAD Office Moved

The CAD Project Team has moved from 45 Princes Gardens.

They can now be found in room 203 on the ground floor of

the Electrical Engineering department (past the sign saying 'Goods Lift'). They can still be contacted on extension 3426.

Opposition To Student Union Reforms

BY DECLAN CURRY

Voluntary membership is facing a new threat this week, with a former education minister telling *Felix* that he will vote against Government plans for student union reform.

Robert Jackson, higher education minister at the time of the 1988 Government inquiry into student union 'abuses', says he cannot support plans that will give the government new, extended powers over universities. He added his concern "for university autonomy, but not for the unions themselves". The former minister added that, if there was a vote in the House of Commons, he expects

to be joined in the opposition lobby by other Tory rebels. "The Government has a small majority," said Mr Jackson. "It would only take six or eight Conservative MPs to vote against it."

With a majority in the Commons of seventeen, the Government can be defeated if nine of its MPs vote with all the opposition parties. Mr Jackson's comments now make defeat on voluntary membership possible, as both Labour and the Liberal Democrats say they will oppose the proposals to split student union funding into core and non-core areas (for more details on the proposals and their implications, see the article on page 6).

The developing revolt is being monitored with alarm by ministers at the Department for Education, who have already been defeated once this year in a House of Lords vote on university autonomy. Junior education minister Baroness Blatch, who then announced the scrapping of plans to extend the powers of Education Secretary John Patten, is said by Conservative sources to oppose the student union reforms.

This is yet another problem for the beleaguered Mr Patten, who returned to work this week after recovering from a mystery viral infection. The Education Secretary told the Conservative Party conference in November

1992 that the "NUS closed shop must go, and soon". Mr Patten, and higher education minister, Tim Boswell, are being lobbied by the National Union of Students and Conservative Student, once trenchant supporters of voluntary membership. New Conservative Students chairman, Tim Keegan, is understood to have submitted a paper to Mr Boswell, expressing concern that too many clubs and societies will be killed off by the Government plans. The Government has now extended the consultation period to 1st November, closing off any change of legislation being detailed when MPs return after their summer holidays.

See page 6 for an article on the Student Union Reforms

Environmental Links With Moscow

BY THE NEWS STAFF

In a groundbreaking move, Imperial College, through its Centre for Environmental Technology, has linked up with the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MEPhI) to embark on a joint nuclear safety training programme.

The scheme, designated the Training and Academic Link Project (TACL) will be initiated

this October. Its aims are to support sponsored visits by Russian trainees from MEPhI and to enable the flow of ideas between the two institutes.

Tony Goddard, Professor of Environmental Safety, is enthusiastic about the scheme: "This is a good match. Both institutions are science based and have a strong interest in nuclear safety research and training."

Graduate Tax

BY DECLAN CURRY

University bosses have called for students to pay more for higher education. The Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals, in a report published last week, proposed the introduction of a controversial 'graduate tax'. Under the plans, students would pay an extra 2% of their salaries in tax after they graduate. The scheme is expected to net between £4000 and £9000 million for Government coffers, and independent consultants London Economics say the tax could finance as much as 90% of the current cost of higher education.

The plans have been

condemned by the Association of University Teachers. Research officer Conor Cradden said that "working class students would suffer most" from the proposals. Labour's Tony Lloyd, ducking questions about his own party's moves towards the scheme, warned against "blundering" into a graduate tax without "properly considering the dangers". A spokeswoman for the National Union of Students said it was too early to comment on the proposals. The NUS president, Lorna Fitzsimmons, is known as a committed supporter of the idea behind the tax, and argued in its favour during the early stages of her campaign for NUS president.

Student Loan Raids

BY THE NEWS STAFF

Bailiffs have been called in to raid the homes of three graduates and seize £1,100 worth of property in order to repay their debts.

In the first case of its kind, the *Student Loan Company* asked county courts to grant search and seize orders to reclaim property to the value of loans given to the three when they were students.

The company has also hired private debt collectors in the United States, France, Germany and Canada to chase more than 200 borrowers now living abroad.

Ron Harrison, the company's chief executive, said: "We are moving into a new phase as we step up efforts to re-gain taxpayers money."

Meanwhile, a survey by Barclays Bank shows that eight out of ten students ended the last academic year in debt. Interviews with 3,000 students in twelve universities show that student debt has risen by 22% in one year. The average overdraft is now £1,672, and most undergraduates are expected to owe £1,900 by the end of their courses.

Editorial

With every new editor comes a new style to Felix. Unfortunately, as this will be the only summer edition, you won't see the full extent of the changes until the start of next term. Hopefully this has given you a taste of what's in store.

This summer has seen Felix move out of the dark ages and into the technological era. We can at last produce most of Felix on computers instead of using a very archaic typesetter. We owe a big thank you to ICU Publications Board for buying the laser printer, IC Trust for buying a computer and monitor (by the way, can we have the cheque now?) and ICU Finance Committee for the donation.

The only thing we need now is a scanner so that, instead of being manually pasted up, the photographs can be dropped straight into the text on the computer. If anyone has a 1200 dpi scanner laying idle, we'd be love to hear from you.

The next issue will be out on 4th October.

Thanks To . . .

Steve Newhouse, this issue would not have been possible without all your help and advice.

Rose Atkins for all the typing and cups of coffee.

Andy Thompson for printing, sorry it was all left to the last minute.

News

Andrew Tseng and Declan Curry.

Reviews

Penguin, Danny Shields, Phil Dodd, Jon Jordan, Richard Evers and Bratt Anderson.

Features

Jaymz Handley, Andy Wensley.

You Only Get An 'Ooooh . . .'

BY ANDREW TSENG,
NEWS EDITOR

Two researchers at Imperial College have solved one of the great tea mysteries.

Professor Michael Spiro and Dr Deogratius Jaganyi, of the Chemistry department, have discovered the reason for the formation of a film of scum when a cup of tea is brewed with hard water.

By using a scanning electron microscope, an ultraviolet laser and a variety of analysis methods, the researchers have found that the amount of scum formed was dependant on the length of time, the oxygen content of the air and the surface area of the tea.

The paper, written by Professor Spiro and Dr Jaganyi and published in *Nature*, describes the scum as, "a complex organic material derived from the oxidation of tea solubles mediated by calcium salts and accompanied by calcium carbonate."

Much of their research used *Typhoo* tea bags. The result of the studies were that drinkers of ordinary tea can have 'scumless' tea simply by adding lemon instead of milk, or by making an extra strong cuppa.

However, for those who are not connoisseurs of lemon tea, Professor Spiro has another solution: "You could always take it off with a spoon."

Album

Paw *Dragline*

Paw, as you might guess from the opening riffs on *Dragline*, are American and follow in a similar vein to metal acts like Soundgarden and Alice in Chains. The result is that songs often lose any melody to burst of distortion, 'One More Bottle' being one example.

It is said that beneath the gruff exterior, Paw's songs are about deep emotional problems 'Jessie' is about losing the family dog and 'Sleeping Bag' a near death experience. Still most of the time Mark Hennessy could be singing about dog biscuits for all you can hear.

The highlight is the current single 'Couldn't Know', where the song isn't overcharged with too much power and allow the melody to flow.

Bratt Anderson
Released on A&M.

Album

Mary Black *The Holy Ground*

The Holy Ground is the latest album release from soloist Mary Black. It owes a great deal to Mary's Irish background, but it is not just another folk album.

Mary Black is one of the best known musicians to be produced from Ireland for some time. She is reputedly the fastest selling female artist in her home country and is well established in the UK.

This album has no consistent style, but this is no bad thing. Traditional instruments are complimented by saxophone and synthesiser. My initial reaction to this was uncertainty; but the mix works surprisingly well. The real strength of the music is in the warmth and strength of the vocals. The harmonies are truly beautiful. Oh, and there are some words - more

about them later.

There are twelve tracks on this album. And no two sound alike. Some have a traditional feel whilst others have an upbeat jazz or blues tempo. 'When the morning comes' provides a lively introduction to the album. It demonstrates the compatibility of modern instruments; soprano sax, keyboards and acoustic guitar, with traditional fiddle, percussion and voice. Nearly every track has a different writer and this is matched by changes in musical interpretations.

You could leave *The Holy Ground* playing in the background and only notice when it ends. I did the first time. This would however, be a waste of the wealth of rich sounds.

The Holy Ground is an album that I enjoyed more each time I listened to it. The album can only grow on you more each time you listen to the lyrics.

Dick
Released on Grapevine.

Video

Black Crowes *Who Killed that Bird out on your Windowsill ... The Movie*

And so we get a tour video, oh joy. 83 minutes full with 18 tracks, as comprehensive as you would desire of any band. Actually the Crowes make a good show of it. The selection is shown in various stages of undress: Live, promo videos, hand-held shaking shots, each as rugged and carefree as the band itself. Intros vanish into Chris in interviews, or Chris swaying like the breeze or even Chris doing whatever else you do as a deity. It's pretty much his show.

Apart from all the songs, there's some 'excellent' footage of extended interviews. Fifty ways to ask the same question: "Do you fight with your brother" etc. Chris wisecracks his way out of most situations with a raised eyebrow of irony. "Yes viewer this is what I have to put up with."

It ends with 'Sting Me' with all the crazed and plain strange audience in view and more Chris, the man who inhales. Surprisingly he comes across as one of the sanest frontmen in America today, at least there's no tortured Messiah-hood around. He enjoys himself and the Crowes kick and smoke pretty much whatever they want. So far they've got away with it.

Tintin

Album

The Poppies *Honeybee*

If Danny Wilson had the 'Second Summer of Love', The Poppies have made the running for number 3. *Honeybee* is psychedelia (or a they say Popadelia) for the 90's. Titles like 'Love Trippin'/Wondering' and 'Another Groove' are evidence enough.

Although today's flowerchildren have a different role, the first 60's generation non-inhaler is presently hashing up the free world from the White House and the mind expanding horizons of little tablets are seen in a more dubious light. So enter the environment as a focus; seen in 'La De Da' and 'Mother Groove'.

'A mushroom clouds my thoughts today' - it's nicely done. Worldwide peace is also encompassed aka Pepsi/Coke. Everyone's song is in about six languages, which renders it somewhat mystifying.

And whilst the second side collapses like the English middle batting order, the first is proof of a firm grasp of pop sensitivity. Even a Lou Reed cover 'All Tomorrow's Parties' is quietly underplayed with a floating Rickenbacker. The opening two tracks, 'She is Revolution' and 'That's What We'll Do' are the best. Clever hooks and well structured vocal overlays.

Yes I could be back there at Woodstock and the Isle of Wight. Jimi, Janis and Tim, where did you go?

Tintin
Released on WEA.

7" Single

Squeeze *3rd Rail*

For any band to lose a member with the qualities of the mighty, mighty Jools Holland might be considered careless. Still post their Greatest Hits album, Squeeze are still producing records of pop squeaky cleanness. All the loose ends have been nipped and tucked carefully into

place, the melodies are bright, energetic and yes, this is an alright single and I hate myself for saying it. The album's worth would probably overpower you, like drowning in syrup.

The b-side is a Cool for Cats medley. A more shaky advertisement for their forthcoming tour you'd have difficulty in finding.

Tintin
Released on A&M.

We need cinema, theatre, music and book reviewers

Cinema

Sliver

A thriller set in a lofty narrow apartment building that New Yorkers call a 'Sliver', where a succession of mysterious deaths have occurred. Carly 'recently ended an unhappy marriage' Norris (Sharon Stone), has just moved in and soon finds herself the attention of two of her neighbours: Zeke 'wealthy young bachelor' Hawkins (William Baldwin) and Jack 'crime writer investigating deaths' Landsford (Tom Berenger). Of course Carly gets entangled emotionally while the suspense builds as to whether either neighbour is involved in the deaths.

To add to the great cast and director (all undoubtedly good in their own rights), the film is well paced and the cinematography is of a high standard, which is essential for a movie dealing with both suspense through claustrophobia and the use of video monitoring equipment.

This film would love to be a 'great' film, and by all rights it should be. The suspense is by no means that gripping and it definitely won't have you on the edge of your seats. The reason for



this is that the film is fundamentally flawed by its script. Part of this is because the characters aren't as in-depth as they need to be for this sort of suspense and a lot of the time you just don't really care.

Apparently the film is meant to 'shock' the audience by exploring the single most secret

fantasy everyone has but won't discuss: voyeurism, but it never even occurs that you're meant to be thinking about it. The most surprising thing about the film is that after all of the clips on the UB40 video, you forget that the film is actually in colour.

Penguin

Cinema

Rising Sun

A murder mystery set against the backdrop of the US/Japan business competition. Detective Web Smith (Wesley Snipes) is 'placed' with the mysterious John Conner (Sean Connery) who informs and instructs Smith in the ways of Japanese business. Conner takes the role of 'Sem-pi' (instructor) to Smith's 'Co-hi' (student), as they tread the careful line between investigation and Japanese etiquette.

The pairing of Connery and Snipes is great and shouldn't be missed. If anything, Snipes is overshadowed by the attention lavished on Connery's character, which is a shame because most of the humour comes from Snipes, and some of these are almost lost due to not caring enough about Snipes's character.

One of the most notable things about the film is that they don't make a song and dance about it being based on Michael (Jurassic Park) Crichton novel.

Even the complementary 'played quietly in the room next door for a couple of seconds so we can put it one the soundtrack' song has relevance. Perhaps the best commendation of the film is that it also stars Harvey Keitel, who has never appeared in a bad movie.

Penguin

Theatre

Under the Stars

Pam Ferris (Ma Larkin in *Darling Buds*) and Connie Booth (*Fawlty Towers*) steal the show in a play about a life long understudy and a failing actress. Both characters are misfits and provide a comical and slightly disturbing insight to the back stage of a theatre. As they rehearse, you see that both of them have opposing views on acting. They bitch, argue a bit and know that beneath the smiles for the press and on stage, they would both love to have the limelight with the other shamed into never working again.

There are splendid performances from everyone else. Penny Morrell is worth noting, as well as Tyler Butterworth for his part as a put upon assistant. The voice over parts of June Whitfield and Patricia Routledge are highly unlikely choices for their roles but nevertheless good. They all add to the essence of the play, especially since it is in a fringe theatre.

The production brings the back stage to life and is worth seeing to learn more about the theatre, without spending three years at RADA.

Phil

Greenwich Theatre, Charing Cross Tube.
Until End of August.

Theatre

Bish Bash Bosh Club

Quite how this show got its name is subject to doubt. It is a series of satirical sketches, some topical (like John Major pretending to be Winston Churchill) but, in a week when MPs were threatened with being sent home if they did not play ball, it seemed somewhat tame!

The show was funny, but only by the brute force of having five very talented people on stage; what they were lacking was a really good script. Many of the sketches started well but ended so quickly that some of the audience had trouble maintaining their concentration. Where they did score highly was their songs. With a pianist providing excellent accompaniment they parodied various styles from Whitney Houston to Rogers and Hammerstein.

Overall, the show was enjoyable, but with its current script it would be more suitable to a Silly Season replacement for Radio 4's *Week Ending* than performance on stage.

Ostrogoth

Nelley's Night Spot, Willesden Green tube
Tickets: £4 (conc £3) + £1 membership

Student Union Reform

Andy Wensley, Imperial College Union President, gives his personal view on the government's Student Union Reform and its implications.

Is it fine to give students Ovaltine for tea but not for them to campaign against drug abuse? How does one distinguish between political and beneficial activities?

Such a question arose in the parliamentary debate on student union reform. These reforms could drastically alter life in further education establishments. But what are they and what implications do they have for the students?

The Government's View

The current government has long been committed to trade union reform. Trade unions work as 'closed shops' where you have no choice as to whether you join. This principle is driving the current student union reforms; you should have the choice as to whether you join.

The government, in their words, *aims to give students the power to choose what involvement they want*. Simultaneously they believe that tax payers should not be expected to fund student union activities that are unaccountable, either financially or democratically, or which represent essentially political activities. In the parliamentary statement on the reform, the government stressed that they must protect students, as well as their societies, from victimisation.

The Reform

The reform would take place in three parts:

- (i) It would limit the purposes for which an institution can pass public sources money to its student union. Students would have access to a 'core' of campus services. The parent institution could support these with public funds. All other union activities would be funded on a voluntary opt-in basis.
- (ii) Campus unions could not use public funds to affiliate to national campaigning organisations, such as the National Union of Students (NUS). If they wished to affiliate to such an organisation, they would have to be funded through private sources.
- (iii) Thirdly, the reform aims to make student unions more accountable and fully representative. This would involve financial and democratic accountability and the development of codes of practice governing campus union behaviour.

Core Campus Services

The government has defined these as being:

- Internal Representation
- Sport
- Welfare
- Catering

Internal Representation

This would include a seat on the Governing Body and on academic, residential and financial committees. Public money could fund:

- (i) a proportion of the salaries of elected sabbaticals involved in these affairs.
- (ii) the conduct of elections of sabbatical and non-sabbatical officers
- (iii) the elections of non-union internal representatives
- (iv) the preparation of welfare information.

Sports

A large part of a student union budget is currently allocated to sports clubs. In the Government's words, *further and higher education establishments are likely to wish to include sporting services to be supported with public funds*. With this in mind, sport has been defined as a core service, enabling salaries of coaches and groundsmen to be paid.

Welfare

This covers many areas including counselling, help for disabled students, accommodation, legal advice and provision for women students with rape crisis centres and safe late night travel.

Induction to university life through Freshers' Week, along with other social events, would be covered, along with support for specific student groups, such as part-time, mature and overseas students. Help for these groups would take the form of social events and advice services.

Catering

Most campus unions operate fast food services. These would be accepted as falling within core activities.

The aims of the reform

Apart from the core definitions, the other two parts of the reform are clear in their aims.

The second part aims to stop public money being used for affiliation to campaigning bodies. The third part is more complicated.

Financial accountability is gained by monitoring the use of public funds. Charges would become dependant on whether activity or service is core or non-core. In the case when it straddles both areas, a proportional amount would be charged.

Democratic accountability would ensure that all campus unions have constitutions, democratic structures along with properly conducted elections. Elections themselves would have a minimum quoracy rate of 33% and candidates must not stand politically.

How does this affect clubs and societies?

Immediately it can be seen that any club or society that is not sporting would be in trouble. But what is a sporting club?

Traditional sports, such as rugby, hockey and rowing, would be core services. But what about all the others? Imperial College Union has some 155 clubs. We spend 43% of our block grant on them, the highest percentage in the country.

Every non-sporting club is currently a non-core activity. To put it bluntly, we could fund our rowing teams but not our orchestra. There would exist a provision to fund our overseas clubs under the welfare umbrella, but their activities may be curtailed. Other clubs facing funding cuts are the political clubs.

Additional costs

A possibly more important implication of this reform is the cost of a core and non-core system. Currently, Imperial College Union, funds sabbatical and staff costs from a single budget. With a core and non-core funding system, a cost, such as a wage, is charged proportionally to the relevant areas. This cross charging involves more work and cost for administrative and financial sections. These costs have been kept as low as is possible in the past, since we believe that as much of Imperial College Union's block grant should go to students as is possible.

What is the Union doing?

Talks with the government, with College and with other student unions, including the NUS, have been taking place. What we need now is input from students, especially postgraduates. Look out for meetings in your departments.

Over the next few weeks, Postgraduate Group meetings will be held in departments to get student views on this reform.

If you have any questions, the sabbaticals in the Union Office will be glad to help you.

See back page for a photo feature on Expo '93

WIN A Mountain Bike

Visit

Southside Shop

beside Southside Halls

To Enter

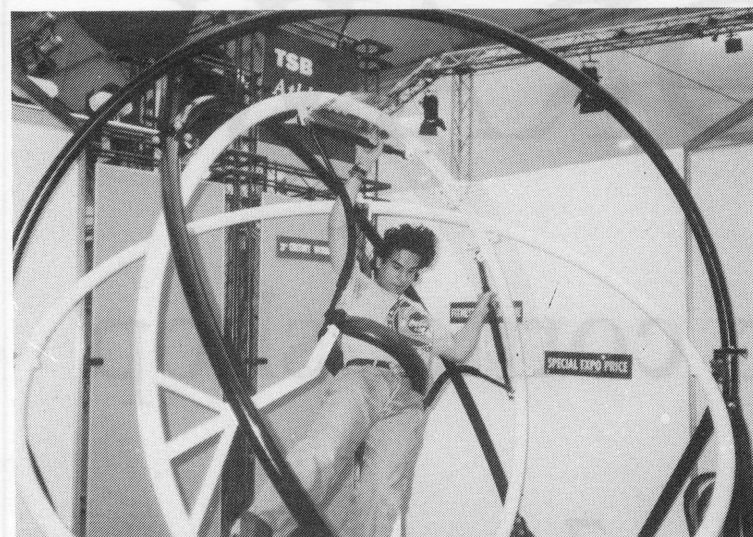
FREE DRAW

I.C.'s one stop corner shop

Open 8 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Expo '93

Jaymz Handley went to the Capital Radio Expo '93 Show at the Business Design Centre in Islington. The photographs below are a small selection of what could be seen, including the Capital Radio rig and Cara from Chris Tarrant's Breakfast Show.



FELIX

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College

Felix is produced for and on behalf of Imperial College Union Publications Board and is printed by the Imperial College Union Print Unit, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BB (Tel 071 225 8672).

Editor: Rebecca Land, Business Manager: Simon Govier, Advertising Manager: Steven Newhouse.

Copyright Felix 1993. ISSN 1040-0711