

mostlyharmless

durham's latest satire and comment
issue 1, michaelmas 2006

MH examines...
Durham Student
Journalism - p2



Rum, sodomy & the
lash... Her Majesty's
Seamen firing
blanks? - p5



MONASTERY OF SOUND

Black is the
new black...

Siddharth Khajuria

This season's latest accessories have arrived - African babies. Angelina's gone for an Ethiopian model, young girl, looks great. Madonna's been cheeky and gone for a risqué version with far lower GDP, David the Malawian. With David's home-country 27 spots below 9th placed Ethiopia in the African GDP Championship, Madonna must be picking up style points as well as children. So...what next? Perhaps Scientology Cruise'll be shopping for new recruits in relegation prone Somalia, which, ranked at 46th, risks slipping down a division. But what'll happen next year, when that 'not-quite-white-nor-black-kid' is all the rage? Chinese take-away's gonna mean something rather different...

Still, if you haven't got space for another child in your life, don't despair; there are other ways to help. You could pick up an American Express RED card; every £1 you spend with it sees a penny going to the continent. According to the AmEx website, it's 'everyday activities like shopping that have immense potential to change the lives and futures of millions of Africans'. Terrific, 'cos next time you get pissed on a £4 bottle of fair-trade beer, 4p's gonna go to the bloke who's just had his kid nicked. Sorted.



Clarice Holt

As Durham's club turf war steps up a level, MostlyHarmless has stumbled upon exclusive information about a new entrant into the market...

The ferocity of Durham's nightclub battle escalated to new heights yesterday when it was announced that the Cathedral was to be turned into a £15m super-club. *Monastery of Sound*

is a crucial tenet of the church's modernisation plan, seeking to develop a 'younger, sexier, more seductive' place of worship. Before long, the gothic columns of Durham's Norman masterpiece will be resonating to the hottest, hippest beats and the deepest, dirtiest baselines. It has even been rumoured that God himself is a DJ.

In an attempt to recapture the city's

existentially confused youth, the cathedral will be offering cut-price baptisms, pre-arranged marriages and free shots of wine to all those who take communion.

The church has allegedly been planning such a move for years, but it was the arrival of LoveShack that apparently spurred them to act. In an interview, the Monastery manager (The Bishop Formerly Known as

Prince) praised the new riverside development: "The Durham club 'scene' was stuck in a rut where people were predominately adulterous, debauched and went to Klute at every opportunity. But the arrival of LoveShack was like the coming of John the Baptist: it showed people a better night life experience was possible. And now we've arrived."

continued on page 2...

IN FOCUS: Durham Tabloids...

Roving cynic, Anton Lazarus has a browse through Durham's student rags

Anton Lazarus

Palatinate

The latest issue of Durhams resident anthology of spelling mistake's and grammatical error's tip-toes between cringeworthy and frankly embarrassing. The constant pleas to become involved in student journalism - flaunting the ever-recycled list of the three journalistic monsters: George Alagiah, Jeremy Vine and, er, Hunter Davies - are annoying enough, quite without quotes such as: "Get involved to be like him!" Like who? Hunter Davies, the man who brought the world the inspirationally named: "My Story So Far," Wayne Rooney's ghost-written masterpiece.

The icing on the cake,

however, has to be contained in the interview with Bill Bryson. The question of why a man with no real links to the City or University was appointed is perhaps justifiably asked, and on this issue you will doubtless agree with Victoria Raimés, Palatinate Editor, that: "There are plenty of excellent Durham graduates...who would be perfect for the job". Who? Why; George Alagiah, Jeremy Vine and Hunter Davies of course.

The Sanctuary

Durham's newest student rag enters with what, were it written, edited and produced by a young child, could easily be referred to as a 'good effort'. Bless. The first news stories other than the 'raging

battle' between Klute and Loveshack make their way into the middle pages after informative articles about where people sit in lectures, RaHS, Gap Year bores and a two-page spread of amateur photos, presumably taken by the editor on a basic picture phone and thrown in in a desperate attempt to fatten the publication up a little.

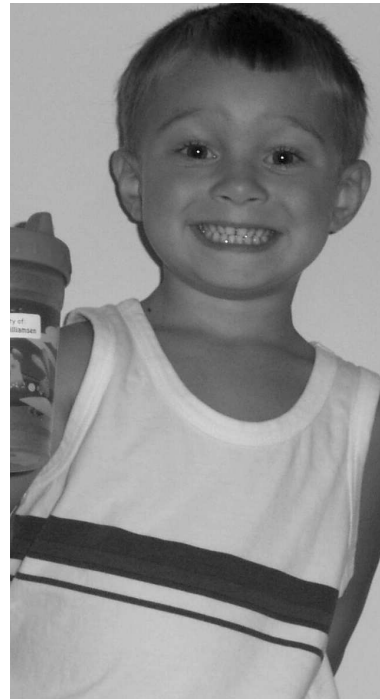
Mostly Harmless

Another new outlet for the never-ending army of Durham's CV-obsessed, shit-spewing lefty wankers to cough up their own special breed of rant, ever-confident that The Norwich Gazette will be sufficiently impressed by their satirical genius to offer them that summer placement they failed to win

last year. The village-newsletter of an attempt for a first edition of this very average, very empty "magazine" was laughed off by freshers and returning students alike. Along with the pizza boxes and plastic bottles that the new morons living out for the first time haven't worked out are not included in Durham's recycling scheme, piles of Mostly Harmless were dumped in green boxes throughout the city. Even the minimum-wage minimum IQ rubbish disposal technicians refused to collect them on the basis of its lowest-common-denominator approach to journalism. A f*&^%g disgrace.

Purple Radio

Sorry, we weren't listening.



Tommy was excited when Sanctuary put his article 'wot i did with my holidays' on the front page

What is MostlyHarmless?

Founded a few months ago by a couple of second-year Historians, MostlyHarmless seeks to provide an outlet for a more creative, irreverent and often provocative brand of journalism.

We'll compare African babies to handbags (p1), newspaper editors to small children (p2) and portray the navy as an unfortunate hotbed of heterosexuality (p5).

As Magnus Taylor suggests, 'nothing's as bad as it seems if you draw it as a cartoon and stick an amusing caption underneath' (p8).

What we're looking for is an original take on what's going on in both Durham and the world at large.

There's still plenty of scope for getting involved:

- we need **writers**: if you're not sure about the sort of stuff we're after, drop us an email and pitch us your ideas. Otherwise, get writing and email us your articles.

- we need **cartoonists** and **photographers** to... draw cartoons and take photographs.

- At a technical level, we need people with experience of QuarkXPress to assist with and coordinate the **layout and design** of the newspaper.

More than anything, we hope you enjoy this issue, and many more to come throughout the year...

The MH Exec.

The Editors:



Magnus Taylor



Siddharth Khajuria

Assistant Editors:



Tom Walker



Ian Chapman

Marketing Director:



Ed Mason

if you want to get involved or have any comments please email us

Monastery of Sound

(ctd. from page 1)

In tactics seemingly better suited to the Spanish Inquisition, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has apparently engaged in what can only be described as 'clerical subterfuge.' MH has received reports of ruthless looking collared agents of the Church menacing students at Durham's nightspots, whilst some partygoers have reported a strange inexorable force propelling them towards Palace Green. It has become clear that there is only room for one club in this town of 13,000 students.

In an interview, the head of the Durham Christian Union denied this would spoil the traditional atmosphere of the Cathedral: "It used to be a tradition that only people who

believed in God would go to church. Then we started to bribe people with little nibbles and cups of tea, before moving on to fully-catered three course meals with caviar and the like. Turning the Cathedral into a nightclub is only the natural continuation of this".

When news of the latest entrant into Durham's club war was broken to 'Andy from Klute,' the poor chap looked visibly shaken before bursting into tears. He was later seen attempting to gain entry into the cathedral by bribing a bemused tour guide with what appeared to be a Klute VIP pass.

Neither this article, nor its author, has any connection to the Established Church and its commercial ventures.

Produced by:

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In search of fresher meat...

Magnus Taylor

Undernourished students have reportedly turned to cannibalism to satisfy an insatiable desire for red meat. After this shocking news the city's streets, once a haven of calm and tranquillity, will never be the same again. The night-time stroll back to one's humble abode, formerly only disturbed by the wholesome sound of projectile vomit hitting ancient stone, has been irrevocably changed. We have received reports that predatory groups of ravenous rugger players are roaming the cobbled savannah lands in search of rich pickings. Only when their voracious appetites are sated do they return to their collegiate lairs to sleep off the effects of their midnight feast. MH's studies suggest that after a feeding frenzy a typical *ruggerus buggerus* will not have to eat again for at least 2

hours and will normally settle for the gastronomic delights of the collegiate dining hall or late night takeaway. MH has exclusively managed to talk to a former Cuth's scrum half who admits to participating in the eating of an unnamed Chads boy (officially now 'studying' in Baghdad as part of the university's ERASMUS programme). Although he took part in the 'meal,' he claims 'not to have swallowed' and 'just wanted to appear like [he] was one of the lads.' He told us that the team chose to prey mainly on Bailey freshers, as their largely sedentary lifestyle makes them slow and easy to catch. Those living on the hill are apparently more tough and stringy, although we are led to believe that members of the team occasionally venture as far as Mary's to gain a lower fat protein boost. The young chap also informed us that some vegetarian team members have

been calling for a tofu or soya 'fresher substitute' to be sold at the DSU shop. A group have considered submitting a petition to the university's Vice Chancellor demanding immediate action. An anonymous source

from within the university rugby club said that such a spree of unabashed cannibalism has been on the cards for a long time. With college meals often resembling, tasting, and having the nutritional value of a bag of sawdust, it is only natural that the hunter-gatherer instinct will kick in amongst the university's less evolved minority. When asked to comment on the recent events, university rugby captain Giles

Frederick Flintstone-Jones looked strangely vacant and appeared to be salivating heavily as he stared at Ivor Tastyrump, MH's 'beef wellington' of a reporter. MH pledges to keep its readers informed on this story. We urge you never to talk to strangers, especially those carrying salt and pepper and sporting a napkin neatly tucked into their collegiate rugby shirt.



Clarice Holt

Cameron softens frontbench image

Richard Hadden

Conservative Party leader David Cameron has reshuffled his front-bench in an effort to improve the image of his party. At a special press conference, Mr Cameron announced that the entire Shadow Cabinet had been fired, before going on to introduce his new team. Said he: "This new Shadow Cabinet will have a much softer image. As Shadow Chancellor, I'm pleased to welcome Paddington Bear. Replacing David Davis as Shadow Home Secretary will be Winnie the Pooh. The Foreign Affairs brief goes to

Rupert The Bear. The very able Super Ted will in charge of education. As for the other posts, well, the Bear Factory has agreed to send over a consignment for me to pick from. They won't have much more than light clerical duties to handle: they're mostly just there to look cute." In response to heckles from hardened critic Lord Tebbit of Mangled Metal, Mr Cameron defended his decision. Said he: "Of course there are those who will claim I'm betraying the ideology of the party. But consider Winnie the Pooh: he's clearly a Tory. Yes, he may be a bear, and,



true, he does like to eat honey, but if you said to him, 'Pooh, would you mind handing over all your honey to a rampaging, anarchistic mob of lefties so that the proletariat can smear it over undernourished water biscuits?', he'd gun them down in an instant. "People are bound to say that I got rid of the old lot because they all liked to contradict me about tax, and Europe, and things. But that's been a deeply-held Tory tradition for years. The obvious problem was that they just weren't fluffy enough. Take Liam Fox, for instance: you just wouldn't want to take him out on a picnic, would

you? "And that David Davis fellow: he used to be something horrible and military, and he wrestles gorillas in his spare time, I hear. Not very huggable at all, I think you'll agree. Even my good chum George Osborne from the Eton 'Carrot, Aubergine and Orifice' Club is proving to be a bit too Tory for our image, what with his constant talking about that tax thingy. "The changes I've brought in will give us a much softer image. As for the former Shadow Cabinet, I've arranged for them to be shot at dawn".

Trophy Strife

MH reveals the true cost of Durham's intercollegiate japes...



College pride under attack

Will Shanks

With an unprecedented increase in the frequency and severity of trophying incidents, the once-harmless phenomenon has become the major topic of conversation in this still nascent term. As well as dominating dining hall discussion, the vandalism of Hatfield college made it onto page one of the Palatinate (idiosyncratically located between pages four and six). Yet while the venerable student publication is not usually known for pulling its punches, editors apparently balked at reporting the most outrageous acts committed in the last few weeks. Therefore it is left to Mostly Harmless to exclusively reveal the true cost of Durham's trophying problem.

While Palatinate dutifully reported the flooding of Hatfield, it somehow overlooked the most appalling act ever committed against the famous college: the trophying of the Senior Man's penis.

In a bid to capture the ultimate trophy, as-yet-unidentified freshers broke into the college and castrated Senior Man Lawrence Noble while he slept. His manhood missing, Noble had little choice but to accept his phallus-less fate and

embrace femininity. In a touching example of college dedication, 'Lorna' Noble has assured MH that 'she' fully intends to continue performing 'her' duties as Senior Man despite the obvious constitutional issues raised. Most Hatfield students have rallied to 'her' support, yet while the general reaction has been one of outrage, a minority of Hatfielders seem to have been amused by the trophying of their president's penis. Kamala Hamilton-Brown told Mostly Harmless; "We found this quite funny and light-hearted, unlike the flood". The identity of the 'trophy-ers' (and the location and status of the penis) remain unknown.

Less violent, but in a way no less disturbing, are the trophying activities of Durham's newest and most mysterious college, Josephine Butler. While other colleges' freshers were stealing banners, pool cues and computer equipment, it has become apparent that the denizens of Butler have been 'trophying' soil from the lawns and plant-pots of other colleges and amassing their spoils in a giant mound. Academics from Durham Anthropology department suspect the construction of this

monstrosity is for ritualistic purposes but as with everything concerning this distant and secretive college, little is known for sure.

Yet even when the facts were readily available, Palatinate journalists were guilty of questionable interpretation. For example, while the newspaper did accurately report the trophying of St Aidan's badger-suit, the incident was presented as "a lighter note" and humorous counterpoint to the travesties committed against Hatfield. Yet this is certainly not how Aidan's SCR President Nick Boalch perceives the incident. A well-known 'furry' fetishist, Boalch has told MH of his great 'frustration' following the theft of his beloved outfit. The misery at St Aidan's seems to have been compounded by the discovery that their college pizzeria is missing, presumably having been 'trophied'.

Prime suspect in this case is St Cuthbert's Society. Few freshers will be aware that 'Cuths' is actually a small, obscure bar that has managed to collect the barest rudiments of a college through years of trophying. Dining room, kitchen, library, properties on the Bailey, as well as tonnes of furniture, cutlery and stationary have been stolen in order that what is essentially a dressed-up bar can almost pass itself off as a student college. Cuths still lacks a proper JCR, shop, toastie bar, enough accommodation for all its members and of course a pizzeria. Along with binge-drinking, trophying is at the heart of the society's way-of-life: indeed, the entirety of last year's exec was trophied from St Chad's. This has led many to suspect that Cuths is behind the more outrageous aspects of the recent trophying 'crime-wave'. "St Cuthbert's Society is run by criminals", said one anonymous Hatfielder, "it wouldn't surprise me if they had stolen Lorna Noble's penis!"

Tax and Tans

MH casts its satirical eyes over the much vaunted air-fuel tax...

Tom Walker

Stop the think tanks thinking, cease consulting the consultants and end the surfeit of surveys, for the answer to society's problems is here - air fuel tax.

It's not a new idea, I know, but with this visionary policy no more cheap flights to Benidorm will be no big deal. As anyone who's ever visited the Costa del Sol will tell you, most English holiday-makers don't want to enrich their

complaints about somewhatlesseasyJet flights. As the hordes flock to their new-found holiday paradise, Skegness will once more have a reason for existence. This can only improve our image abroad - we'll be far too busy puzzling out deckchair mechanics to find the time to throw continental plastic chairs at Johnny Foreigner. Look at that; we're resolving racial tensions as we go. Economically, renewed investments into bingo halls will revitalise the



knowledge of another country's culture and way of life. No, they want an England with enough rays to replace their usual marinade in fake tan, yet an England with red-tops, dingy pubs and soggy Yorkshire puddings. Sadly, even the doubtless talent of the fine chefs of Faliraki can't recreate the fatty film on any genuine greasy spoon's hash browns. Sun's great and all, but the rest just ain't quite England. This problem, however, has a simple resolution: build a giant tanning salon over Skegness.

Paid for by the new air fuel tax, the 'sunshine' from these huge UV tubes will ensure that there are no

market beyond Gordon's wildest dreams. Of course, it would be foolish to ignore the health costs the programme could create. This has been duly brought into consideration - Patricia has assured me that the NHS will be long gone by the time the melanomas start to sprout.

My only concern is that Skegness will be just too perfect, thus preventing holiday-makers from getting their Recommended Daily Allowance of grumbling, but all in all the plan's a sure-fire winner. I heard it might be good for the environment as well, but if you ask me that just sounds like a load of hot air.

The Queens' Yacht?



Andrew Tickell

A leaked internal Governmental Report has shown that heterosexuality is running at a rate of 35% in the British navy. Defence Secretary Des Broon, Scotch, lambasted the "scandalous" rates of heterosexuality as 'unacceptable' and 'dangerous', calling for legislation to close the legal porthole.

Mr Broon, said to be close to his wife, promised a "Rum, Sodomy & Lash" report into the problem, commenting: "If we *have* to take any more of these heterosexual men and women, we have to be selective. Those with prior token gay experiences are at least an improvement on unadulterated 'straight' sailors infesting our system at present. The Government will not permit deviant majorities to weaken our naval position."

Hillary Armstrong MP, Minister for Social Exclusion, agreed, condemning the present system that allows as many as 12,000 straight sailors to enter the services each year and vouchsafing a new governmental campaign to

stamp out this abuse of the system. "As a practicing heterosexual, it is important for me that heterosexual achievements and talents are recognised. More important, however, is the defence of the United Kingdom. I firmly believe that social exclusion is the only reasonable way forward in this area." DaveCameroon.com, Tory Leader, was keen to agree. He did.

However, academics have claimed that the Government's campaign will not deal with the problem, condemning the 'slippery slope' of meterosexuality proposed. Professor Moan Chompy, in a letter we found at the dump, said: "The problem with these meterosexuals is that they don't go far enough. Under their tough exterior, they're essentially heterosexual. It's intolerable in a diverse modern society, and certainly unacceptable in a fighting force."

Today's leaked report also follows hot on the heels of the Paris Business Review article of last year describing the "rampant naval

heterosexuality reducing Britain to a slave-race". Citing such famous homicidal homosexuals as King Richard the Lionheart and the entire Spartan military, the article called for an expansion of aggressive LGBT programs as the best means of restoring British International Thallasocracy. A picture emerges of an increasingly beleaguered British naval policy after the 400-strong UK rubber duck fleet was slashed in 2004, a move described by Pop Benedict the Umpteenth, a 5'2" pensioner of German extraction from Harrogate, Kent as that of a "semi-sentient sponge".

One homosexual marine, who wished to remain anonymous, Captain Joe Vester, 34 of HMS Fancier, said: "I entered the navy given the distinct impression that I would have wide access to fellow LGBTs. I get to training, and I find out they're all straight. No cock action at all. It's a scandal, and the worst bit is that Government are only interested in covering it up."

"It isn't so much 'kiss me Hardy' as 'kiss me Helen'".

The Gospel according to Dan Brown

Tom Walker

* Thou shalt not murder, at least not until thou hast already carefully lain a trail of cryptic clues leading to your inevitable discovery in a large European city of your choice.

* Thou shalt not commit adultery with another secret society. There are so many of the buggers that it'll get confusing otherwise.

* Thou shalt not make any false idols, for the answers to most of the world's problems can be found in religious art anyway.

* Thou shalt honour thy 'meaningful' historical facts, and produce them ad nauseum at every possible moment.

* Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's riches, as banknotes are only freemasonic advertising in any case.

* Thou shalt not steal from thy neighbour, unless thy neighbour's novel is from the same publisher and needs a sales boost from a high-profile court case.

* Thou shalt not worship any other gods. In fact, thou probably shouldn't worship anyone except possibly Dan Brown himself, the world's leading authority on, well, pretty much everything.

(Disclaimer: All references are purely fictional and any resemblances to actual secret societies are accidental. Apart from the bits about the Catholic Church. They're all true.)

Spreading the butter of hate

Nishant Kumar

In response to the escalating claims that the Muslim community in Britain is being victimised – the government snapped into action today – forming the Commission for Equal Racism. The purpose of this task force is to ensure that Muslims are not the only group being singled out for hate.

Friend of the Muslim community Jack Straw hailed the move as a welcome

addition to the government's attempts at total inclusiveness. "We must be inclusive in our hate. No community must feel that it is left out of our prejudice. Muslims believe we discriminate only against them – this is false. We also hate wogs, niggers, yids, chinks and any other foreign elements in our society. It is criminal that one group is made to feel left out in this way. This task force will ensure the even spread of the butter of hate over the toast of over society."

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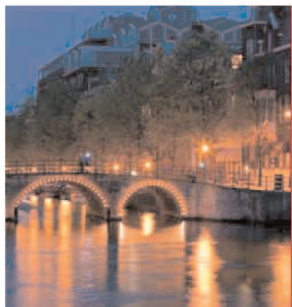
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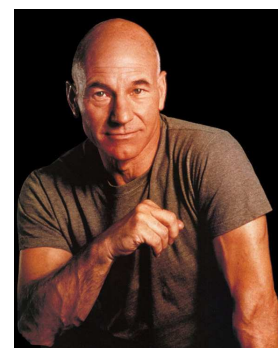


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DURHAM UNION SOCIETY COMING UP NEXT WEEK...

Wednesday 22 November:

Patrick Stewart



3.00pm in the Chamber

Friday 24 November:

Death Penalty

Proposition

Peter Hitchens
Associate Editor,
Mail on Sunday

Thomas Ball
American debater

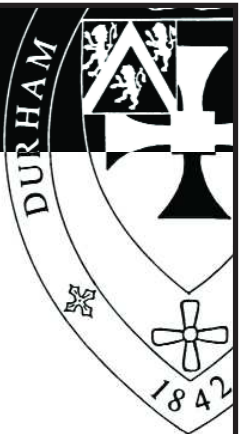
Opposition

Stephen Pound MP

Neil Fodor
Amnesty UK



8.30pm in the Chamber



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A History of Satire

Magnus Taylor

armed only with a couple of rusty table knives and a knitting needle.

Nowadays satire is all around us, in the food we eat, the clothes we wear and even the tainted air we breathe. George Dubya waddles out apeline from behind every lamppost declaring war on Mars whilst dear old buck toothed Tony snaps at his cowboy booted heels. Have we turned into a nation of petty, pernicious cynics incapable of enjoying simple and childish pleasures like puppies, clouds and getting caught in the rain?

Perhaps it's the very buttock clenching awfulness of 'the modern age' that means if we took all the world

seriously for even half of the time, we would rapidly descend into a bunch of uselessly dribbling imbeciles?

Your helpful satirical wizards have conjured up a solution to this terrible quandary. Henceforth, we shall take none of the world seriously all of the time and only some of it seriously for anything that's left over. In this way we'll be able to pretend that we really don't mind living in a small, wet island on the fringes of western civilisation.

Sometimes we all need to be reminded that nothing's as bad as it seems if you draw it as a cartoon and stick an amusing caption underneath.



insert amusing caption here - we can't think of one.

(Clarice Holt)

MH Review:

Borat and the Bigot

MH Review

furthermore I would be worried if you did not find yourself to be the same. Seated in the soft darkness, fondled by accessible humour, Baron-Cohen masters your responses. In this production every response is an exposure. Easy company and worn seating are no lulling compensations for the stripping bare of complacency.

Baron-Cohen's mass appeal keeps us guessing - he metamorphoses at just the moment that the power of his work seems graspable. It is this adolescent-like rebellion - better to be silly, or to fail, than to give people an easy ride - that so enthralls us. It baffles and irritates anyone who dares to place him as an idol, making serious social statements. It breaks down

the stuffy barrier that so often links great social commentary with impenetrable texts, and it pushes responsibility into mass-culture, challenging people to think and be responsible for their attitudes and actions on a personal level.

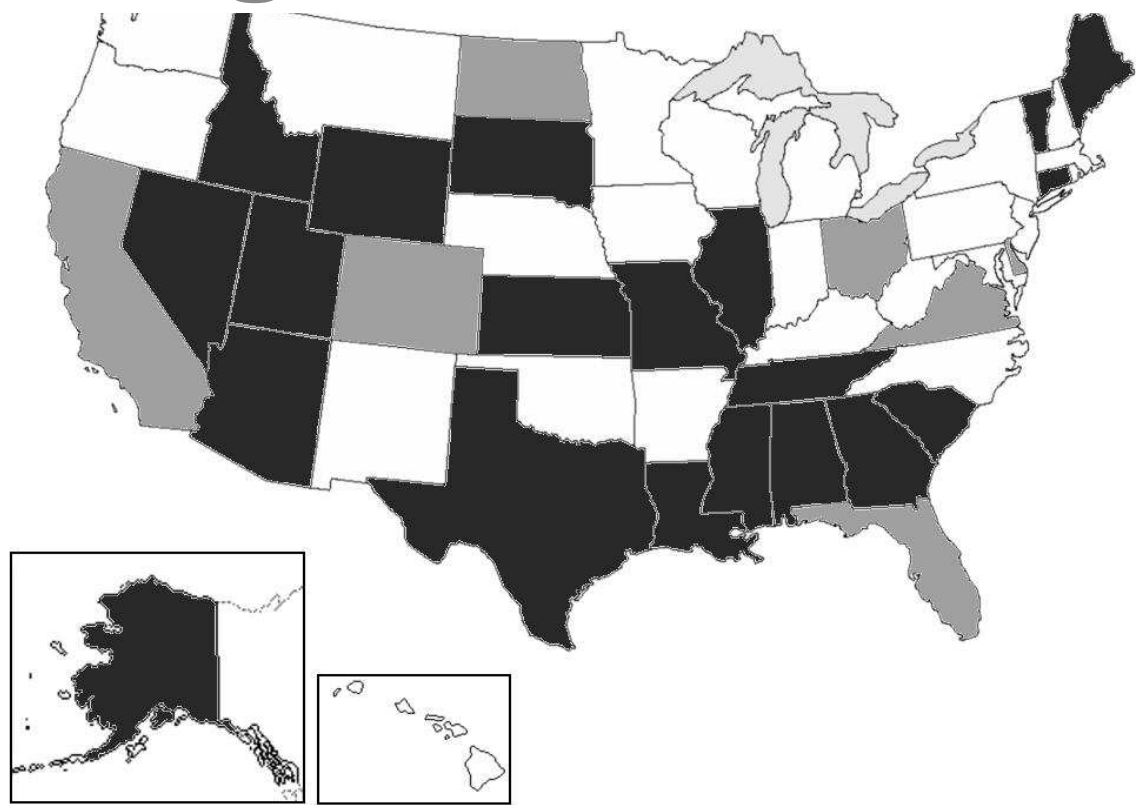
Unlike the carefully planned pages of the press, which scare, challenge, then reassure, Borat's hold on me stems from the fact that it does exactly the opposite. It is a film that, although surreal, is genuine and aims to prevent blasé response. Baron-Cohen did not take years or spend billions to root out bigotry in society: it came quickly and easily to the surface. Those who did not appear outright awful became the unseeing and the unvigilant, saying nothing and colluding in

silence.

Prejudice is the curse of analysis and memory, and although it can be shrunk using effort, compassion and logic, its influence will never be removed completely. Borat's gift for exposing it teaches us to ridicule its existence, to be vigilant to it in all its guises, and to shift its presence into uneasy recognition, not discrimination or silence. Propaganda, ethnocentricity, conformity, rebellion, recognition: there should be nothing our mind is exposed to that we do not analyse and interpret. Borat - with his sharp humour, his moments of slapstick rebellion, and his piercing insight - is a medicine that is delivered sweetly and can be painfully hard to swallow. **RR**



MH goes stateside: the midterms



Alistair Cormack's
cartographical
guide to the US
midterm results...

- States which still lynch gays, women and those not from 'around here'
- Lynching on Tuesday only
- States which *now* lynch gays, women and those not from 'around here' slightly less

What you didn't know...

Alistair Cormack, Matt Hindle, Magnus Taylor

For those of you who didn't stay up all night glued to your television sets, MH brings you the post election results, analysis and gossip:

* Condoleezza Rice was found in bed with a white supremacist at a post-election party in Austin, Tx. The supremacist declined to comment.

* George Bush is to revamp the republican strategy by adopting an Eritrean Child, in a TAS (tactical adoption strike). Laura is said to be thrilled, Barney is less than pleased.

* After his shock sacking resignation Donald Rumsfeld has taken up a new post at the National Organisation for Women, He is said to be eager to implement his 'shock and awe' strategy using his weapon of mass destruction. (intelligence suggests that the aforementioned weapon does exist, but we've all heard that one before.)

* South Dakota rejected proposition 78, plans for a tactical nuclear strike on both Canada and France. Despite the narrow 57-43 rejection, South Dakotan politicians hope to get the resolution back on the ticket for 2008.

Fear and Loathing on the campaign trail

Joe Vester

In Britain, as a liberal, it is sometimes hard to see why Americans vote the way they do. One might think the Democrats, who supposedly aren't evangelical, racist, big-business nut-jobs would be the clear winners to anyone with sense. However, the fact is that there really isn't very much difference. The following provides some guide as to the level of most debate in the US:

Republican: How many days at work did you spend last week?
Democrat: How many days did you spend?
R: Stop lying to the people, Bob. The People of Pennsylvania deserve more. Just tell them the truth.

D: You answer my question.
R: Answer mine.
D: I have answered it, now answer me.
R: Just tell the truth, Bob. Stop the lying. Look into the camera and say how many days you spent at work last month.
D: I have told the truth, now you do it.
R: No you haven't!
[degenerates into shouting over each other]
I change the channel, and on comes a political ad. It's from Tennessee, a Southern state where the Democratic challenger for the Senate, Harold Ford, is black. It appears to show a number of people from the street, speaking about their support for Ford, cutting between them.
(Black) woman: Ford's good-

looking, isn't that enough?
Woman: Yeah, obviously, terrorists need their privacy too.
White man in deerstalker: I agree, I do have too many guns.
White bimbo with skimpy clothing and squeaky voice: I met Harold at the Playboy party!
Sleazy-looking man in dark glasses: So he took money from porn producers, who hasn't? (laughs, slimily)
[As the ad ends, the white woman comes up again and does the 'call me' sign]
I marvel that, even in an ad sponsored by the Republican National Committee, it is possible to provoke supposedly long-dead fears of black men seducing white women.

One might think that in the Tennessee case, then, there might be a simple choice, between racist bigotry and a new, brighter, liberal future. Ford is a new darling of the liberal press, bringing the Democrats back into the South.
However, when these two candidates went head-to-head, the difference was not so clear. The Democrat turned out to be a supporter of the Iraq war and Bush's economic policies. He then proudly proclaimed himself not to be any sort of liberal. In fact, he said he liked the President very much as a man, and, as a fellow evangelical, admired his religion. Against this, the Republican constantly tried to show how different from the President he was, and rejected

that America should "stay the course" in Iraq.
With a weak and hugely unpopular administration, one might have thought the Democrats had it made this time. Even the Republicans are running from association with Bush, each candidate attempting to show how many times he has voted against the President. The two parties are more like tribes than anything else, grasping at anything that might grab a few votes, running from anything remotely controversial, and it is hard to see why one would vote either way, even with such a terrible president as Bush. No one's going to change anything.

Doing society the *Durham* way

Ben Grafton

If you're part of a society, congratulate yourself on your self-importance. If you're the President, Vice President or Social Sec, (the one responsible for organising piss-ups, plain and simple) then you've got an integral part to play. But what interests me, is what exactly your obsession is with the society or, more pitifully, the committee. Why here in Durham are you so desperate to get involved or to fit in? Surely the first thing you should have been thinking about when you got here was "where's the college bar, what's the name of that leggy blonde from downstairs (Kate), and why the hell did I agree to that

treble J.D?" It seems that in the quest for personal fulfilment in this 'rich and vibrant learning environment,' there's a grave sin to be committed: not getting your foot in the door. However, if you party on down to the Social Committee interviews, and offer your services to Welfare; if you stand up and be counted as Sports Treasurer, and strive towards the Mecca of Exec, then yours is the Earth and everything that's in it. And which is more, you'll be bit of a bum-licker.

Curriculum Vitae: it's amazing how you've developed an unhealthy interest in Latin all of a sudden. I wonder how exactly you're going to reword "I swanned around the place like

I owned it" on a CV. Be aware that there's a potential can of worms opening up here...just hope that when they all wriggle free, they don't form some sort of society and become quite as cliquey as their human counterparts.

Don't get carried away though. Relax. Take a chill pill. Go out for a quiet drink on the Bailey. When you get there, notice the well-dressed gentleman at the entrance. He'll take great pleasure in announcing his well-rehearsed catchphrase, "Castle only tonight folks" before returning to his copy of, let's say, Milton's Paradise Lost. Similarly frustrating, moments later, are the words "Hatfield only" coming from a fat bloke who puts down his can of

Special Brew barely long enough to deliver the immortal line.

We mustn't exaggerate. But we've got to at least build up this college rivalry malarkey; it's essential. Ask anyone who's ever played a sport at Uni. Easy to spot, some will even turn up to French lectures carrying La Crosse sticks, virtually mummified in their college stash. Now correct me if I'm wrong, but as far as I can remember, it was only ever cool to walk around with your name on your clothes the first day of primary school. Those who had their name visible after that time, were the ones who had to be accompanied to the toilets in case they had a little accident. Somewhat

appropriate, some would say, as later this evening, 'Chopper Harris,' (21) captain of Men's Weightlifting is rushed to the nearest gents, wearing a (vomit-resistant) hoodie that sports his title lest anyone forgets it.

You can almost taste the bitterness on your tongue, oozing from the direction of the 'peasants,' ordinary folk who enjoy a laugh and a drink, but who aren't social climbers. If by any chance you fall into this category, but after reading this, have been persuaded to get yourself more involved (unlikely), then I'm afraid I've got some very bad news for you. You've missed the boat. Although luckily for you, it was only the Princey B. So no big loss there then.

Dastardly Despots Slam Saddam

Richard Hadden

Many former world leaders last night issued statements welcoming the death sentence handed down to former president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, by a special Iraqi court.

Said one notable former Soviet leader, Josef Stalin: "I'm only too glad to see the back of him. He was a lousy, second-rate dictator, who gave us despots a bad name. True, he did go through all the motions of despotism, like purging his own government, random torture, knocking off irritating journalists; but that's hardly original: that's the kind of

thing me, Adolf, Benito – all the old crowd – used to do years ago."

Speaking in an interview with David Frost (close enough to deceased to allow transcendental interviewing), Mr Stalin rubbished Mr Hussein's other achievements during his twenty-four year reign: "It's no good being half-hearted as a dictator. Take his war with Iran, for example: at best that was a draw, but he could have gone out in a blaze of glory, burning his own people on the way back. Whilst, I admit, he did manage to flatten a few Kurdish villages, on the whole his attempts at religious or ethnic genocide were frankly

just abysmal."

Mr Stalin went on to lament the general decline in dictatorial standards worldwide: "It's a trend that's been going on for a while now, unfortunately; it really is pathetic what some people are trying to pass off as despotism nowadays. That Kim Jong-Il fellow's not doing badly, I admit: he's managed to get his hands on some nuclear bombs, and he's quite clearly insane, but he has been in power for years now. Back in the old days, we would have knocked off and ethnically-cleansed three neighbouring countries by this time."



Saddam: second rate dictator, first rate beard

The Secret Diary of Yoda

Woken up this morning, I was. Loud bang there was. Come on Thursdays the dustbin men they do not. Most irate I was. Having a

dream about Keira Knightley was I.

In my pond, a space ship some pillock had crashed. A right mess they had made. All over my house splashed mud was. Particularly livid was I. Out steps lanky bastard. Dressed in pyjamas

was he, accompanied by robot, yeess. Slightly effeminate were they both.

"Clean this up I hope you will," I said. "Jedi master am I. F%&*ing janitor, I am not."

"Jedi master are you not" said he. "Over-evolved

toad you are. Sh*t-hole you live in".

Homosexual, he did infer me. Last straw, this was.

"Better than your sex life mine is," I said.

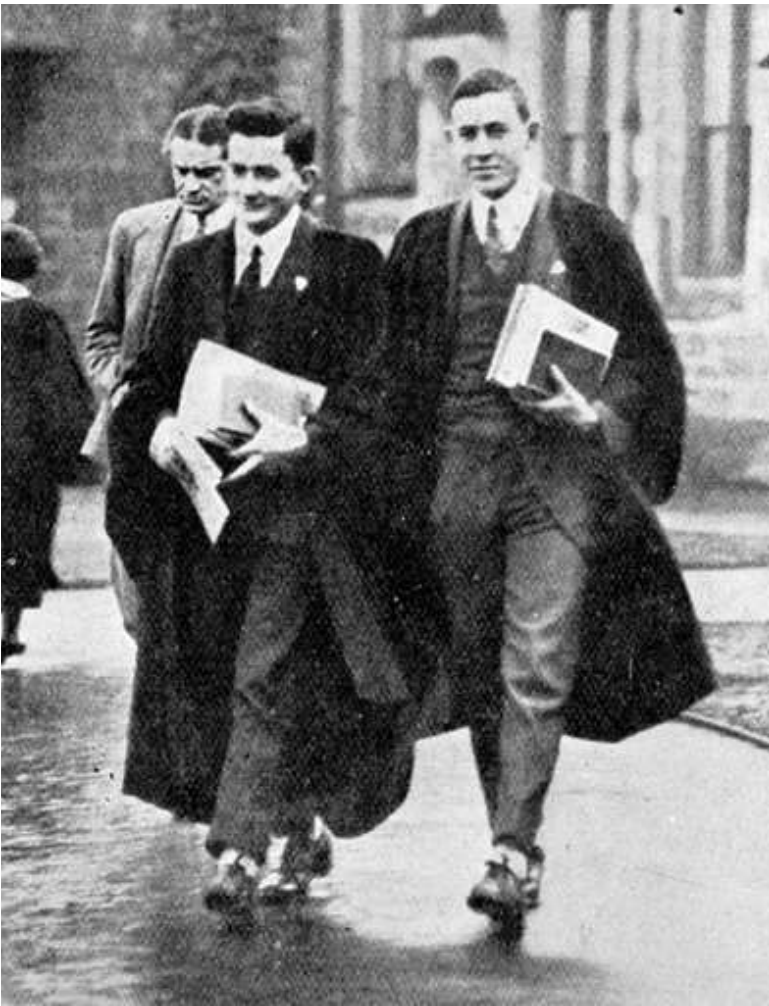
"Bugger off," he did tell me to do. "Princess Leia and Chewbacca have I

shagged. Too old for shagging are you."

"Ugly tart and walking carpet," I did name them. "No need for Viagra have I. Use the Force, I can. For eunuch, Mrs Yoda did leave me. Very exhausted she was, yess." **RH**

LOCAL NEWS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE...

Pinnacle of social development discovered in North East



Siddharth Khajuria

Come to Durham.

Racial Tensions? Raging debates over hijabs and niqabs? Nope. Just check the latest prospectus. No less than a beautifully sedate hotbed of multiculturalism and modernity, this place.

ASBO culture? This town doesn't need Tony's cuddly Community Support Officers. Where's that world of woe portrayed by the Guardian's front pages? Little more than fear-mongers, these liberals. Have they not been to Durham? Fools.

Come hither and see

that socialism's dead, it's time for the champagne.

And whilst on topic, let's stop with this talk of alcohol abuse. Academic excellence and dangerous debauchery – not mutually exclusive you see. Don't listen when they tell you it's one or t'other. Not here. They stumble down the cobbled streets hand in hand.

Government fact-finders, social commentators, investigative journalists, John Reid; what are you waiting for? Come to Durham, for the answers to this island's problems lay atop a hill in mining country.

Local Pot Calls Kettle Black

MH investigates shocking reports of racial stereotyping amongst kitchen utensils in Durham city...

Matt Brown

In what has been described by Durham police as a "racially provoked verbal assault", a local Pot is accused of calling a nearby Kettle 'black'. A fellow Kettle commented "I thought we'd come a long way since the days of judging a Kettle on the color of his paint. It's what's on the inside that counts, in

this case herbal tea."

Pot has refused to comment but his lawyers, Pan and Mug have issued a statement claiming that he was confused by the plethora of terms used in modern society to describe the defendant. A Wok for the defense added "it's so confusing to know what's politically correct and what's offensive these days. Me so horney, I looove

noodle!"

Pot claims to have friends of every culinary background, and his lawyers maintain that any allegations that he is a lazy lay-about who only gets off the sofa if he's got the munchies were not only offensive to the Pot community at large, but inaccurate - the accused is a crack Pot.

Ba'athists linked to Grey College Fireworks Fiasco

Richard Hadden

Grey College is under investigation for obtaining the fireworks used in its famous display from characters of reputedly "shady" dispositions.

Said a spokesperson for the suppliers, Mr Uday and Mr Qusay Hussein al-Tikriti (now deceased): "I don't see

what they did wrong. My clients had some 'hardware' lying about, some second-hand Soviet-built Scud missiles mostly. No one wanted them. They were just gathering dust in some hidden silos near the Iranian border, so they decided to swap the anthrax-laden warheads for cheap colourful gunpowder and stick them on eBay. Admittedly they didn't

have the proper papers to be licensed firework vendors, but it's not like we're living in the E.U or anything."

Said the University of Durham, well-known for its tough stance against the unauthorised deployment of WMDs in student accommodation: "Um".



Student Journalism?



Write for us... ...Rupert did

Rupert (above) used to write for MH; he strove with every sinew to form peerless lines of polished satirical prose. He was destined for greatness, until fame consumed him and he went one step too far. An ill judged polemic on the subject of the vice-chancellor's terrible halitosis resulted in his unceremonious expulsion from the university.

Undaunted, Rupert continued to tread the satirical highway towards the great golden paved streets of journalistic nirvana. Sadly, it wasn't to be. Clinging to the memories of glories past, Rupert returned to his old Durham haunt.

Rejected by friends of old, he can now be found on Old Elvet Bridge, where he has taken to wrapping himself in copies of MH, using them as crude protection against the biting cold of the Durham winter.

Rupert's dedication is an example to us all. We salute you Rupert, long may you live the satirical dream.

No-one famous has every written for MH, and probably never will. However, be you a violent polemicist, an unashamed cynic or just plain brilliant, MostlyHarmless needs you.

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