



mostlyharmless

durham's latest satire and comment
issue 4, easter 2007

PUBLIC SERVICE?

- DSU President questions motivations of council candidates
- DUS President stands despite commitment to year abroad
- Prospective councillor 'neither lived nor worked' in ward



Some of the students who stood for Durham City Council: from top left, clockwise:
Nicola Heaton, Joe Cookson, Chris Bolland and Fred Kuchlin

A number of Durham students stood for election in last week's local council elections. MostlyHarmless, with a healthy hint of cynicism, raised its eyebrows.

Durham's budding politicians have been keen to establish a foothold in the local political scene for some time. When MH thinks of student politicians, the image of

rampantly careerist CV-augmenters (no doubt unjustly) springs to mind. You can't really blame us when the NUS's blundering attempts at 'relevant' political debate forms the majority of direct student involvement with the political sphere.

Councillors themselves are actively encouraging a student presence on the City Council.

Liberal Democrat Councillor and prospective parliamentary candidate Carol Woods was enthusiastic at the prospect of 'having more young people in local politics.' MH doesn't altogether disagree. With 10,000 students out of a population of 70,000, it's a good idea to get student voices heard on the Council. It's this that seems to be

continued on page 8...

DEAD GUNS

- NRA to hold memorial for gun law victims
- Gun senselessly deactivated every 3 seconds

William G. Pilgrim

The National Rifle Association announced this week that it is to hold a memorial service to remember the innocent victims of gun control laws across the developed world.

"Every three seconds, a gun is senselessly deactivated in the prime of its life by the evil heartless liberal governments of the Western world," announced NRA board member Ted Nugent. "We must put a stop to this senseless waste of potential".

The memorial service will be attended by politicians, diplomats, NRA members and gun enthusiasts from all over America, and is the start to a month long international 'Gun Aid' campaign.

It is unlikely that celebrity NRA member Charlton Heston will attend as he is suffering from Alzheimer's. Reports suggest that the illness has not affected his ability to operate guns, rather his ability to remember why he began shooting in the first place - often with hilarious consequences.

The 2nd Amendment of the US Bill of Rights - written over 200 years ago - states that: "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Time travelling Constitutional framer James Madison commented, "Free and unrestricted ownership of semi-automatic handguns by the general public in a free, peaceful USA under no threat from external attack and in possession of the world's largest and most powerful military is exactly what

we had in mind when wrote the 2nd Amendment." He then proceeded to spend over 20 minutes loading his musket, fired one shot at a small deer and travelled back to 1791.

High-profile events have already been scheduled in support of Gun Aid. A memorial service is to be held in Kigali, Rwanda, in memory of hundreds of thousands of machetes that have been melted down and used to build hospitals and such like.

NRA President Sandra Froman responded to questions at yesterday's NRA press-conference:

"All you ever hear about on the news is 'HIV this' and 'famine that'. Nobody seems to care about the important stuff. The fact of the matter is that guns are being disabled by the authorities the world over when they could be being used to shoot at stuff, like animals and tin cans, and maybe intruders."

The NRA (established in 1871) has been publicly commended by the Ku Klux Klan (criminalized in 1871) who also feel that many of their hobbies have been unfairly curtailed and stigmatized by the government and media.

This reporter wishes to keep a neutral stance on the debate, but will be keeping guns in his prayers in the coming weeks.



News for Local People

Angel of the North 'not a real angel'



Clarice
Holt

Magnus Taylor

A group of American tourists from Houston, Texas are reported to be 'outraged' at what they term 'a dirty piece of blasphemous dishonesty' perpetrated by the County Durham Tourist Board. It seems that the group in question were under the illusion that the North-East's favourite piece of public art, the Angel of the North, was in fact the physical manifestation of God's right-hand man, the Angel Gabriel. It seems that the confusion arose primarily due to the inability of the Americans to distinguish between fictitious religious characters and objects from the real world. It is believed that the group considered invading the local Tourist Office and staying there until they produced 'the real Gabriel.' However, they eventually decided to travel down to London, where they hoped to witness 'a miracle of congestion charges' carried out by the city's patron saint, Ken Livingston.

Iran welcomed into Nuclear Club

Siddharth Khajuria

Iran has made it into the exclusive Nuclear Club. Club secretary Donald Blunt has posted Iranian President Mahmoud I'm-a-dinner-jacket his membership card, entitling him to full use of clubhouse facilities. Blunt hopes that the recent expansion of membership to include Iran, India and Pakistan should ease fears of institutional racism at the controversial organisation. Blunt told MH: 'We welcome all creeds to the Nuclear Club. There is no reason why the Arabs and Asians should not have equal access to our facilities, should they be willing to pay their membership fees.'

Associate member, Israel, was said to be seething at Iranian membership. Sources close to Israel's Nuclear representative told MostlyHarmless that they did not believe Iran had a right to membership. The source, Paul

Wolfwhistle, said: 'Iranians are not welcome here. What is happening to the world? They let these Iranians into the club swimming pool, they let some man called Tiger play at Augusta. What next? Palestinian Homeland?! Piffle. A Jihad on all their houses!'



Ahmadinejad enjoys club facilities

Brown Sugar Racist

Durham's ethnic-minority community have launched a protest at Brown Sugar's deceitful activities. Said Saeed Khan, leader of student lobby group Black Flower, "Brown Sugar doesn't do what is says on the tin. I thought this was going to be Durham's top ethnic hangout when I applied, but everytime I walk by, I don't see any of my brethren." SK

Mohammed media cancellation

In a statement issued today, Mohammed has announced that he will not be making further media appearances this year after his "poorly received" Danish modelling campaign. His spokesman said, "Naturally, we are disappointed that it didn't take off quite as well as it could, particularly in the Arabic world. Hopefully a moratorium on press appearances will remind folks about how they've lost out, and we can try a more targeted campaign in some time in 2008." 'Max'

Student 'bombing' campaign

Fears ran high in Durham after two students were remanded in custody after under the Terrorism Act, reportedly close to instigating a "campaign of bombing".

The pair, who had been under MI5 surveillance for some time, were finally arrested in Durham Public Swimming Baths. A spokesman for Scotland Yard said that they "had been watching them for over an hour. They had already engaged in the illegal activities of 'Running', 'Pushing', 'Acrobatics/Gymnastics', 'Heavy Petting,' and 'Diving In The Shallow End' – it is clear that it was only a matter of time before they started bombing." RH

Procrastination

Tom Walker

As Durham enters its fraught and frenzied final term, a recent university report has indicated that study hours have fallen to unprecedentedly low levels over the last year. The report suggests that the phenomenon stems from a worrying new trend in which students compete to find the longest word for 'wasting time.'

The word 'procrastination,' an intimidating fifteen letters long, has held sway over the Durham scene for some months, but has recently been deemed not to be "quite pretentious enough" by linguistic hipsters at the forefront of the movement. As eager students



The late, great Richard Whitele. He liked his letters

rush to make their mark on the vernacular, library staff have

been forced to take the unprecedented step of banning all thesauri from their shelves.

Said one fresher: "Everyone knows that popularity depends on being seen not doing any work. The longer the word is, the more time you've obviously wasted both thinking of and typing it. 'Scratching my arse' just doesn't cut it in this age of polysyllables."

This dangerous competition threatens to hamper Durham's academic performance in the upcoming examinations, and the editorial staff of MH hereby pledge to declare a moratorium on all academic work until the source of such subversive actions is discovered.

From the Tabloids

Anton Lazarus examines what three of Durham's journalistic goliaths have been saying...

Anton Lazarus

The Sanctuary

Durham's student tabloid this edition features a pioneering Subliminal and Helpful In-Text Graduate Advertisement Service (SHITGAS):



LIBRARY IS BUSY! *[[Working for Deloitte would be great.]]* Students return to Durham this term to find the former exclusive home of geeks, losers and foreign students full of cool and pretty

people who hate political correctness. *[[Ernst and Young, it's not boring.]]* Even our very own queen of sexy socialites, Bronny Zita-Jones, was spotted gazing at fit men and scoffing mouthfuls of Nutri-Grain bars behind a large pile of books in the bowels of Science Site's new most popular building. *[[P Morgan; we pay you money.]]* Numbers at the library have been steadily increasing since The Sanctuary was first distributed there at the start of the academic year...

Palatinate

DSU CALLS FOR MORE SPACE IN LIBRARY The usual pre-exam overcrowding in the Library this week has led to calls for library extension plans to be brought forward. Former Palatinate office-cleaner and media hero George Alagiah, speaking in an exclusive interview with Palatinate, recalls: "The library was always busy before exams." DSU president Alex Duncan told Palatinate: "The



University is just super. If the new Vice-Chancellor thinks students sitting on one another's laps and a one-in-one-out system for the short loans collection is the best way to deal with the problem, then who am I to disagree?"...

durham21.co.uk
LAST CHANCE STUDY-ROOM? Sackme Moose asks: why are we all doing everything at the last minute? As usual at this time of year, students have been gathering in Durham's main library somewhat like small insects around a pile of freshly laid bovine-turd. While some people come to Durham to work hard throughout the year, managing to contribute a never-ending stream of articles to an award-winning student media website, while completing all of their assignments on time to a first class standard, others leave their 'revision' to the last minute. Are these people just a group of selfish thick-kids too busy not reading this award-winning website to get anywhere in life? Last time Durham21 picked up an award, which was last week...



New Era Biggins

Tom Walker and Ben Grafton welcome Durham's new VC...



New Durham VC: Christopher Biggins



Star of Stage and Screen? Christopher Higgins

Tom Walker
Ben Grafton

After a series of gruelling interviews, Durham University is delighted to announce the recent appointment of its new Vice-Chancellor, Christopher Biggins. The comic actor, who shot to fame in the 1970s with iconic appearances in Porridge and Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em, replaces Sir Kenneth

"The comic actor who shot to fame in the 1970s ... replaces Sir Kenneth 'terrifyingly-efficient' Calman"

'terrifyingly-efficient' Calman, who is moving on to pastures new after 9 years at the helm. Biggins, who will be the university's twenty-third Vice-Chancellor, has perhaps become better known more recently for his moving portrayals of 'Widow Twankey' in a series of sell-out pantomimes. His appointment will be seen as a godsend for many, who feared that the gaping hole left by Sir Kenneth Calman would prove to be unfillable. Professor Christopher F Higgins, BSc, PhD, FRSE, FRSA, FmedSci, who also

applied for the new position, has apparently taken his rejection with good grace, and plans to devote his new found spare time to amateur dramatics, chamber music and judo. One university official, who wished to remain nameless told us, 'The job of Vice-Chancellor is an extremely important one, so it was crucial that we got the right man. Whilst we scoured far and wide, there was only one man who could ever match the energy, ingenuity and charisma of Sir Kenneth, and that was Christopher Biggins.' Sir Kenneth moves to take up his new position as Chancellor of Glasgow University, and considers the post an exciting new opportunity in his long, glittering career. 'There's plenty of scope for change there,' he told MH. 'Student accommodation is far too cheap, and they haven't even introduced top-up fees yet. I'll soon show those backward Celts.'



Cheerio Ken!

THIS ISSUE

Issue four's highlights include:

- MH Opinion - condoms, Africans, rock stars and more: pages 4-5
- Esther Rudolph returns. This time she's stuck in the library: page 8
- Make your own map of Africa: page 9
- a short story about Durham's latest fad, 'freeganism': page 11
- Spot the difference with MH: back page

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MostlyHarmless // Opinion

Shock as black man runs for President

As Obama mounts a forceful bid for the White House, Magnus Taylor looks at the colour of his skin

Magnus Taylor

Oh my America! Land of the free, home of liberty, bastion of democracy, inventor of the CIA-sponsored Third World coup. Well, that's enough platitudes to be getting on with. Believe it or not, this headline is actually true, and we have some serious and weighty socio-political analysis to get stuck into.

Barack Obama is rich, Harvard-educated and also running for the Democratic presidential nomination. On the face of it there are no real surprises here. However, the one crucial difference with Obama is that he is not your average white middle-class American. He is in fact a black middle-class American. The question is: does this really make any difference? Obama did not grow up in the ghetto. He spent most of his early life in Hawaii. He was the

first African-American to edit the prestigious Harvard Law Review, but this does little to connect him with your average resident of Harlem or New Orleans. Just because Obama is black, it doesn't mean that he should automatically be seen as the champion of black America. He has about as much to do with black America as Prince Harry does with white England.

Politics in America is about identifying with great swathes of the electorate and engendering some sort of personal affinity with your candidate. Bush found his home within the conservative God-bothering Christian Right. They swallowed his born-again crusader rhetoric without too much thought about his actual credentials for the job. In contrast, Obama is pretty moderate: he wants a moderate phased withdrawal from Iraq, moderate dialogue with Syria

and Iran and is only really moderately black.

America can cope with Barack because he doesn't go around shouting: 'Black Power' or advocating hip-hop and the Nation of Islam as a means of social progress. Obama is not the saviour of the black America because in a truly meaningful sense he is only tangentially black-American himself. He has shot off in a direction inaccessible to the vast majority of his black brothers. This makes him a politically potent force because he looks different but sounds pretty much the same. My analysis may be simple, but the reality is that most people vote in elections on the basis of pretty simple perceptions. This is how democracy works. Image and money rule, and Obama has already shown he has the talent to match even dangerously liberal liberals such as Hilary

Clinton in these stakes. If Obama continues to sell himself so effectively, people may well grow to love him for being young, gifted and only just a little bit black.



The Condom Conundrum

Intrepid MH reporter Emily Dukakis tests her sex-ed know-how...

Emily Dukakis

Over a third of students believe that condoms 'have holes in them large enough to allow HIV to pass through.' Really? So says a survey run by the good old NUS and the Terence Higgins Trust, a sex education NGO. This is pretty shocking stuff.

I was in the middle of reaching for the green ink to write to my MP in protest when I suddenly remembered my cynical duty. I decided to take the online quiz myself, and, coming to the infamous question, noticed something strange. It actually read: 'Can condoms have holes in them large enough to allow HIV to pass through?' Well, sure, they can. Klute theoretically can play

good music, but that doesn't mean to say that it does.

I'd assume that the correct answer to that question was yes, it's *possible* for them to get holes in, and yes, if there is a hole, HIV *could* pass through it. A reasonable response? The Terence Higgins Trust, obediently parroted by the BBC's website (see picture) didn't think

so. 'Students clueless about condoms,' proclaimed their press release.

Raising awareness of sex ed is a good idea, but making an otherwise unexciting survey instantly sensational by being 'creative with the truth' is emphatically not the way to go about it.

Last Updated: Monday, 23 April 2007, 23:16 GMT 00:16 UK

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Students 'ignorant about condoms'

Many university students in the UK lack basic understanding about condoms, a survey suggests.

A third of those polled thought

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Madonna Saves Planet (again!)

Siddharth Khajuria

Child thief Madonna is back, this time to save the world from meltdown. The ageing rocker will perform at London's Live Earth concert, part of a "monumental music event that will bring together more than 2 billion people to combat the climate crisis".

Artists such as Madonna, Keane, Snow Patrol and James Blunt will deliver a "call to action", to 2 billion global "participants". Following their success in relieving a number of African nations from famine, poverty and their children, rockers feel their work there is done.

More importantly, Africa just isn't 'cool' any more. Child thievery has – as this publication predicted in its first issue – moved on to yellower pastures. Earlier this year, Angelina Jolie picked up a

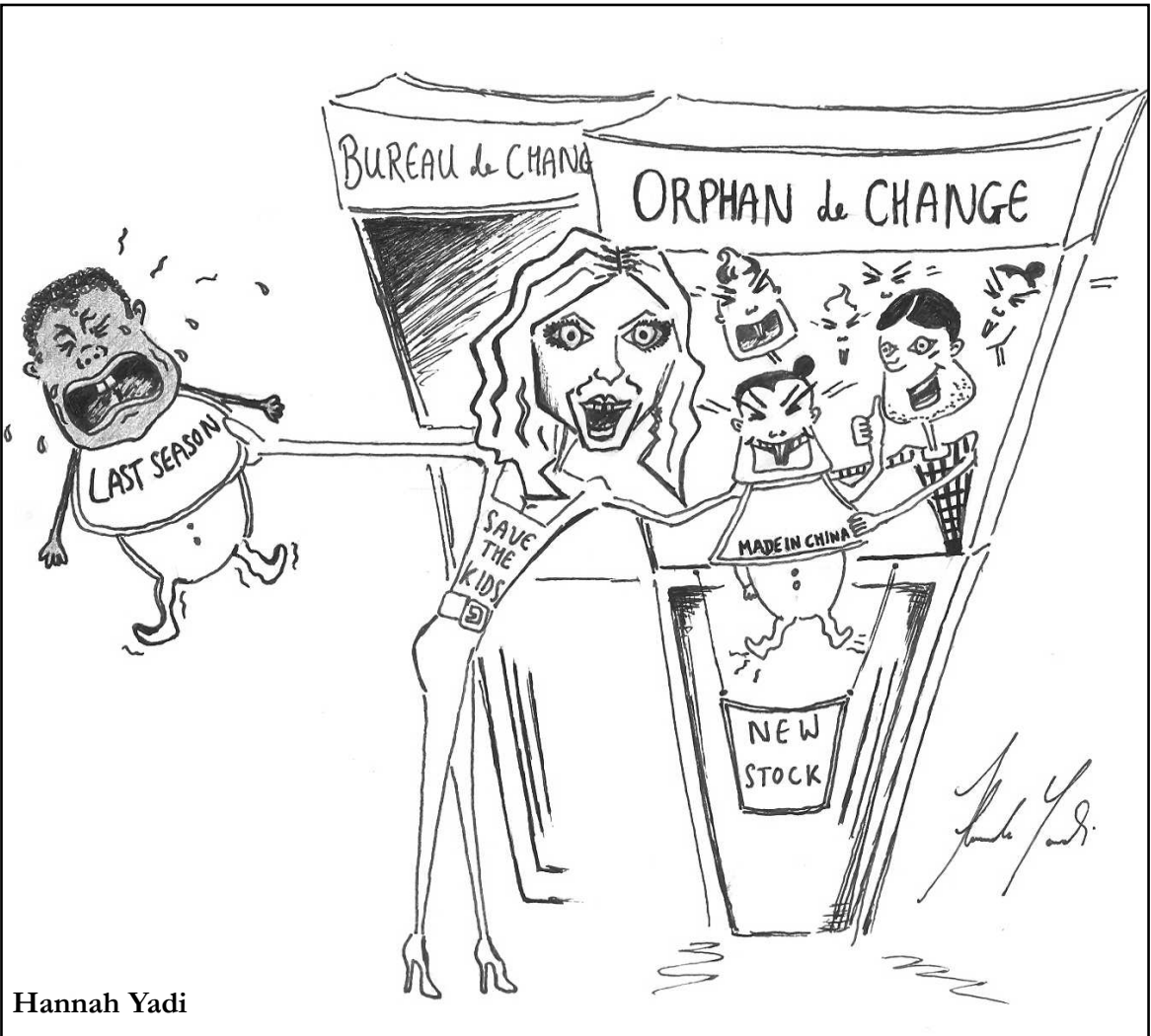
newbie from Ho Chi Minh City. Musicians, like politicians, realise the need to hold public attention. In 2005, that meant Live 8, a series of concerts designed to coincide with the meeting of the G8 nations. Back then, making poverty history was all the rage. And huzzah, they made poverty history. You can't hear it anymore.

Ever since David Cameron rode a bicycle to work (tailed by car and helicopter), politicians, musicians and the media have been battling over all things green. Things that a few years ago were obscure irrelevancies have been thrust into prominence: carbon footprints, Guardian guides to middle-class wind-turbines and an increasingly rotund former Vice President.

There's nothing wrong with giving Al Gore a little bit of love, or letting 2 billion people

listen to James Blunt grumble and moan. The problem lies elsewhere: thinking that celebrity charity makes any sort of long-lasting, sustainable difference. Good causes, politics and popular culture have to work in some sort of unity. But if in two years time we're talking about climate change as much we're talking about Africa now, there could be trouble lying ahead.

The problem of tying charitable action to politics and popular culture is that the latter two have the attention span of a toddler with ADHD. There are only so many leader articles, comment pieces and features to be written about the planet slowly getting warmer. The problem with popularising green politics is that it becomes fashionable. And at some stage, much like Africa, it'll go out of fashion...



Hannah Yadi

Madonna trades in last season's model for a fresh bit of Asia...

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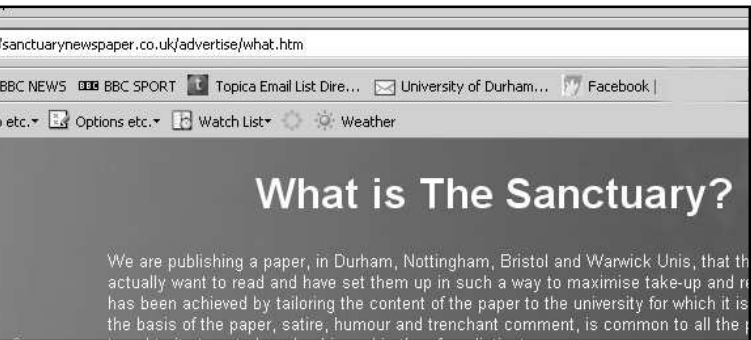
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Sanctuary Newspaper tailored to you

Saul Alinsky

The Sanctuary is a masterful bit of craftswomanship. Your intrepid correspondent did a bit of digging and ventured onto its website, where it is suggested that

hitting satire and irreverent content", the distinction designed to "take into account the perceived difference in reader taste in each university". It's a wonderfully euphemistic way of depicting



one of the newspaper's strengths is the manner in which it is tailored to the readership at each of its universities.

The Durham Sanctuary, for example, is depicted as being deliberately "light-hearted and casual" whereas the Bristol Sanctuary "consists of hard

Durham's "light-hearted" and "casual" populace as "ignorant" and "stupid". It would seem, according to the Sanctuary's very own publicity material, that we're not suited to the "hard-hitting satire" and "irreverent content" dished out to Bristol's edgy student population.

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The MostlyHarmless guide

10 Ways to Escape a hostage situation

Nick Collins

In light of our fourteen heroes and one slightly-more-publicised heroine escaping from Iran in a trail-blazing show of submission, Mostly Harmless offers a timely guide offering various methods of escape, for the persual of the more discerning detainee.

1. The "Great Escape"

Just wait for that inevitable moment when the entire prison system lets its guard down for exactly five minutes, and escape using whichever tunnel/disguise/system of levers and pulleys miraculously gives you a window of opportunity.

2. The "Nail-File on the Window Bars"

Perfect for any detainee hoping to escape an unguarded cell circa 1850.

3. Play the Guard until he gives you the keys in

submission.

Ideally a 2-man job. Wait till he takes you for exercise, then **BAM!** Note: Flaying implements necessary.

4. Flay yourself until they release you out of pity.

For those held by more sympathetic/apathetic captors. Not one to try amidst the pestilence of a deserted Tora Bora cavernous hell-hole after a US Cruise Missile's just leveled the local children's hospital, believe me.

5. Entice the Jailer's Dog with a Stray Bone

Works especially well on pirate ships.

6. Strike a baragin.

Your Rolex, and the Mars Bar in your pocket, for your imminent release. They're foreign - of course you can out-barter them.

7. Stockholm Syndrome

One up the bum, no harm done.

8. Wait for your government to negotiate your release.

Optimistic. (See image below)

9. Call upon the mighty Prophet Muhammed to engulf your captors' spirits in a spiralling curtain of eternal darkness, and to empower your brothers to eliminate all traces of them and their infidel race with a range of equally horrific explosive and chemical attacks.

Gage the religious leanings of your captors before you spring this one on them - I cannot stress this enough. You might be lucky, but there's also a fairly good chance that you could make things worse.

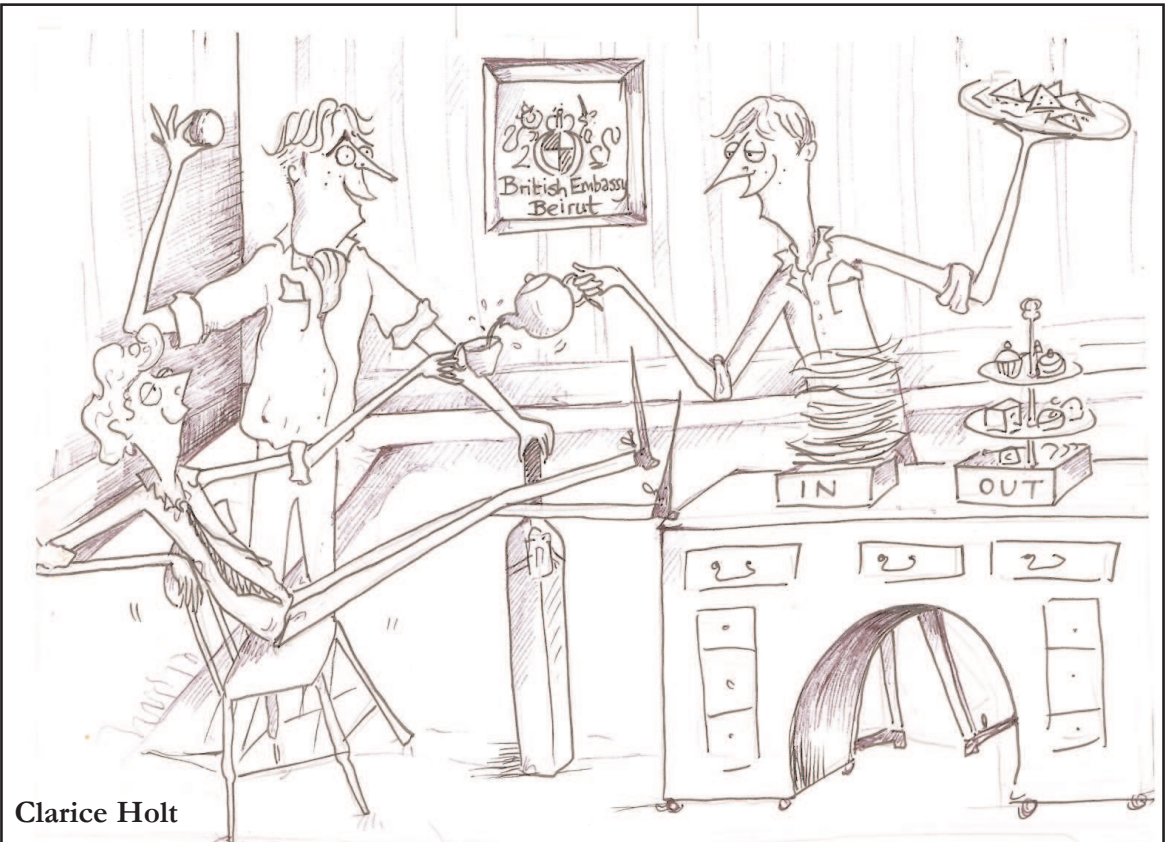
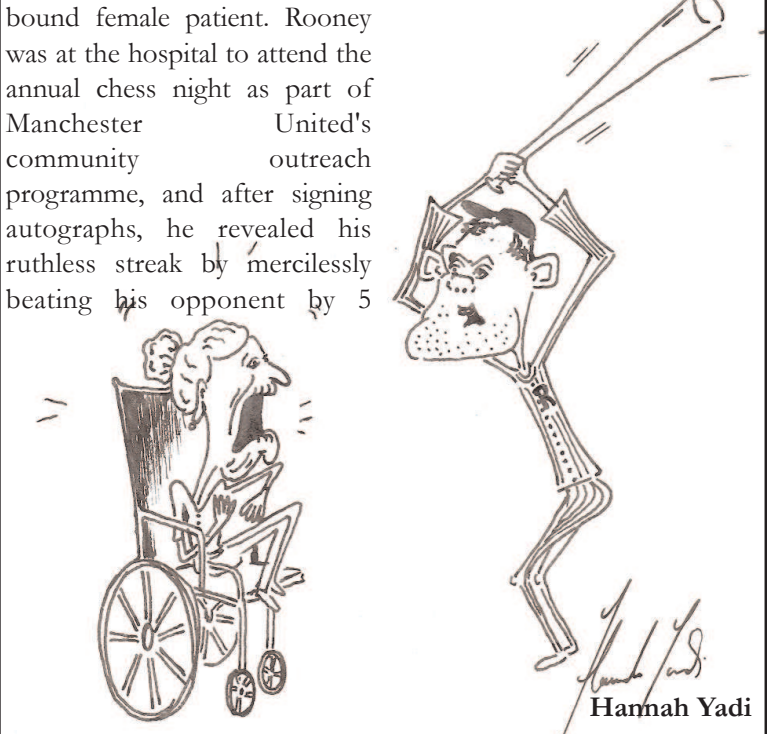
10. Admit your guilt, apologise, publicly state your regret and foolishness, thank your captors for a lovely stay, go home. Say exact opposite for £100,000.

Self-explanatory.

Footballer beats paraplegic woman

The patients of St. Anne's Hospital, Manchester, were in shock last night, after seeing Manchester United and England footballer Wayne Rooney savagely beat a wheelchair-bound female patient. Rooney was at the hospital to attend the annual chess night as part of Manchester United's community outreach programme, and after signing autographs, he revealed his ruthless streak by mercilessly beating his opponent by 5

checkmates to 0. 'I always thought he was mentally retarded,' commented one onlooker. 'But he destroyed poor Mrs Rogers. I'm shocked. What a clever man.' NC



8. Wait for your government to negotiate your release

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Education, Education, Education? Minor Party News

Andrew Tickell

Robert Kilroy Silk's new political party argues that the role of education in Britain is booming "out of control", misplacing the sceptre of public power in the hands of those unworthy to bear it.

The party manifesto argues that "this country was built upon the honest foundation of the Englishman who rolls up his sleeves and takes to the task. Not greedy Scotch or muck-faced Mick with his grubbers in the public purse, fingering their so-called "degrees". The days of Churchill and Pitt are numbered, and Britannia is the worse for it. This fixation on formal learning is Un-English. The Englishman's home is his castle, whether it's in Stoke or not. And he's entitled to his opinion on it."

In his first press conference yesterday, Kilroy Silk condemned all university courses, save for the Oxford degree in PPE (Puttering & Polite Erudition) in which the students do not have to attend any lectures, and are examined only in their final year

by a panel of three members of the Conservative Party willing to certify them as 'Bonus Ovum' and fit for high office.

A spokeswoman for the conservative Unitary Policy think tank has given aggressive support to the party's position, but has also praised Evade Cameron of the Conservatives for "appearing to have no career at all. A sterling figure. Blair is less successful, having qualified as a barrister. Certainly, he seems to have pleaded no cases, but that is hardly the point. He is still possessed of the loutishness of learning."

Kilroy Silk's line is particularly strong on military matters, promising to close the Officer Training Camp at Sandhurst during his first 100 days in office. Although usually reluctant to speak in political circles, Britain's highest army officer, Field Marshall Sir Wimple Stanley Whipshot whispered to MostlyHarmless that "The Empire was built on that solid cornerstone of British shipping: the expert amateur. Wellington. Indeed, all his officers received no technical training whatsoever in the proper



Kilroy-Silk

motion and use of a body of men, and look at the success he had." "I fear that some of the loss of life associated with Iraq must be attributed to the so-called 'education' provided to the soldiers - leading them to over reach themselves. Form square to receive cavalry, or form line to give fire. It's terrifically simple."

Student Councillors (continued from front page...)

motivating the likes of Joe Cookson, a Conservative candidate, who described the fact that 'nobody' spoke for the 2500 out of 4000 students in his ward as 'a disgrace.'

So, which student issues have the council neglected thus far? Chris Bolland, another Conservative candidate, cited lowering council tax and eradicating the congestion charge as his key concerns. However, students in Durham pay no council tax and very rarely use cars. Bolland stated that he was 'not standing to represent students specifically, but to represent the people of Carville [sic.] & Gilesgate Moor'. Sure, but if we need a student voice so badly, why does this voice focus on issues that are barely relevant to students themselves?

Bolland freely admitted that he neither lived nor worked in his ward. Had he ever been there? 'Many times in the past few weeks, and it is certainly a lovely part of Durham'. Can such a candidate hold as genuinely large a stake in the local community as someone who lives there, and moreover does so throughout the year?

Bolland polled 142 votes, trailing the leading candidate, Liberal Democrat Barbara Howard, by 1071 votes, and was even defeated by the electoral might of the Durham 'Taxpayers' Alliance.

It would be churlish to mock such defeats - David Cameron himself admitted last month that the party had 'a fight on its hands' to improve its poor electoral position in the North. In this respect, he extolled the fact that his party had put up more candidates for election than any other.

However, it is hard to believe that he imagined that this 'fight' would be successfully carried out by a bunch of student residents with fairly tenuous long-term ties to the area. Joe Cookson told MH that he considered it 'questionable' that any candidate from Lancashire, the South or the West Coast should be standing. Perhaps he is right.

MH's scepticism was further aroused by the nature of the candidates selected. Frederick Kuchlin, also Easter Term President of the Durham Union Society, ran for election in Pelaw and Gilesgate Ward. Though he

considered it 'unlikely in the extreme' that the residents of Pelaw and Gilesgate would elect him, Kuchlin stood in the knowledge that he would be unable to serve the full duration of his term. He is a linguist and will spend the next year in Russia. Did the 108 people who voted Conservative in Pelaw and Gilesgate know this?

Kuchlin stated that he would have been 'pleased to step aside' if an elusive candidate 'who wasn't taking a year abroad' materialised. If the only candidates that can be found are those who are in Russia next year, then maybe it's better that there are no candidates.

When asked about paper candidates such as Kuchlin, Carol Woods suggested that the issue was a matter of 'personal integrity'. The outgoing DSU President, Alex Duncan, shares her concerns. 'It's interesting to note that certain people standing for the council have no plans to stay in Durham beyond June. This, surely, raises questions as to whether they will be able to perform the role, and as to what their real motivation for standing may be.'

A round up of alternative political news...

Richard Hadden

BNP calls for ban on "smelly cheese"

The British National Party leader Nick Griffin has called for a complete ban on "smelly foreign cheeses" such as Roquefort, Gorgonzola and overripe Camembert. He stated: "They all smell revolting. We don't want flavoursome foreign cheeses overrunning our country and stealing the market share of British mild, rubbery, tasteless, mass-produced Cheddar. All smelly cheeses should be deported right away. Apart from Stilton, obviously."

Greens "move into commune"

The Green Party has recently

moved in a six-foot-square commune in Surrey, built out of recycled wicker baskets from last year's Womad festival. To demonstrate their self-sufficiency, they are refusing all "imports" and have managed to cultivate two turnips and a carrot.

Monster Raving Loony Party in tax "rethink"

The Monster Raving Loony Party has called for a reform of the government's tax policy. Said their spokesgibbon: "We advocate a flat-tax policy. Giggle."

UKIP "falls asleep"

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) has fallen asleep on a beach near St. Tropez.

Adams and Paisley 'have Pizza'

The sun rose in a spree of neo-romanticist rhetoric on a new and rose-tinged future for Northern Ireland yesterday after it emerged that the Moderately Reverend Ian Paisley, leader of the DUP, and Sinn Fein Top Honcho Gerry Adams had met last night for what has been described as a historic "pizza".

In a particularly symbolic gesture, Rev. Paisley agreed to allowed Mr Adams to order anchovies on the pizza, a key sticking point in negotiations that had previously prevented any pizza being ordered at all, leaving both parties with the options of garlic bread or nothing. **RH**

Examinations stole my soul

Magnus Taylor

The examination season looms over Durham like a great black cloud of lingering discontent. Vivacious young adults in the prime of their lives sit trapped breathing the artificial air of the library and dreaming of a utopian world without mind-numbing tests of intellectual application.

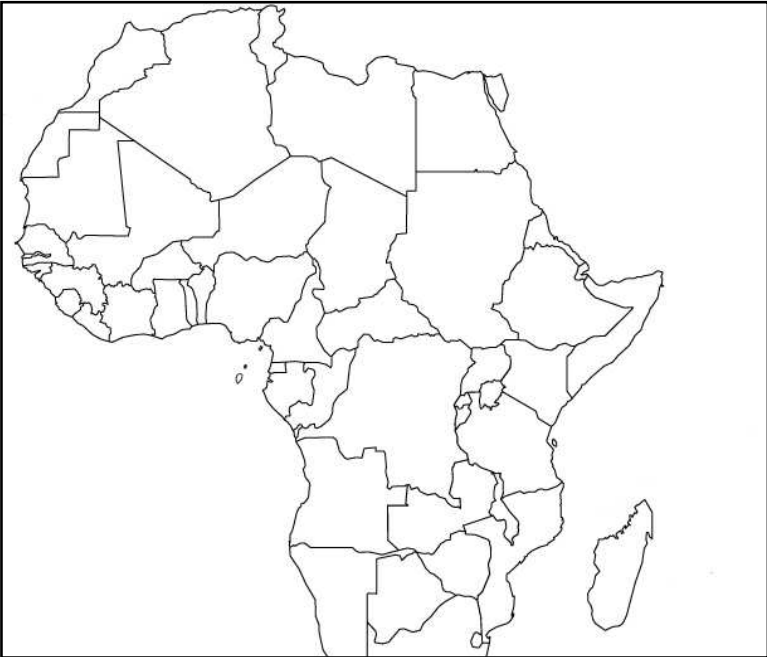
A Durham graduate told us that his descent into mindless-middle-class-malaise could be traced back to the fateful summer of '94, when he sat his philosophy finals. 'It was terrible,' he whimpered. 'One moment I was having a lovely argument about existentialism.

The next, I found myself working for Deloitte with a company car, two kids, and a wife I met in freshers' week. It was as if all my hopes and dreams had suddenly vanished, and been replaced with financial stability and a Skoda."

Sadly, this is by no means an isolated example of a condition known as 'Corporate Mind Shrinking Disorder' (CMSD). The symptoms are easy to spot, and generally include a propensity to memorise pointless lists of facts and figures, to eschew human contact and develop a misplaced belief that the path to happiness is paved with revision notes and first-class honours.

MH Cartography: Angola and Algeria anachronisms?

MH Cartographer-in-chief Alistair Cormack gives a you chance to reshape Africa



the outdated, 'traditional', view of Africa

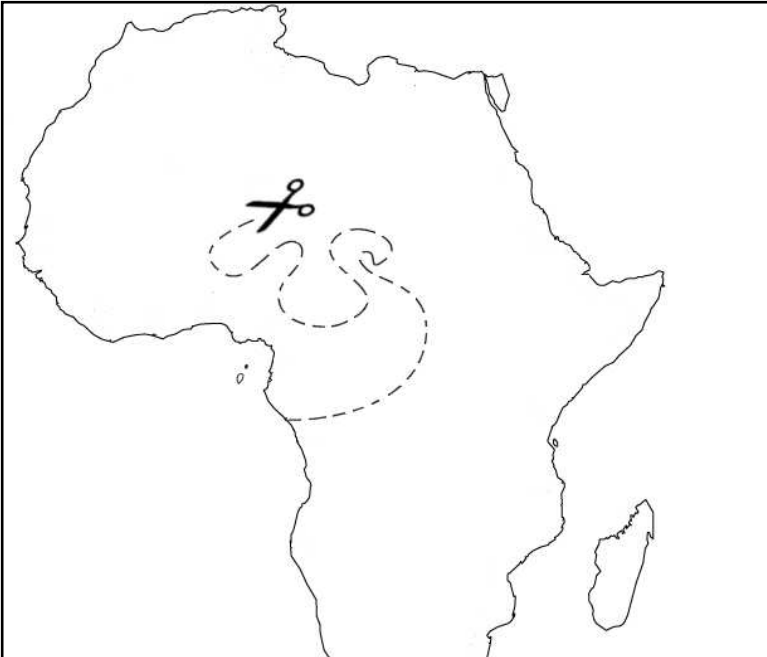
Alistair Cormack

European imperialists admit they may have got it wrong with Africa.

Following a posthumous meeting of David Livingstone, Cecil Rhodes, Henry Morton Stanley, and King Leopold II of

Belgium, the major European powers declared that drawing of arbitrary straight borders across the continent with no regard for historical, ethnic and tribal* boundaries *may* not have been a great idea.

MH now gives you a chance to do better than King



the future?

Leopold and draw your own arbitrary borders - how hard can it be? Note: use a really small pencil as maps are drawn to scale and your biro based scrawl may end up being over 50 miles wide, leading to villages being left in a war torn no mans land 75 years from now.

Best map receives a banana from Bono. Second place gets a postcard from Madonna's adopted child.

**note that the use of the word tribal is highly controversial, and may itself be a manifestation of Western Neo-Palladian ideals.*

'Transgender levels reach record high' - says facebook

Ben Grafton

Durham University has more than twice the national average of trans-gender students, MH has discovered. In a recent Facebook survey, 12% of Durham students were listed as neither male nor female.

Said Terri Smith of the Durham LGBT association, 'Although the results do not reveal anything specific, like how many students are pre or post-operation transsexuals, the news will be very warmly received by our members.'

The study is the first in a series of Facebook surveys currently being undertaken, and appears, for the moment, to confirm Durham's status as the most liberal and open-minded university in the county..

Esther Rudolph visits the Library...

Esther Rudolph

Ahh, the library; my haven, my home... my church. The library is the only true refuge from the general squalor of the living room with its green-foamed cups of tea and bits of crisp in the carpet and the sound of Alistair pretending to study in his room but actually watching Tyra Banks go off on one on America's Next Top Model. Peace, love, freedom, alphabetisation; the library is a beacon for all that is good in society.

It's 9pm and it's all lovely and quiet, completely empty, and partly dark and resembles the set of an American university slasher movie ("Hullo?!... Is anybody there?..." A voice comes over the tannoy: "Hello Michael. I want to play a game. We're going to test your library skills. I'm holding a chainsaw in one hand and 901.82 FER in the other. Where am I, Michael? Where am I?") So I settle down on level 4 with the

tome on Weberian social theory I've been chasing for weeks, let out a little sigh of contentment, and get stuck in, pen at the ready.

Cor, I pity all those idiots out tonight, having a laugh, dancing theatrically to that poor-excuse-for-a-eunuch, Mika. I'm getting some learning in, and will be at least an hour and a half ahead in revision when we sit our exams. Haha! Come on Max Weber; show me your secrets, surrender your love...

Fifteen minutes later and I'm so bored I want to die. Kssspoh! What was that? I look up to see a boy sitting across from me, behind a tall stack of books, wearing a massive parka, and swigging from a can of Carlsberg like this is what people do all the time. I gawp at him in disbelief and he just stares back at me, glugging, expressionless, like a big defiant breast-feeding baby. I should say something, but I'm just too... British. This is a library, for pete's sake! What's

“ H e l l o Michael. I want to play a game. We're going to test your library skills. I'm holding a chainsaw in one hand and 901.82 FER in the other. Where am I, Michael? Where am I?”

next? Are we all going to be shooting up on Palace Green? I suppose this is meant to be all very Oasis and cool. Well, this isn't Human Traffic, pal; this is Durham. If you want to go clubbing and have massive illegal raves and legendary house parties and generally have a really good time, sod off to Manchester.

I go back to Weber and frown behind a large textbook. I suppose I was asking for it, going to the library at the Dark Hour. This is the hour that people do it in the library, allegedly. And by allegedly, I mean this is what your freshers' rep tells you with not a small amount of glee while penning you until your eyesight goes sideways. People doing it in the library - why?! It's the ultimate degradation of a sacred place!

What if one of the library staff finds you and staggers backwards, clutching its eyes and screaming its ear-splitting pixie's cry? All it wanted

to do was tidy up the library before retiring to the little underground burrow where it goes with all the other library staff to sing gnome songs and sleep at the end of the day. Oh, the depravity! As far as I'm concerned, if you're going to do that, the best place is in a pitch-black locked room, in a quiet house, between the hours of ten and one, with sanitised laundry, at least two forms of contraception and a boy who knows your surname and doesn't keep calling you Caz, or, as sometimes happens in Durham, Tim.

The obnoxious boy in the parka lets out a loud belch and produces a foot-long Subway from his bag. What are you going to do next, huh? Light a fag and use Microeconomics For Public Policy as an ashtray? If anyone is going to get crushed in the electronically-operated journal shelving by that slasher, pal, it's you.

A Little bit of Durham Life

Royal Wedding Off

Ben Grafton reports on marital distress at Durham University...

Ben Grafton

University officials were said to be distraught last week at the news that the influential couple William and Kate were to separate after a solid five-year relationship. Having been forewarned of impending relationship crises by tabloid heavyweight The Sanctuary, Durham held back a tear as it learned that twenty-five year-old Hatfield beauty Kate Tiddleton and her dashing husband-to-be, Will Royal, 24, had broken up.

Staff and students alike joined the outcry, refusing to believe that two attractive and intelligent young adults could have possibly entered into a

“79 per cent of Durham’s female students believe that they will find their husbands at university, whilst a whopping 95 per cent of Durham males can’t believe they found their way home last night.”

relationship that did not end in marriage. University Polo captain and future Castle College president Will and promising media lawyer Kate are said to have mutually ended their relationship during a recent ski-trip to Biarritz. But whilst scores of Durham’s rag-readers expressed initial sadness upon hearing the news, the tide of sorrow soon turned to outrage.

“This is absolutely appalling!” said university chancellor and idealist, Bill

Bryson. ‘I’ve met both Will and Kate at numerous university garden parties, and I felt that the strength of their relationship was a perfect example to all young people. To hear that they’ve separated is an absolute travesty, not least because I was centring the whole plot of my forthcoming book around the love-story that is, or rather was, Will and Kate.’

Incredibly, 79 per cent of Durham’s female students believe that they will find their husbands at university, whilst a whopping 95 per cent of Durham males can’t believe they found their way home last night. Luckily for the city’s singletons, however, the break-up of the North-East’s most glamorous couple does not appear to have changed attitudes towards dating one jot, as hordes of budding fiancées continue to queue outside Klute every night.

Things could have been a hell of a lot worse,’ admitted the honorary Dr. Bryson, optimistically. ‘But thankfully our students still have the good old British media to fall back on, granting them access to a multitude of idealistic relationships on which to base the foundation of their romantic lives. Pete Doherty and Kate Moss, Posh and Becks - the role models are out there. I’m just sad that on this occasion I didn’t get to buy a new hat.’

‘Prince of my Heart’ will be available from all good bookstores on May 12th.



King Bryson was distraught

The Insiders’ Guide to Durham

Rachel Ruty provides an insider’s look at Durham’s infamous nightlife...

Rachel Ruty

24/04/2007

Today I walked right into Bondage. It was so embarrassing - I had a huge spot and my tan is fading so it looks huge! He was with Muff, Scro and Ed, on the way back from training. Muff was a little twitchy from the steroids and Bondage wanted to take him home safely, so he was holding his hand. Bondage has had his stitches taken out and apparently he’s booked into surgery to correct the angle of the scar. Once the others were talking together, he whispered that he’d see me at Klute later. My only worry is that Sienna Thompson-Willan-Aanyatopolis-Trivers will be there. She found out he knows Prince Harry and has been like a bitch on heat ever since.

25/04/2007

Klute was messy after Mummy’s detox plan and Swiss Air. I did see Bondage, but Scro had split his lip in a vicious game of staple-to-the-beat and was off



to A&E. Sienna T-W-A-T, got there first, by the time I arrived they were leaving. Today my liver hurts, so I missed Brown Sugar and I had three oatcakes and a lie down. Lectures don’t start until Thursday and Suzy has promised I can borrow her notes, and she writes down everything. Gregory also said I could have his second essay, so tomorrow I can sleep this bug off.

28/04/07

I haven’t written for a few days as I went back to visit Daddy. He just got moved to the open facility near Guildford-on-the-Wirral. The solicitors say that I’m not to discuss money there at all, as people might listen in, but Daddy and I pretended we were discussing cakes instead. I had an awful misunderstanding. I decided to go over to B & M’s house when I got back, and I walked into Muff’s bedroom to see him kissing a black man! I pretended I didn’t see and left, but later confessed to Bondage. He tried not to laugh, and said it was a rugby initiation thing and meant nothing. I was very relieved as Petunia has been crushing over him for weeks, but Bon assured me Muff hates gays. We both found some common ground. I felt like he really opened up. Bon said he wasn’t interested in T.W.A.T. and even got Mbutom Mbare to make us some cocoa. I feel like this might actually come to something!

Krazy Charities Kommittee got Karried away

Rob Sykes

The latest DUCK organised event to raise money ‘for charity’ has flabbergasted environmentalists and normal people alike. Their most recent plan, that of draining the River Wear and refilling it with custard so that a rugby team can race a small gazelle through it, has been seen by many as a step too far.

‘You’d think that we would run out of zany ideas to keep raising more and more

money for those charities out there, wouldn’t you?’ asked the DUCK Head of Public Relations Zoë ‘The Madcap’ Madison, ‘but there is plenty more where that came from. How about a bungee jump off the top of the library into a bucket of pickled onions? Or a load of us actually going out to ‘Africa,’ and getting people to give us money for climbing a great big hill?’ When asked how exactly this made money for charities, Zoë replied that this was outside her remit and quickly

departed so as not to be late for her sponsored fire-walk.

The environmental damage caused by the ‘custardation’ of the river is expected to reach billions of pounds. However, according to Zoë this is a small price to pay to show the world how zany the Charities Kommittee really is. She again pointed out at this point that they spell committee with a ‘K’ so that their initials spell DUCK - a subtle pun which I’m sure has passed many of us by.

The MH Short Story

Free to those who can afford it...

Durham's student bin-raiders regularly went foraging for food last term. Such saintly 'freegans', disgusted at the senseless daily waste of food, sought to save dozens of blueberry cheesecakes from a premature demise. 'Think of all those starving Africans who'd kill for a slice of cake,' they argued. Much to their chagrin, M&S took the bins away. Did anyone think of the consequences? Perhaps not, but hey, it was fun while it lasted...

Sam Toolan

There was a warm chill that night and a sense of bounciness. Like a mouthful of something too hot and delicious when tears of laughter stream down your face and over your runny nose.

Wait, said my friend at the door.

Giggling, she ran back inside and reappeared with another pashmina wrapped around her throat. I objected

“No honestly, it’s really easy. Just reach in and take what you want!”

slightly to the sickly pink of the stole. That might get us caught, you know.

Subtle changes in her face and a carefree hand movement whisked my objection away like tea-leaves to the wind. I chuckled and returned her a face of affectionate scorn.

Full of beans, we danced over the bridge and up the alleyway as the cheers and squawks of the partygoers withered to a booming silence and a mild smell of piss.

In the dark we stumbled up the mossy path. We could’ve just gone round, said my friend. Less fun, I said. I knew she was enjoying it.

Lowering our voices, we crept down the concrete steps, peering about uselessly.

It’s ok. Coast’s clear.

I took out a silver torch, twisted the sleek end and traced the narrow beam of light to a

group of rectangular shapes. Ooh, said my friend. I smiled in the dark, happy to have the torch.

Inching closer we could see the shapes were grey bins with black lids. I heard my friend shudder slightly. I still don’t know if it was from excitement or fear.

All the bins were lined up in a row like cats and I started to slide open the cold plastic lid of the first one.

Don’t wear nice clothes, they’d said. I got blue ink all over one of my favourite jumpers. Oh no, don’t worry, it’s just to mark what’s past its sell-by date. No honestly, it’s really easy. Just reach in and take what



you want!

We peered in together. I could feel the heat from my friend’s face on mine, hear her breath tight and dry through her balmy lips.

The lid was half way open when we heard a sound like a cough. I froze, let go and

the bin slammed open, leaving a low rumble in my chest. My friend stepped back and I felt my face grow cold.

Pounding blood rose to my throat. I stayed where I was. Another cough and a slight rustle.

I realised I was still holding the torch and shone the light around the side of the bin. Scattered pages of crumpled newspaper. Plastic sheets stacked up at the side of some sort of loading area. A concrete ledge. A pile of damp blankets.

A slight movement from the other side of the ledge. Something rising. A ball. Hair. A head. Yes, a head. The head of a man.

He seemed half awake. Half past nine. Asleep.

It was like meeting two new people. Him. Me. And then a new me.

Hello, I said. What now? You ok? Hello was probably enough.

Alright, the face grumbled. The man raised a hand. After a few moments I moved the light away and the man lowered his hand.

Um, we’re looking for the food bin. Is this it? Now that the light wasn’t in his eyes I could no longer see his face.

Yeah, he said. Empty now though. The sound of his voice made me want to sit down in the cold mud of a puddle. I had a look earlier, he said.

It took a long time for what he said to make sense. I’d forgotten why I’d come here. Why we’d come here. I thought of my friend and her small, warm face.

Oh right, I said. Empty? Now I didn’t believe him.



Asleep on a cold concrete ledge at nine-thirty on a Friday night. He was already lying down again. As if I wasn’t the first. I decided to check the other bins.

Sorry for waking you, I said, as the familiar polite nothing me came back. Have a good night!

“But they said there was loads of free food!”

What’s going on? said my friend. We were under a streetlamp. I told her what the man said. She didn’t believe me. Not my fault, I thought as I smiled. She was cross and she wanted to hurt someone. I waited.



But they said there was loads of free food! And now some tramp’s got there before us! Rubbish! Her pink pashmina waved in the wind. Oh well, I said. Come on. Let’s go to Bimbi’s for some chips.

I switched off the torch.

The following morning the loading bay doors open to reveal a crumpled mound huddled in one corner. A supermarket worker prods it, gently rousing Simon from his slumber. It’s time to move along now Simon, he says softly. Simon grunts a thank you matey and slowly the huddle rises and twists into a man.

Simon stretches, collects his raggy things and hobbles off. He looks back wearily at the blurred figure in the blue uniform. The blue figure gives a little wave and says cheerfully, we close at ten tonight mate. Come back then, I reckon!

Fat chance, he thinks. Better beds than that in Durham.

MH:Spot the Difference

Anton Lazarus brings you the MostlyHarmless take on the Iranian hostage 'crisis'... See if you can spot the differences between Britain's finest and America's most wanted.



Tehran



Guantanamo

Tehran	Guantanamo
15 White People	Almost 400 non-white people
Allowed to wear own clothes and given new smart suits and gifts on release.	Own possessions destroyed and given new smart orange jumpsuit to wear 24/7.
Released after 13 days and excused from trial in the sovereign state's judicial system.	Still held after more than 5 years. No prospect of release. Excluded from the state's judicial system.
Split into separate cells, questioned and asked to sshhh.	Deprived of sleep, subjected to serious psychological torture, exposed to noise, light and heat for extended periods, physically beaten. Starved and denied use of a toilet, spat at. Holy book urinated on.
All confessed to acts they now deny.	Many still maintain innocence. Those that have confessed under torture exposed to world as terrorists and placed into mock trials.
Media storm and national outcry at detention of Brits. World condemnation. UN statement.	Little attention from media. US methods supported by British coalition partners.
Hero's welcome home.	When British captives were released they were taken to Paddington Green Police Station and extensively questioned under the Terrorism Act. Then released without charge.

WORK WITH MOSTLYHARMLESS



MostlyHarmless is a small independent publication that started this year. It is edited by Magnus Taylor and Siddharth Khajuria with Tom Walker covering their backs. Sub editors this edition were Nick Collins, Ben Grafton, Richard Hadden, Anton Lazarus, Ian Chapman, Tom

Rosenthal, Rachel Rutty, Seb de Lemos and Nick Hyde. Cartoons were drawn by Clarice Holt and Hannah Yadi.

We are always looking out for enthusiastic new talent to make MH funnier, smarter and more varied. If you want to get involved, be it with writing, editing,

cartooning or designing, please email us at mostlyharmless06@gmail.com

If you have an idea for an article or are looking for suggestions, get in touch. We hope you've enjoyed MostlyHarmless over the past year.

Jack

Kirsty

The A-Z of student life in Durham

Visit studentsindurham.co.uk

Fancy adverstising here?

Drop us an email...

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