

Comment and Features

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Esther Rudolf

"There are a lot of
things I'd like to
do to you, you
dirty, dirty man"

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mostlyharmless

durham's latest satire and comment
issue 6, michaelmas 2007

Brazilian man *not* shot dead on Cathedral Bus
College bar mascot *not* called Muhammed
Union Society *not* inviting racists to speak

Dull ¹/₄ ➔

there is no news

(so we made some up)

Very Local News for Very Local People

DUS Class-Denial

Tom Walker

Thousands of protesters are thronging Palace Green in a demonstration against the visits of historian David Virgin and Stockton student Nick Riffing to the University. The two controversial figures have been invited by the Durham Union Society's President, Ewan Chapwoman, to speak at a debate on free speech next week.

The pair's well-publicised political views have incited widespread opposition to the debate. Virgin, a well-known class denier, was convicted to three hours' imprisonment in Surrey in 1998 after claiming that differences in social status no longer existed in modern society. He has also sparked controversy in the past by suggesting that evidence for the existence of Durham's coal mines was 'inconclusive.'

His views have been most vehemently opposed by groups

throughout the university, who claim that it threatens the very fabric of their culture. "You can't allow him to speak - it's legitimising his views," squealed Wine Soc President Angela Astley-Birtwistle. "Durham's built on prejudice," agreed Collingwood Choir conductor Aled James, adding the finishing touches to his 16-part harmony arrangement of 'The Famous Hatfield College.'

He continued: "If we allow this disgusting class-denial a platform it'll dry up almost all of our conversation topics. We can't discuss the quality of college meals and our ironic love of B*Witched for a whole three years, you heartless debating bastards."

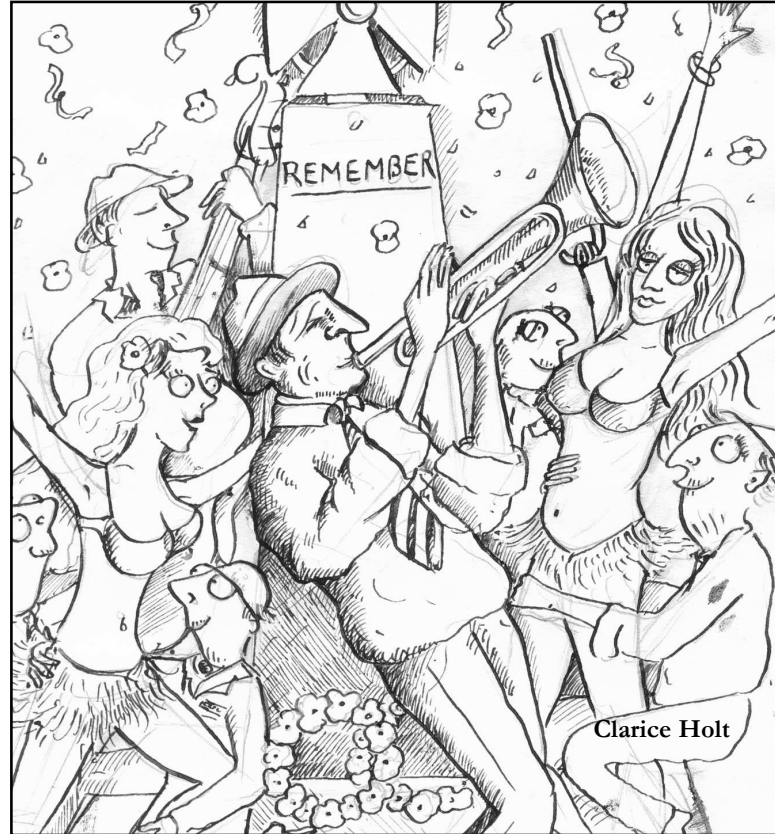
Protesters seemed somewhat more divided over the reasons for their opposition to Riffing. A significant minority appeared to be trying to vote him off 'I'm a Celebrity...'. The rest claimed to instinctively distrust him because he was from Stockton.

Matt Brown

The people of Durham are celebrating en-masse following the most successful Remembrance Day in the city's long history. After the ceremonial remembrance poems were grudgingly read out, the band got the revellers in the mood for fun. Instead of playing the Last March, the brass section struck up a confident rendition of Louie Bega's 'Mambo Number 5'.

The silence at 11 was enlivened by a two-thousand strong Mexican wave, starting with the Bishop of Durham in the western pulpit of the cathedral and arriving, with a crescendo, in the Market Place. After the wave was completed, the crowds celebrated with the traditional breaking of the poppy-filled Remembrance Piñata. The veterans were then allowed the honour of starting a dignified conga line which wound down towards the river to the sound of the Benny Hill theme tune.

Remembrance Day Fiesta



Clarice Holt

Local News in Brief

CHIMP KLUTE ATTACK

Genetically modified chimps escaped from labs at the science site last week, running amok around the city. They were found several hours later, semi-conscious in an alleyway behind Klute. When questioned, one of them responded: "That was so not worth a fiver." **DD**

DSU LOGO CHANGE

Inspired by the effects of the Conservative Party's change of logo, Durham Student Union has decided to follow suit and recently agreed to adopt the internationally recognised Yin-Yang symbol to better represent Durham's multicultural racial dynamic.

To investigate this issue further, MostlyHarmless travelled to

Stockton to find a black student with whom to discuss this matter. William Hugo Barrington-Smyth of Surrey, whose great grandparents hailed from Jamaica, observed: 'I suppose the new logo half makes sense' **SS**

STOP AND SEARCH FAILING

Durham Police have blamed crime increases in the city on the failure of new 'stop and search' tactics imposed by central government. Spokesman PC Barksby told MH: "The policy simply isn't fit for purpose. Valuable police hours are being wasted trying to locate members of the black community to search." **AL**

LIBRARYING IN DURHAM COTTAGE

Anonymous posts on an internet forum exclusively discovered by MostlyHarmless have revealed that the practice of Librarying may be occurring in small old homes across the city.

Accounts of Librarying as severe as lending books and studying at desks with complete strangers are described in detail on a popular

website known to be used by many of the country's most prolific Librarians.

While there is no specific evidence of this bizarre and seemingly unlikely activity occurring in Durham, MH felt it wise to inform our readership of the rumours and ask: "are you having too much library?"

MIGRANT GUNNED DOWN

An independent watchdog has cleared the Metropolitan Police of any wrongdoing over the deaths of two innocent victims at Sandringham Gardens Tube Station. The IBPCC (International Bird of Prey Criminality Committee) ruled that the shooting of Henry and Henrietta Harrier was regrettable, but to be expected at this time of the season.

The committee heard that the operation took place after Mr and Mrs Harrier, aged 3 and 5 respectively, were mistaken by police for a migratory Brazilian suspect. In his defence, firearms officer 'Harry' stated: 'They matched the subject's description exactly. That is, they were both a bit brown.' **TW**

FIGHTING COCKS FAKE There was outrage in Durham last night as two students discovered that one of the oldest legends in Durham was nothing more than a trick. It has long been accepted that locals do not come onto our campus and that students do not go into their suburbs and pubs. This policy has been responsible for the peaceful relations between both groups in the city. However, it has emerged that these so-called 'locals' have never actually existed in Durham.



Mostly Harmless has made the shocking discovery that the founders of the university simply 'invented' these figures, often

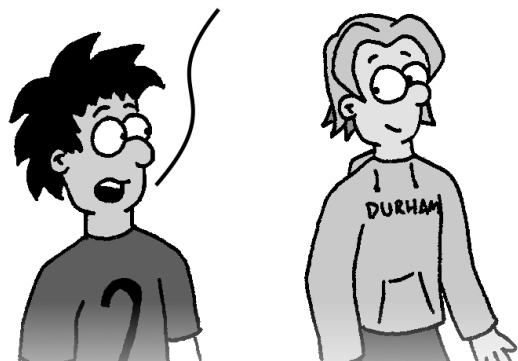
resorting to paying actors to put on a northern accent and walk through the streets of Durham. The deception was uncovered by two drunken students who, disregarding all warnings, entered the Fighting Cocks, only to discover that it was not a pub but an operation centre for this grand deception.



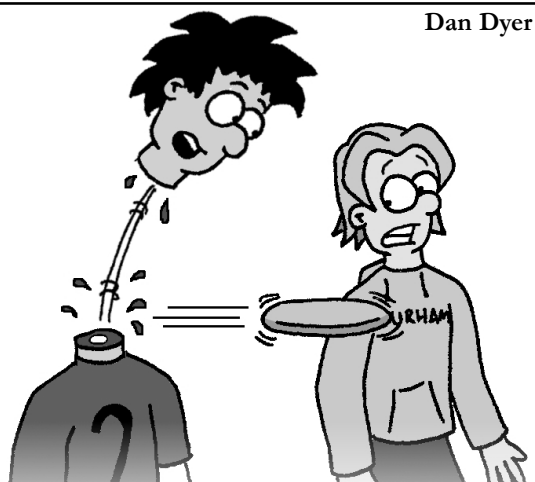
Vice-Chancellor Christopher Biggins appeared disgruntled by the discovery, saying in a statement: "The threat of non-existent locals was the best social control we had. What are we supposed to do now?" The Fighting Cocks now looks set to be turned into yet another gratuitous bakery. **PN**



YOU KNOW, BEFORE I CAME
HERE I NEVER THOUGHT FRISBEE
WAS AN ACTUAL SPORT.



Dan Dyer



WHO MADE THIS?

Mostly Harmless is edited by Magnus Taylor, Siddharth Khajuria and Tom Walker. Anton Lazarus provides invaluable creative support, copious quantities of ideas and will, on occasion, do what he is told. Sub-editors for this issue were Cordelia Graham, Dan Dyer, Thom Addinall-Biddulph, Rachel Rutty, Ben Grafton, Richard Hadden, Zaki Moosa, Charlotte Spencer-Smith, Sam Toolan, Tom Rosenthal and Alex

Mason. Thanks to Lucy Davies and Clare Turner for copy editing.

Cheers to Hannah Yadi, Clarice Holt, Dan Dyer and Tom England for the cartoons.

Jack Logue makes the amusing images whilst Alaric Green and Bertan Budak look after our marketing and advertising. More thanks must go to treasurer John Corcoran for being far more efficient and organised with money than the editors have ever been.

Olympic Update: China Plays to its Strengths

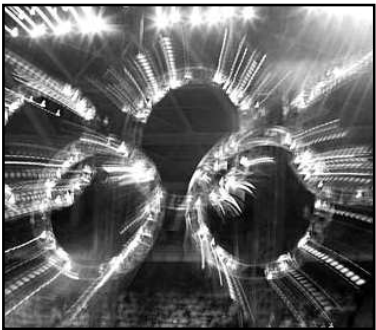
Magnus Taylor

China has unveiled a series of new and exciting events in order to showcase home-grown talent at the 2008 Olympics. The traditional long jump has been re-branded as 'The Great Leap Forward.' Competitors will compete together to modernise the country's agricultural and industrial sectors, using a tactical system dramatically different to those of the Western capitalist teams. It is believed that over 500 million 'athletes' will participate in the event.

In addition, the ever popular field event: 'Systematic Abuse of Human Rights' is set to form the centre-piece of the month's multi-cultural sporting celebration. China's high-profile entry 'The Region Formerly Known as Tibet' looks a good bet, although there's some strong competition from Russia's 'Chechnya' and the USA's

top competitor, which is simply referred to as 'Guantanamo'.

Similarly, 'the big three' will feel they're in with a shot in the 'Funding Most Dubious Foreign Power' event. China's oil-based stake in the Sudanese government is sure to stand her in good stead here. However, the British and Americans may feel quietly confident in their position as underdogs. Their 'extraordinary rendition' training program, which encourages up-and-coming vicious and corrupt regimes, may give them the edge.



Spanish Inquisition in Health and Safety Breach

Thom Addinall Biddulph

The Spanish Inquisition has been found guilty of breaching health and safety legislation yesterday for their 'accidental torture' of thousands of Spaniards.

At a court in Madrid, Judge Baltasar Garzon said that there needed to be a 'frank and thorough debate' about the Inquisition's 'pray-to-kill' policy, nicknamed Operation Pontius.

Antipope Cameron V has called for Torquemada's immediate resignation, saying: "The

commissioner's first duty is to ensure people's security in their faith. By operating a secretive, ill-planned policy of kidnap and torture, he has undermined that. He is an honourable man but his position is now untenable'. Acting Quasipope Vincent V commented, "Torquemada is far too close to the New Vatican and should resign now".

A spokesman for Commissioner Torquemada said he would not be resigning, and pointed out that for every person tortured there were 999 French men who were not.

Ma'am, Why Won't You Die?

Rachel Rutty

Prince Charles is currently believed to be 'extrovertly sulking' after the tragic loss of the People's Princess (see four page picture gallery overleaf). Charles, according to a surreptitious Daily Mirror footman, has become obsessed with calculating the average age of royal female deaths.

He had intended to arrive upon the figure in 2002, but was suppered by the 'frankly inconvenient' deaths of Princess Margaret and the Queen Mother.

Recalculations resulted in the abhorrent discovery that his mother may well live a jolly lot longer than expected.

We paid a close (but not intimate) footman £10,000 for musing: 'It's a difficult time for dear Charlie - he's long kindled hopes of ruling England as a single-monarched, polygamous, organic freehold.'

The next day, the Prince

decided to act. After a quick cull of the local wildlife with the boys, and sustained by a Duchy and Original piglet wrapped in nudist-lined double chocolate, the Prince left for Buckingham Palace.

Armed only with a shotgun, five assistants, and a polo pony, Charles barricaded himself in the nursery and demanded a formal meeting with Her Royal Highness. As the Prince noted her regular breathing and positively healthy glow, tourists overheard a torrent of abuse, which has since been translated from the original German as: 'Die bitch trout, die! Who are the bleeding Welsh anyway?'

Talks are understood to have continued long into the night, finally culminating with a placatory statement by the Queen. It has now been decided to reinstate the autonomous Kingdom of Durham, where Charles is set to reign as King Bishop (formerly known as Prince).

PMQs Causes Accidental B Minor

William G. Pilgrim

Parliamentary commentators were stunned into silence during Prime Minister's Questions today when the simultaneous jeering of the Conservative back bench produced a loud and inadvertent B-minor chord.

Cameron had been grilling the PM with a series of linked questions on the state of the NHS and after a third weak, question-dodging response, Brown was met with an astoundingly harmonious group heckle.

The melancholy B minor was followed by a stunned silence, minutes in length, in which Conservative MPs looked around at one another with startled looks on their faces. The silence was eventually broken when David Laws (Lib Dem MP for Yeovil) exclaimed: "Fuck me - that was weird!"

The incident has raised significant procedural issues regarding the limitations of Hansard transcription.

"It really knocked me off guard" Brown later admitted, "because for a split-second I thought someone was playing my favourite song, [If you had my love' by Jennifer Lopez] over the tannoy, but when I realised that it had a posh accent, I knew it must be the opposition".

Cameron was quick to claim this as an "epoch-defining



moment for the Conservative Future campaign", leading some to suggest that he had a hand in orchestrating the refrain.

Andrew Marr commented that "for a supposed 'freak occurrence,'the idea of the whole parliamentary Conservative party singing together in unison is surprisingly compatible with the new friendly image that the party is pursuing." However, many backbench Tory traditionalists are openly lamenting their involvement.

"Group scoffing used to be one of my favourite things about being in the Conservative party," commented Clive Blastcorn, Tory

MP for Aylesbury, "but it will forever more be tainted by this moment of poncey, pinko, choral coincidence".

Experts have suggested that had Cameron really been behind such a stunt, he would probably have opted for a D chord (B minor's more optimistic relative major).

Popular tunes written in B-minor include 'Hotel California' by the Eagles, 'Man Eater' by Hall and Oats and the theme tune to ER.

It is rumoured that a similar stunt is being planned in which all 6 Lib Dem MPs will attempt to produce a D# minor seventh in memory of Menzies Campbell.

Cricketing Pink

Nick Collins

English cricketers are said to be concerned after the sports' authorities at the MCC announced that the limited-overs white ball would be replaced by a pink "gay" one.

"It's all wuffy and camp and it's for fairies," said self-styled 'one-man gun-show' Toby Farringdon Smith, oiling up his biceps. "They'd never have tolerated this back at Eton. The gentleman's game is in danger of being overrun by bums."

"I don't feel like I want to hit it, I'd rather spit on it and call it names," said the Devon opener. "It's unnatural to make a ball pink. What's wrong with the traditional white balls which have grown on cricket trees for centuries?"

An MCC spokesman argued that the ball's greater durability would make it an asset in

the game, and insisted that its luminous pink colouring was essential to the ball's hardness. "Pink is just a harder colour," he explained.



A pink ball, yesterday

Bryson "Sad"

Mr William Bryson, Chancellor of the University of Durham, yesterday pronounced himself to be 'sad' and 'full of the woes of December.' The precise source of this veritable barrage of unrestrained morbidity is unknown. It is believed to have occurred immediately after Bill had passed a particularly grim morning in



which he ate an unboiled egg and made several off-the-mark quips about haddock. These were immediately snapped up by his ever-present entourage of student journalists, and are due to be hastily published in an 'I hate Bryson' collectors' edition of Palatinate. **MT**

Features and Comment

Democracy Better than Sex?

Is democracy really all it's cracked up to be? Magnus Taylor takes a wry look at the wonders of letting 'the people' decide

Magnus Taylor

Democracy is not only more pleasurable than sexual intercourse, it is also considerably better for you.

For the uninitiated, democracy is an easy concept. It consists of 'the people' of any given country, colonial dependency, or militarily occupied landmass being given a small yet significant influence over the process of government.

"Wait a minute," you might say, "isn't that a bit risky?" You would be right. Democracy is a tricky business. Yet it has become the most loved political concept since communism subsided into the destruction of personal liberties, economic failure and having to live in Russia.

Having given dictatorship, monarchy and anarchy a go, the world seems to have reverted to an unquestioning faith in the ability of common man - and sometimes woman - to decide what's best for him (or her). The trouble with the common man is that he has a nasty habit of deciding (or electing) exactly what is worst for him (or for his fellow man).

Democracy makes it very easy to make the big mistake, and rather less simple to put it right again. This is particularly prescient when your own democratically elected government (Pakistan) has just revealed to you that it will be much better for society, and the world in general, if we postpone that pesky election for another 5 years.

In this age, though, democracy has become the beacon of all that is right and proper. It



The Iraqi people play with their new toy won't just make you more prosperous, but also a better lover. You'll be much more likely to inveigle your way into the pants of the world's most important democratic players. Recently, the 'western world' has become something of an expert in the altruistic exportation of 'democratic aid.'

This 'aid' normally takes the form of economic sanctions; for the lucky few, an upgrade to full democratic military invasion lies in wait. Don't worry yourself too much - once all the bombs have been dropped and the freedom fighters have been vanquished, you'll most certainly be given your country back. What is more, some helpful souls will have installed a nice new shiny system of democracy, which will be an instant (and I mean immediate) improvement on that horrible old thing you had going on. What a relief, I'm sure you'll agree.

The problem with democracy, however, is that nobody is really sure how to operate it. Democrats - much like electricians

and plumbers - are faced with a number of tricky, technical questions. Who is my MP? What is the proper procedure for killing my neighbour? Where has my king gone? I quite liked him. None of this is a problem if your country is rich, stable and filled to the brim with vague liberal apathy. However, when you chuck in a handful of Islamic terrorists, a dash of poverty and a generous helping of oil, things get murky. What if they vote for the wrong party? What if they don't vote at all? What if they don't want to vote? What if they do vote and then start shooting each other? These are tricky questions, answered by the U.N.'s latest pamphlet: 'The joy of democracy: your vote and what to do with it.'

If you can't read, then don't worry too much; your democratic leaders will look after you. Isn't that a relief? If not, then simply resign yourself to the fact that democracy rules, and there is nothing you can do about it.

Dictator Toppling

MH Reveals the U.S. Department of State's latest offering: it'll topple your dictator for you



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Form 145.2A : Application for toppling of local dictator/despot/unsavoury

Part A: Personal details (see note below A.1.)

NAME _____ TELEPHONE () _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL (if rich enough) _____

CARRIER PIGEON BOX (if not) _____

Notes:

A.1. Please note, your details are protected by various data protection acts, which means they will not be passed to anyone (see note A.2.) without your explicit consent.

A.2. "Anyone" does not include the CIA, FBI, or your local militia if we ever want to get 'in there' with the regime for cheap bananas/grapefruits/unrefined crude oil.

Part B: Details of dictator/despot/local unsavoury

NAME OF DICTATOR (see note B.1.) _____

Please tick the following that apply to your dictator (in the financial year 2005/06):

Is your dictator head of the ruling party in a one-party state ☐

Is there freedom of speech/the press ☐

Does he control a secret police force ☐

Has he been responsible for,

a) brutal suppression of resistance ☐

b) genocide ☐

c) gormless-looking fanatical parades ☐

Does he have a moustache/'revolutionary' (e.g. Che Guevara) facial hair ☐

Notes:

B.1. The dictator named should not have been anyone previously established in a coup by the United States, supported militarily or financially, openly or secretly, by the United States (unless it was Nixon: we can just shrug that off).

Part C: Details of Country

NAME OF COUNTRY (see note C.1.) _____

CONTINENT (for presidential use) _____

RELIGION _____

NAME OF AMBASSADOR TO UNITED STATES _____

NAME OF AMBASSADOR'S GOVERNMENTAL DRINKING PARTNERS _____

POPULATION OF COUNTRY _____

GDP OF COUNTRY _____

Please tick the following features which apply:

Lots of oil ☐

Run by fanatics ☐

Lots of nukes ☐

'Evil' (Axis-members or otherwise) ☐

DIFFICULTY OF MILITARY COUP (Scale of 1 - 10) _____

NUMBER OF ARMED MILITANTS (to nearest ten-thousand) _____

POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR GOVERNMENT IF INVASION GOES PEAR-SHAPED _____

Notes:

C.1. The United States is committed to the spreading of democracy throughout the world (see note C.2.)

C.2. Unless the people are likely to vote for someone we don't like, in which case, we aren't.

C.3. Ideal candidates for military toppling should also:

a) be evil/sinister

b) be vaguely linked to terrorists (e.g. similar headdress/facial hair/sweat).

c) be no one quiet and unobtrusive (e.g. Robert "Cuddly" Mugabe, who won't give us any trouble unless we bother him first).

d) have expressed dislike of United States foreign policy (e.g. France).



Do Not Swear, Nobber

Cordelia Graham

A word for those aspiring to wisdom - do not swear. I think this sentiment was first cited in Richard III: 'My lord of Buckingham, do not swear!'

We all know swearing is sometimes inappropriate (sometimes it is hilarious), but fortunately most are able to veto their use according to their present company. Not me.

Every manner of obscenity has made its way into my vocabulary throughout my teens, some standard, others grammatic variants, the cause of which I have managed to blame on my love of language. Whilst some might find it amusing, most react unfavourably, especially on a family

holiday.

I thought I had toned down my vocabulary until, during a game of Rally 123, my four year old cousin, who resembles an angel, shrieked to his brother 'Come and get me, you big nobber!' in front of his parents. His parents, my aunt and uncle, who up until now had been paying me handsomely to babysit their blonde-haired blue-eyed princes.

Fortunately they didn't seem to notice so I immediately drew him aside. "Will," said I, "you must NEVER say nobber." The boy looked hurt. "But you say it all the time," he pointed out with wide open eyes. "No, Will, I said nozzer, there is

a big difference." I lied, my voice wracked with shocking hideous guilt. He looked sad and then ran into the house quietly.

Will never said nobber again - yet I was left to reflect. This wasn't the first time I had had to draw a small child aside and hurriedly quell the foul language they had picked up from me. In an attempt to gain wisdom but also make someone punish me for making a small child feel bad about my mistakes, I told my mother what had happened. Instead of telling me off, she thought it was highly amusing and told my sister. I linguistically molest children's vocabulary and she spreads it.

Why I Hate the Library

Anton Lazarus

It's a sad fact that I hate the library. Things weren't always this way. When I first arrived in this fair city the library was my haven, a quite place to withdraw and reflect. Since then though the library has, in my eyes, sold out.

The library is a necessity; I have no choice about going there. If I want to even just scrape through my degree I have to visit it. Sure, I can go in, check out some books and be out in ten minutes, but it shouldn't be like that. I should want to spend time there. I should want to bask in the weird hum at the back of level 3. I should enjoy dancing between the moving shelves on L1. I should find a reassuring feeling of camaraderie in mentally ostracising a fidgeter in the silent study room.

Do they really think that hoards of menacing locals are going to pour in off the street and attempt to steal knowledge from books paid for by our fees?

I should but I can't. I find myself too offended, too irritated and too downright betrayed by the library authorities.

Take, for example, that massive television that greets you as you enter. I don't know what the world's obsession with flat-screen TVs is, I can only guess that the people running the world grew up in the sixties against the backdrop of the moon landings and now think 'isn't it amazing, a moving, colour, image on a more-or-less flat screen, must buy, must buy...' No, I will not



stand there scanning the BBC news feed at the bottom of the page, or trying to decipher the Japanese symbols, or read the 'Stockton Library Opening Hours' which, to me at least, sets the benchmark for useless information.

Probably though what annoys me the most about the library TV screen was the answer to a question asked at a library users committee shortly after the screen was installed. The question was: "Would the money not have been better spent on books?" to which the reply came: "No, that money couldn't have been spent on books, it was money from a different budget." Well, correct me if I'm wrong, but that doesn't mean the money couldn't be spent on books, that means their budget is a pile of, if you'll excuse my French: merde de chien.

I suppose the TV only really annoys me once I'm in the library, which means that I've remembered my campus card to swipe in through the gates. This annoys me for two reasons. Firstly, what do they expect to happen if they don't have those horrible things? Do they really think that hoards of menacing locals are going to pour in off the street and attempt to steal knowledge from books paid for by our fees? The books will set off the alarms if they're not checked

out. I don't know why we need to be counted in like mindless drones arriving into the colony.

I also take issue with the library staff who will not bend on the "No ID No Entry" rule, as if to do so was as bad as selling pornography to children, or child pornography to adults. "Yes, I know I don't have my campus card and I'm sorry. I just want to come in, look at a book and sit quietly reading, I'll give you my username and recite the last ten books I took out, and tell you my library fines to the penny including details of the books they were amassed on and duration they were overdue. Here's a selection of other photo ID and my college meal card. Please can I just pop in." "No." And that's it. There is no movement on this at all, no possible chance that a little light will go on in this moron's mind and realise that I'm not here to burn books or perform lewd sexual acts in the lavatories. I am a student, I genuinely want to read and learn. What more noble cause is there? Why won't you let me learn? But then I suppose by not being reasonable he is only doing his job perfectly - he's been programmed not to let me in without a campus card and his tiny brain works like a computer; it's yes or no and there's no middle ground. The man isn't human.

The F-Word

I'm not a feminist, but...

Claire Hendon

The f-word, my friends. I am going to do it, put it right here in print before the whole world (or at least the immense readership of this fine periodical) so I can't take it back, and don't have to live it secretly anymore: I am a feminist.

Obviously, I will now no longer be able to wear my pretty clothes. Or fix my hair... or wear my make-up. I'll have to come to terms



with my god-given body hair. Hate men, hate marriage, and hate children. No more guys, either, I guess. Unless I become one of those have-sex-like-a-man feminists, right? Which will be no small feat when one considers the aesthetic I am soon to embrace. Though I could perhaps attract the mans with my no doubt militant, abrasive and man-hating-though passionate and liberated-personality? Not that I care, of course, what the useless oppressors think of me. Oh no.

I know that it's not going to be easy. But I couldn't live with myself anymore if I didn't finally cop to the fact that the definition of feminist-'a supporter of the doctrine advocating social, political, and all other rights of women equal to those of men'-applies to me. I suppose I will have to live with the consequences of that, unattractive as they may be. Or I may become.

'Feminist' has become a dirty word: so unattractively connoted that I feel as though an

image of me in combat boots is conjured in the minds of my audience as soon as I give an opinion on pay equity. Immediately followed by my denouncement of stay-at-home mothers, and violent insistence that all men are pigs. My mother stayed at home. All men are not pigs. I think we feminists must feel misunderstood in much the same way American liberals do, or French people who like to work.

I don't really think feminism dooms me to a life of un-girlie angst. I do, however, think it's swell that I can vote, wear trousers if I so desire, and know that my husband cannot legally beat me. Feminism was, and is, about being able to choose your life, including the choice to be at home. And it's about being respected in that choice. It is no exercise in hatred or declaration of war against men.

Maybe the great works of feminism in Western society are mostly done, but we who benefit from them should not do the women and men who won them the disservice of prefacing anything we say with, 'I'm not a feminist, but...' Girls (and boys), you don't have to preface it with anything. You are a feminist. And that is okay.



(My acknowledgment and thanks to Nelly Roussel's 'She Who is Always Sacrificed' speech, oneangrygirl designs, and those annoying girls who say they're not feminists, for inspiration and information.)

FROM THE WEBSITE...

Visit MH's online home for further irreverent humour, cutting edge comment and further forays into a world that is only ever mostly harmless. Here's a taster:

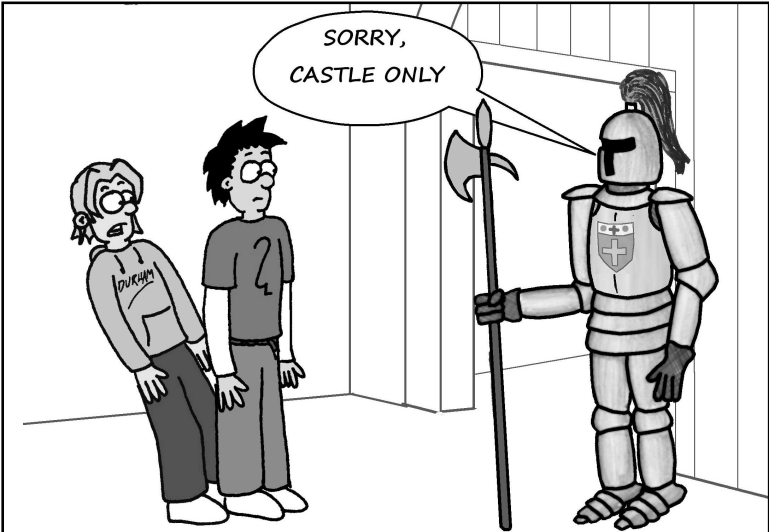
An Abbreviated History of the Men of the Universe: "Did you have to make the tool of procreation so goddam hideous? It looks like a visible part of the intestine covered up with some left-over elbow skin..."

The Turnip Story: "As the cold continental winter months sidle up menacingly, like they're going to prod you with an eel in their jacket or drop tuppence in your drink and make you go to sea for six months..."

A Cornucopia of Socially Acceptable Diversions: "What if Tea and Biscuits should clash irrevocably with Chocolate? Well, you'd end up with chocolate digestives..."

I See Naked People: "Where in the world could I find the optimal amount of nudity? Any ideas?"

www.mostly-harmless.org.uk



10 Reasons for Students to shop at...

1. **Toni & Guy**
10% off cuts Monday – Wednesday
2. **GAME**
10% off all software purchases with the GAME loyalty card available for £3 from our store
3. **Vision Express**
15% off glasses frames and lenses – ask for details
4. **New Look**
10% off with NUS card
5. **JJB**
10% off everything with NUS card
6. **Officers Club**
10% off full priced items
7. **3 Store**
Free MSN and mobile mail with the latest deal with NUS or any student ID
8. **Stationery Box**
10% off everything in store.
9. **The Craze**
20% off full priced items
10. **HMV**
10% off selected products

Don't forget all the other stores at Prince Bishops, including Fatface - newly opened at the end of 2006 for the latest young fashion, plus banks, cafés, phone shops, gift shops and travel agents.

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Door Courtesy: It ain't all about the Curtsey

Tom Lyons

Ladies and gentlemen - and yes, I feel it is appropriate to refer to you with the formality of a low grade magician or pub lavatory sign - with the standards of etiquette in our society steadily slipping, I have addressed one of the burning issues of the day: door courtesy.

Ever found yourself exiting a shopping centre or precinct of some sort, noting an approaching elderly person and holding the door for a good 10-15 seconds - all the time nonchalantly trying to appear as if you are curtailed by an interesting shop window display? If not, you are by definition rude. Take heed.

1. If the person is more than 6 paces away from the door AS IT PIVOTS (I cannot stress the importance of that phrase enough) then a second firm and sturdy push of the door after you have exited shows that you



are considerate, but does not interfere with your day. Neither does it make you look stupid if the person is distracted by a Pound Shop.

1b. This rule is amended for women with push-chairs/buggies. Add two paces for each child being pushed (i.e. woman pushing single buggy = 8 or more paces)

2. If the person approaching is at less than six paces away AS IT PIVOTS, you - the holder of the door - should push it open and stand adjacent to it. Wait for the person to place the palm of their hand onto the centre of the door. Then accept their thanks with a slight nod of the head (or a curtsey for a girl) and continue with your travels.

2b. If the individual is elderly or particularly sickly looking, take extra care that they are fully through the door before releasing your grip.

3. If a person is approaching at speed and you are unable to quickly

ascertain the number of paces they are away AS IT PIVOTS, use personal judgement and discretion. It is advisable to assume fewer steps than more. As I always say, it's better to be cautiously courteous than dismissively disgraceful.

If, in the event of a dramatic misjudgment, the swing-back of the door causes physical bodily harm, make a discreet exit..

4. In the unlikely event that you have held the door open and the individual has failed to acknowledge your kindly act, stare at them for an absolute maximum of 2 seconds. Tut and shake your head as you continue with your travels.

4b. If the rude individual is notably larger than you, reduce the stare time to one second and disguise the tut as a disgruntled cough. Door courtesy, if performed correctly, should never end in physical harm.

5. If you have miscalculated and the individual appears to be farther away than they really are, do not, at all costs, try to maintain 'door openness.' Apologise with a sympathetic head tilt, or, when necessary, an actual 'Oh, sorry'.

5b. If the person remains curt after this, then point 4 can be adopted. Obviously, adhere also to the rules of 4b

5c. If, in the event of a dramatic misjudgment, the swing-back of the door causes physical bodily harm, make a discreet exit..

5d. If the harm is to someone who looks slightly menacing, ensure 5c is undertaken at an accelerated pace.

WANT A JOB? WANT AN IPOD?

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PIN Numbers

Lamoney kicks against the pricks

Marten Lamoney

If you're like me, and you probably are in some ways and aren't in others (- it's an infuriatingly idiotic opener used to create a cringeworthy sense of mateyness), then when you first arrived in your pristinely dank little room you thought...

Big old notice-board, better get some pins, or "thumb-tacks," if you're an idiot. You know, to adorn these porridge-beige walls with all those bleak posters which show how frighteningly high-brow yet, at the same time, sensitive and humbly self-mocking I am.

Well, I didn't just sit there like a fool, I went to Woolworths and I quickly found my quarry: Three hundred drawing-pins. Now, I'm not sure about you; as I said in many ways you may not be like me, but I think that three hundred is quite enough; ample; more than enough, even. Like I say, I don't know what you do in your spare time with your pins; frankly, I don't want to know. What you do in the privacy of your own home with your own drawing-pins- Just keep it to yourself, alright!

So, you can imagine my mild surprise when on closer inspection of the squat, cylindrical tub I noticed a label advertising a very special and exciting deal:

Two for Two Pounds.

I quickly did the arithmetic. It wasn't difficult. But the result astounded me: Six hundred sharp, shiny drawing pins, for two pounds. Assuming that one uses four pins per poster (following principles expounded in Fermat's little-known "Penultimate Theorem"), that'd be enough for one hundred and fifty posters. Suddenly a sickening

sensation pierced my little heart like a pinprick; it was the woeful realisation that I would never exhaust my supply of pins because, well, I didn't have enough posters; the corollary of my poster-shortage being, of course, that I didn't have enough interests to represent in poster-form. I bethought me: "If this is the average number of pins per capita, then I must have fewer interests, then I must be somehow below average; I must be... somewhat a dull person..."

Naturally, I was mortified. But suicide by pin pricking the skin's surface, well, it's not easy, because pins just aren't designed with that purpose in mind, which is to say they don't penetrate very deeply. So I gave that up quickly enough. But what was I to do with this surfeit of pins? Improvise acupuncture? Use them as metallic maracas? Hide them away in the cupboard and try to pretend they didn't exist?

Suggestions on a postcards, please. Help me.

P.S. If anybody has any interests they'd be prepared to exchange for pins, I'd be interested to hear. Very interested.



Pricks

Make Peace with T.B.

In the latest stage of Tony Blair's political menopause he has released 'Make Peace with T.B.' The board game, suitable for ages 1-97, requires players to assume the character of any one of a variety of Middle Eastern, African or Balkan nations. One player (chosen by democratic process) will assume the identity of the great man himself and he/she will act as the 'peacemaker.' Competitors will attempt to answer

questions such as: How much oil do you have? Will you buy weapons from me? And, Can I use your corrupt Secret Service to torture my Islamic enemies? The winning nation (the one with the most affirmative responses) will receive a 'state visit' from T.B that will include an after-dinner speech normally worth £300,000 (available as an additional DVD priced £14.99.) **MT**



The Job Application

Alaric Green shares his latest application form with MH.

Prosperous Inc.

Please explain what attracted you to work for Prosperous Inc (please limit your answer to 150 words).

I am genuinely passionate about working in this industry, and am in no way motivated by the large salaries or the fact that I don't want to work in places where I may come into contact with the lower classes. I have always wanted to work for you - ever since I first thought of it last week when my parents refused to support me after I graduate. I would absolutely love the city life, poncing about in suits, making shed loads of cash, then taking the tube home and posing with the FT while talking loudly about shares and 'credit crunches'. I feel attracted to Prosperous Ltd for many deeply-felt and non-generic reasons. I am definitely not applying to every comparable business in the hope that one of them is careless enough to take me on and let me piss about on their payroll. The drive and passion I feel for this firm is even greater than for the last firm I applied to, and that time I was allowed 350 words to express it.

Describe your personality and how you think it is suited to a career with us (150 words).

Real-life three-dimensional people cannot sum up their personality accurately in 150 words (with the exception of Peter Andre). However, I will diligently spin you all the clichés about being a great member of a team, being a good leader, having strong drive and being a committed worker. I know these are clearly suited to a career with you because it says so on your website, but this had no bearing on my answer. I can give you countless examples from my life to demonstrate these numerous qualities, as long as they can in no way be verified by you, and as long as you have not also received applications from my friends who spin the same stories.

What have been your main extra-curricular achievements (150 words)?

When I was eleven I managed over 100 keepie-uppies. I have a 25-metre swimming badge and played one of the three kings in my primary school nativity play. I also know someone who managed to keep his tamagotchi alive for over 5 months. Since coming to university I have mostly occupied myself drinking and buying stash with 'cool' nicknames on the back so that other people will think I'm popular. I am, however, willing to exaggerate an incredibly minor role I had in a group presentation until it appears that I single-handedly started a new Durham charity and raised enough money to give 37 homeless people positions on the executive for the 2012 Olympics.



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Letters to the Editors

Every month, MH receives hundreds of letters. This issue, we decided to print a few

Dear MH,
I've always thought of myself as being quite attractive. At school many of the boys went through a phase of liking me, and I was judged 'best legs' by our school yearbook. So it worries me now that despite a surge in cases of indecent exposure in Durham, I have neither been flashed at nor masturbated-towards. Why is this? Do I need help?
Yours worriedly,
Raquel Robinson

Dear MH,
I applied to Durham with my boyfriend, and we've continued our relationship, even though I'm in a hill college and he lives on the Bailey. Things were fine at first, but now he always seems to be too busy to see me, and I'm worried. He says it's because of his workload and sports practice, but I'm scared he might actually be seeing another girl behind my back! I've found out that he is quite close with a girl from his building, and when I've popped in on a surprise visit, I'm sure he seemed guilty and secretive. That said, it is possible I'm simply being paranoid since I've got a large workload and am starting to stress. What should I do?
Susie.

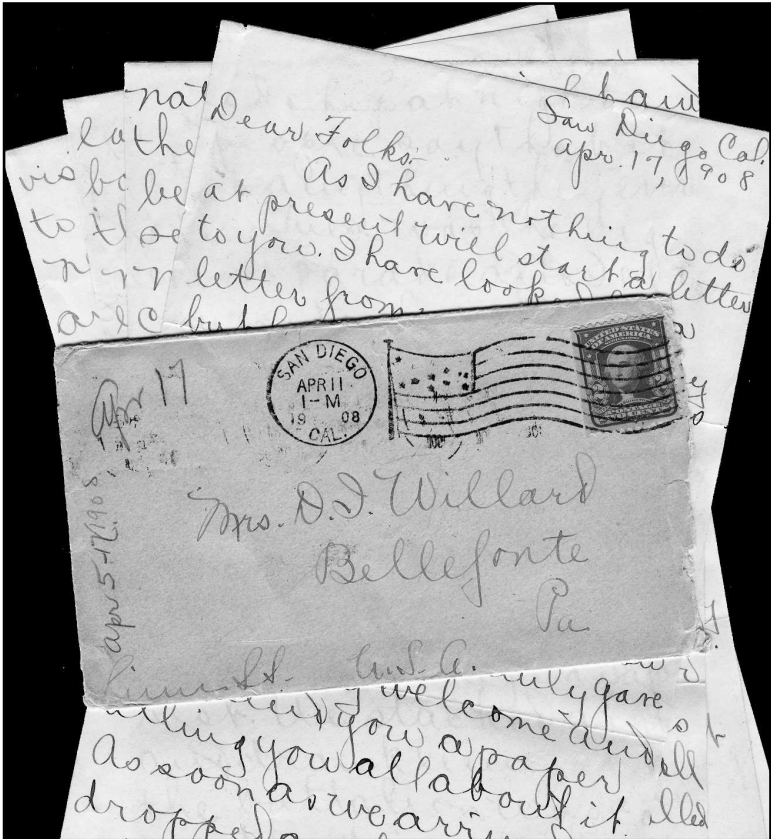
Dear Susie,
If you're starting to stress about your

workload, then time management is your most effective solution. Break the work down into manageable chunks, and get to each one individually - then it won't seem like such a big task. Remember, your college parent has done this last year and so should be able to offer some advice on the amount of work you should be doing each week.
Yes, I expect your boyfriend is cheating on you. Move on.

Dear MH,
I'm worried about my choice of career. Ever since I graduated from Durham, I've been getting this empty feeling every time I go into work. Surely this wasn't what I was supposed to be doing with my life? I had so many plans. I could have been someone. What should I do? Please help.
Doreen Jones, Careers Advisory Service

Dear MH,
I've been getting this feeling lately that I'm being used. I may look like a loveable and cuddly travel writer, but I have opinions too, about things like world peace and top up fees. Sometimes I think my life has become nothing more than a cheap photo opportunity.
Kind regards,
Bill

Dear MH,
I'm interested in doing some work experience with a newspaper. I was wondering if your publication would consider allowing me to make the tea and do the photocopying for a week or so over the summer.
Yours sincerely,
Tim Smyth



Attention, all you Durham students! Paris students are revolting - now it is our time!
Let us build on Durham's revolutionary past of Hatfield students and feminism, 1968 students protesting against dinners. Momentum is on our side. You can sense how wild lads are getting: shouting in the streets, or running around dressed in cunning disguises

(terrorists, fairies, bears in the case of one drama company). Havoc and uprisings are nigh!
Drunken members of AltSoc, dissidents (well, a dissident) from Labour: my vicious guinea pig and socialist students call you to action! Let us conspicuously gather (army gear, please) at 6 o'clock this very Sunday . A commando will go and infiltrate Old Shire Hall, while a selected group of thirty lads will go and hold the castle walls with the help of whoever they can muster in the bailey bars. The main bulk of our forces will occupy the DSU, and raise our flag there.

If anyone has a flag, contact me. Come along - it will be good fun. The two first volunteers will be provided with half a bar of Fair Trade chocolate, funded with the money we stole from New Labour! The five next ones will be offered free beer. This is provided they pay their membership fee beforehand (£140, non-refundable). Brave men (and women) never die. As the poet had it; "fall we may/ but never forgotten, nay / forever remembered in May / loyal day today".
Yes - I wrote that. Remember to keep this secret.
Commander Erik

If you want to write to us, email your woes, queries or whatever to mostlyharmless06@gmail.com

The Esther Rudolf Diaries: Esther Gets a Surprise

Esther Rudolf

It's Friday night and I'm at my module buddy Mark Hilscher's house, watching Psycho and sitting amongst debris made up of biscuit crumbs, pizza boxes and slightly toasted housemates. Live bits of tuna-filling scuttle around the floor, breeding, and possibly asking for money. There are a lot of things I'd like to do to you, you dirty dirty man. And the first thing is de-lice you. Then I'd shampoo your carpet and scrub your housemates with medical soap, before fumigating the hallway and flooding your kitchen with oven cleaner. No, wait, Esther, calm down, he's just a friend. I'm starting to need the loo, and I need to work out a way of travelling from the surprisingly white sofa (that'll be a new addition to the furniture then), across the stepping stones of newspapers from 2006 and general bits of crap, through a sea of misery and broken Toploader singles. Onward, to battle what trolls may live in their loo!
I get up and turn around. Oh my word. Oh my god. Period.

Massive. Period. Massive. Massive period. I've had a massive period! It's sitting on their white sofa, staring at me. Its expression is one of abandonment, as if it's questioning me as to why I've left it behind. I rush out of the room and bolt myself in the loo. What the hell do I do?
First things first, I need a sanitary pad. I could go in there and



ask his housemates if I can borrow one, but I imagine that James, Nick, Tom and Simon would only respond with mute bewilderment. Or disgust, when they realise that I've left the Somme on their sofa. Oh my god. Oh Christ almighty. I could go in there and sit down to cover it up, but something tells me that this is only

making a bad situation worse. I could leg it, but what if I leave a trail all up the way up the Viaduct for Mark to follow like a Beagle and demand that I come back and clean it up?
I could lock myself in here and wait until I'm 'clean' again, like a low-ranking female from a Native American hill tribe. But this would only encourage Mark and his housemates to wee in the sink, which is something I suspect that they might actually do. Plus I've got a group project meeting tomorrow. Maybe they haven't noticed yet. Maybe this is an exciting addition to the Psycho experience? Nope, I'm starting to hear noises of disgust from the living room, which I think, from them, is a bit rich. It could be worse.
There's a knock at the door.
"Esther? Are you ok? You've left an awful lot of blood on the sofa. Are you hurt? Open up." Shit. My only response to that is, "I...I...I..." "Dude, look at her, she's gone all white." "Right, that's it. We're taking her to A & E." And

before I know it, I'm bundled into the car. I should say something. This is exactly the time I should say something. But I don't want to break to them the real reason why I'm now destroying the upholstery of Mark's car. The car jolts off, with the boys squabbling in the back; "it's all your fault, Simon. You didn't clear up all the shards of the glass unicorn you broke yesterday." "I did, I did!" "But we didn't find the foot. Where was the fucking foot?" Mark squints at the road muttering, "you've killed Esther. You've literally killed Esther. You've killed Esther with a glass unicorn foot and this is exactly the sort of thing you'd do, Simon."
Just as quickly I'm bundled out of the car and marched across the car park to A & E by six pairs of hands. We wait for twenty minutes, and as every minute passes, they become increasingly fraught, and I'm more and more appallingly aware of how I can't possibly tell them because they might actually stab me and make it true. When a doctor does finally call me up, they all rush forward and collectively gibber a story to the effect that I've been

hoofed in the back of the leg by a unicorn. The doctor eyes me up and down, clicking her pen repeatedly, and takes me into a cubicle. What do I say? What the hell do I say? She draws the curtain on six pairs of anxious eyes and sighs. "Miss Rudolf, have you had a period before?"



Period?

D'Heroes - Tonight on BBC2

Tonight on BBC, the gripping fantasy drama about a group of Durham citizens who realise that they all have special powers...

Thom Addinall Biddulph

...They must save the university from the clutches of the villain Vicechansylar, who has a plan to conquer Durham by first splitting people's wallets open and then stealing their degrees. In tonight's episode, How To Stop An Exploding Balance, the D'heroes must prevent Vicechansylar from destroying Durham with a huge financial bomb. For our readers, we provide a character guide:

BILL BRYSON, writer

Bryson is a mild mannered travel writer who one day discovered he had the amazing ability to steal other people's blood. He has a personal grudge against Vicechansylar, who has prevented Bryson from actually living in, or anywhere remotely near Durham, by setting up a force barrier that stops fat men with beards from entering the city.

PATRICK, pizza seller

Patrick discovered his power to turn anything in to a kebab or pizza at the age of 15, and made a rapid start by

turning his parents in to a Meat Supreme. He is a nocturnal operator, preferring to work under cloak of night and alcohol. He was instrumental in stopping a previous villain, the Cal Man, by sacrificing his own son as a Hawaiian pizza so greasy that it killed the Cal Man instantly.

MAGDA, Big Issue seller

A master of deception, Magda has tricked most of Durham in to believing that she is an old Romanian woman with little English and a desire for 'bigger shoes, please'. In fact her piercing whistle penetrates people's souls and allows her to see their most basic fears and desires....and then provide them with it in a flimsy magazine.

CAT BOY, Cat Boy

Cat Boy can transform at will in to any animal, so long as that animal is a cat. His power is, to be honest, of limited use, especially as said cat wears a collar and can thus be heard coming from a mile off. However he did once distract Vicechansylar by batting playfully at his mortarboard.



Hannah Yadi

Welcome to the MegaChurch

Nic Miller goes searching for God in the American Deep South

Nic Miller

This summer I had the (mis)fortune of spending a few weeks in a small town just north of Jacksonville, Florida, home to one of the country's largest evangelical stadiums, the simply-named First Baptist Church of Jacksonville. Visit today to find out how you could purchase a 'prayer bear' for sick relatives or how to reimagine American Thanksgiving as a holiday directly celebrated by Jesus.

I encourage all visitors to America to partake in the free tourist attraction of a mega-Church. Be careful, however. A non-rattling tongue can swiftly metamorphose into the tongue of Satan, or worse, that of an agnostic. A laugh can be a sign. Not of direct communication in the holy language, but of the Devil's presence in the congregation's midst.

So, a small group of us from the outside decided to breach the holy gates with great care. Along with dozens of frankly loony Southerners, we "respectfully and earnestly" assembled one Sunday morning at the pulpit - 'front-stage' - of the Church - 'convention centre' - for a welcome to the First Baptist flock. Or, as they prefer to say, perhaps in heliport code for the

DICCU Rescue-copters, FBC-JAX.

The pastor began by dipping his hand into some sort of special pail, emerging with a few drops of distilled water. He then threw the hand up in the air with an exclamation: "The power of the Lord welcomes you; feel the heal." At other times, it was a sound I can only approximate as: "Ayu-chuluhluh-MUHLUHLUHI!"

He then slapped the forehead of the guest. This appeared to induce some sort of divinely channelled black-out. One by one, the guests ahead of me fell into the arms of the pastor, overwhelmed by what, I suppose, could only be understood as the power of Christ. Of course, I lacked the belief to follow suit. I had to hope that my acting was up to scratch. Failing that, the Pastor would have to possess an unusually strong hand.

Luckily, the former held out - the pastor actually had quite a gentle, well-moisturised hand. I fell, apparently naturally, into the arms of the priest while a crowd of thousands declared, "The power of Christ, a-luh-luh-luh-mah-kuh-luh." I was then escorted to a chair by a staff member, fanned with a paper bible and then given the oblique cue to wake up:

"You are reawakened".

A few moments later, still seated in the chair, I heard:

"God can do anything - we could just say, God, fix the world - and he will! How many of you know that this is a pretty sick old world? Well then, let's just fix it! Somebody get your tools out and fix this whole world! We've got too many Christian adults that are fat and lazy! They don't want to give up their evening meal or fast. Did you know that Muslims train their children from when they're 5

years old to fast for the month of Ramadan? We can change the world - we've got the ability to change the world! Hallelujah - say God - I'm here to be trained - I'm here for an education - I'm willing God - I'm willing to do what you want me to do - I'll say what you want me to say - in Jesus's name. Amen!"

Props to the preacher in trying to address the obesity epidemic - indeed, from the looks of the crowd, it seemed to have afflicted every other person. But then a

realisation befell me - that Evangelism wasn't just funny. Behind all the joyous and festive dancing and head-slapping and tongue-waving (after all, if "you don't have your mouth open the holy spirit can't talk through you"), and voting Republican and bombing abortion-clinics, there was a dark side.

According to the Evangelicals, agent-of-God George W. Bush's little foray in Iraq was always doubly justified. If smooth, it was a quick victory for Amurrica, providing fuel for 30-storey illuminated crosses and SUVs emblazoned with witty (yet salvational) slogans. If rough, it simply hastened the day when the homosexuals and abortion doctors - not to mention supporters of the satanic European Union - would burn with the arrival of the latest Devil-incarnate. He would, of course, initiate the final battle of good and evil ending with the destruction of the state of Israel.

"I'll do whatever you tell me to do, Jesus. God Bless America and we will prevail in Iraq - God's power gives the might and right to do anything. We will win!"



The MH Feature: Recruitment Daze

Anton Lazarus steals a friend's identity and thinks about getting a job

Anton Lazarus

It's almost midnight, it's freezing and I'm lost. I look down the unfamiliar backstreet of a corner of one of the outer boroughs of our great capital. A drunk stumbles past and heads back towards the station from where I emerged half an hour ago. I go to ask him for directions but stop as vomit starts spewing from his dirty face.

"I'm hoping to confirm my suspicion that by working for one of the big graduate recruiting companies you are choosing to set off along the road to your eventual death."

Questions as basic as 'who am I?' and 'what am I doing here?' buzz around my head. I am assuming the identity of a friend in order to attend an all expenses paid graduate recruitment event at the global headquarters of a major pharmaceutical company. On my lecture-free Monday I'm hoping to confirm my suspicion that by working for one of the big graduate recruiting companies you are choosing to set off along the road to your eventual death.

The flavourless gum in my mouth has turned distinctly tough as

I find myself in a newly gentrified canal-side development with expensive-looking apartments. A trendy restaurant sits in stark contrast with a sinister mist that that has set in over the deep-lock, every type of rubbish imaginable from tyres to trolleys bobs around on the gloomy tar-like surface of the water. I pull myself out of the dreamy state this nightmarish world has induced in me and fall into the hotel's smart lobby.

"Good evening Sir". "Good evening" I reply, despite my feelings of the outside world being far from good and the evening now more accurately describable as the early morning. "Reservation for..." I trail off at first but quickly find composure and throw in my friend's name at probably the last acceptable chance before Saj gets wise to me. Poor old Saj, working the night shift. I'm sure it'd make his day to catch an identity thief.

Obviously considering whether to hand myself in left a strangely vacant look on my face and Saj asked if I was okay before handing me a document to sign. A signature? Saj was onto me. I did the only think I could think of: "the pen doesn't work", but it was no use, he produced another pen at lightning speed, like he knew what I was going to say. Fortunately though my tired mind caught up, realised Saj wasn't Sherlock Holmes and scribbled something that could be mistaken for a child's drawing of a car crash.

Up in my room I locked the door and checked out the view through the window over the canal. Inexplicably at this time of night a boat was rippling past emerging

from and disappearing into the now thick fog that hugged the ground. I got into bed and allowed my imagination to carry me away into a dream of a Holiday Inn version of Apocalypse Now. Saj and I travelling west on a canal boat searching for a power-crazed madman surrounded by faceless graduates in a forest of middle management office space.

The next morning I arrived at HQ a little late and with a more than comfortable amount of sweat engulfing my body like a great damp hug. Looking a little flustered I navigate security and collect a visitor pass bearing my now familiar alias. The building is impressive, everything you could ever need under one roof, a combination of workspace, gym, cafés and restaurants, a newsagent and a hairdresser spread along 'the street'; a private covered area stretching the length of the building, a bubble that once sucked into, one would literally never leave. A depressing thought on the one hand, but when considered aside the local slums this was an oasis of corporate chic in a desert of chav scum.

An icebreaker was in full swing as I arrived in a large room on the sixth floor with views of the indoor street on one side and over the depressing grey concrete sprawl of London to the other. The hubbub of the room blurred into the background and I realised where I was. This was the big business looking down at the masses from a giant pyramid situated in this seemingly unlikely spot but always watching the people around. I was in the Ministry of Truth and surrounded by post-teen idiots fresh out of Aston, University of. I stood next to someone and looked down at THEM, I was part of the machine, I had crossed a line. Ignorance IS strength. "Have you ever been to a Robbie Williams concert?"

"I beg your pardon?" "Have you ever been to a Robbie Williams concert?" the girl next to me repeats as if it's the most natural thing you could ever say to a perfect stranger: "It's one of these questions, we've got to find someone in the room for each of these categories, or do you drive a fast car or have any unusual hobbies? I've got all the rest." She was genuinely proud of this. I wanted to say yes to all three. Yes I've seen that wanker live, yes I've got a sodding Porsche parked up outside and yes, I grow bonzai trees for my room so that when I bring women back they look like giants and that turns me on. But I didn't, I meekly said "no, sorry" and dropped back into thought.

Everyone takes seats at one of the ten tables in the large room.



Anton Lazarus, tempted by employment

"Come for a day, stay for a career" pleads an introductory slide show that goes on to boast of the size of the company, its various famous products and generally how great it is. There is a real belief that being a part of a pharmaceutical company is a great thing, something to be proud of. In whatever role you take in this company you are helping to change people's lives for the better.

There was the usual mix of lectures and 'interactivity' in their 'quest of the best' to help us along

"I've got a sodding Porsche parked up outside and yes, I grow bonzai trees for my room so that when I bring women back they look like giants and that turns me on."

our 'career journeys'. We're shown a series of propaganda videos, stories of the lives changed by 'our' drugs, but the seeming dichotomy between making money and being philanthropic remained below the surface. A speaker from marketing unsettlingly moved effortlessly between topics: "We know that giving a kid a shot [of medicine] is the difference between life and death, it's an exciting business to be in. We're interested in brands..." I wasn't sure I was comfortable here and yet I began to be sucked in.

My phone gently vibrates against my leg as I talk to Greg from

procurement. Greg explains to me how the company paid him living expenses, sorted him a flat, gave him a large bonus and huge responsibility in his first year. His job was to buy things the company needed, anything from bottle tops to tables and chairs, he spoke of it with a passion and I was genuinely interested. I wondered what it would be like, I could have my own flat, real responsibility, I would be respected by my parents and friends. This is the real world, I thought, I should accept it, I should go for a job now and leave the younger me to worry about the so-called 'real worth of life'. I could be happy here, I can get an eco-loan to buy a bicycle and live next to the canal. I can't live in my own little world all my life, I need to join in, I've got to play the game and this could be my first move. I look at my phone, the text is from Magnus: "Have they stolen your soul yet?"

And they had. A small part of my soul had gone, I'd been sucked in and wrapped up in the potentially warm and comforting world they could offer me. I'd forgotten that I should be considering my life as something precious and majestic, something that can't be packaged up and sold off. I wasn't happy, I had lost. I didn't really know why I had come here but I had hoped to assert some kind of superiority, to sneer at the evils of working for evil, faceless industry. I wanted to take a free-trip-to-London-sized bite of the forbidden fruit and then delight in spitting it back in disgust, but instead I had looked into the eyes of the beast and had, momentarily at least, been seduced.



Souls sold on the cheap

The Back Page

A Durham Decathlon

Robin Morris

Most people are not natural decathletes. This might be due to the natural talent and constant training required for such an incredibly gruelling discipline. On the other hand, they've probably just got the events all wrong. Where's the inclusiveness in an event so obviously biased towards those with an interest in physical activity? In response to this series of errors, MH presents A Very Durham Decathlon - an event more suited to the talents and abilities of the student of today. Roll on Beijing 2008.

* Reverse facebooking

Don't add people after you've met them - add them first, track their last two years through their photos, then claim that you drunkenly bonded last week and greet them enthusiastically whenever you see them. Points awarded based on how many drinks you convince them they owe you.

* Palatinate baiting

See if you can get the most mundane story into the next edition - the last one set a pretty high standard, with a gripping story about edits to Durham's Wikipedia page making it to page 3. Personally,

I'm polishing up a cheeky little number on how I *totally* have too many essays this year.

* Asking anyone wearing a Keffiyeh (those chequered scarf things) about their Arabic heritage

Less than three great-grandparents and you get to slap them. Admittedly, this one isn't a sport so much as it's justice. Fashion justice.

* Short Loan treasure hunts

Steal someone's short loan book, hide it somewhere in the library and then leave them a series of fiendish clues to its location. Will they find it before the library closes? Who knows! Refuse to answer to any name except Richard O'Brien, and if they get upset, run off whilst shouting back that they can find you in the Aztec Zone.

* Stealing Jack Wills

It's not theft, it's redistribution of wealth. Keep score among your friends by tracking your earnings on eBay.

* The ATM Jackpot

Your friend might not need £200 cash, but pushing the button for them is only ever going to make the night more fun. Afterwards, helpfully suggest they use the

money to buy you a couple of drinks.

* Danger Kluting

How many people can you let in the back gate of Klute - down the steps outside...mind the CCTV - without attracting the attention of the bouncers? Bonus points for climbing in from the outside and not being beaten by burley doormen (PS. Andy, this is all a joke - just don't bar me okay xxx)

* Competitive cemetery wanking ...too soon?

* Mobile shelving hijinks

Find the moving shelves in the library basement, and take your life in your hands by sprinting to the wall and back as two shelves close in on you. Reports differ over whether the moving shelves either stop when they hit something, or suddenly slam together in a gory spectacle of death - I've always believed the second one.

* Theology bingo

A classic; find a theology lecture, bring alcohol and drink every time your lecturer says "God," "Jesus" or "Bible." Sacrelicious. Sure, you can adapt this to other subjects, but it's just not the same.



Clarice Holt

"It had always been Penny's dream to write a dissertation on Byron"

The Anarchy Xmas Project

Charitable Promotion

Durham musician Tom Rosenthal has composed and sings 'Smells Like Christmas Time', recorded by his band 'Anarchy Xmas'. The Anarchy Christmas project is a nationwide attempt to get a song to the Christmas No. 1 Spot whilst also raising money for charity.

The song will be available to download from the iTunes website from December 10 with all proceeds going to Oxfam, NSPCC, Cancer Research UK, Shelter, and Friends of the Earth.

It's festive pop, it's only 79p, it's part of a project which is fed up with manufactured acts producing non-Christmas songs, and it's money which will go to worthwhile causes.

www.anarchyxmas.com

WORK WITH MOSTLYHARMLESS



Welcome to another edition of MostlyHarmless. Hopefully you've come across an issue before, and if you haven't you'll hopefully have figured out that we're a paper based around irreverent satire and comment. We're open to most styles of writing, about pretty

much anything you can literally or metaphorically shake a stick at.

The editors are all finalists and want to hand the paper over to some talented new people next term. We need writers, page designers, photo-shoppers, copy-editors and, of course, future

editors. Drop us an email to mostlyharmless06@gmail.com if you like the sound of any of these or even if you just have a crazed lust for power that only MH can satisfy.

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