

MOSTLY HARMLESS

issue 9, easter 2008

ONE OF YOUR FIVE-A-DAY

A PUBLIC APOLOGY

Mostly Harmless has been ordered by the courts to publish a full apology to the parents of missing toddler Madeline McCann. High Court judge Lord Bevercrook, summing up, stated that the succession of stories not printed by the publication in any of the five editions since her disappearance was a breach of our duty to the people of Durham. Kate and Gerry McCann: we're sorry.

"NEWS" 2-5 // COMMENT 6-9 // FEATURES 10-11 // MISCELLANY 12-16

WHO MADE THIS?

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convert Patrick Feltham (St. Mary's) recounted his personal epiphany:

"I was sat in a lecture, near the back, bored out of my mind. I was just resting my head on the desk for a quick nap when a hoodie a few rows in front caught my eye with a simple, concise and relevant extract from St. Luke's on the back. At that moment, it felt as if God was speaking to me through the garment. It was electrifying."

Pete Watson

UNIVERSITY FAILS TO RECOGNISE PRESIDENT

Durham Student Union is in uproar (miffed) tonight as the Vice Chancellor failed to recognise the new DSU President Andy Welch at a "Getting to know you" function. A spokesman for Prof. Higgins said: "It was dark and I didn't have my glasses. It was an innocent mistake - anyone might have thought he was a waiter." Chris Williams

suggest that Vice Chancellor Chris Biggins is set to intervene, demanding that a 5% "maverick bonus" be applied to Latricia's final grade. Robin Morris

FASHION OUTRAGE AS KEFFIYEH POLITICISED

Outrage has swept the high-street fashion world after the discovery of covert political messages hidden in this season's must have: the Topshop keffiyeh. Taiwanese workers vented their anger at the contraversial Beijing Olympics by stitching an image of protesters being silenced by athletes holding machine guns. The message can be viewed by staring at the pattern like a Magic Eye puzzle to



see the hidden 3D image. One Durham student who bought the keffiyeh says "I'm appalled, I bought this scarf because it was in Cosmo, I don't give a damn about politics."

Emily Dukakis

DICCU STASH PROMPTS LANDSLIDE CONVERSION

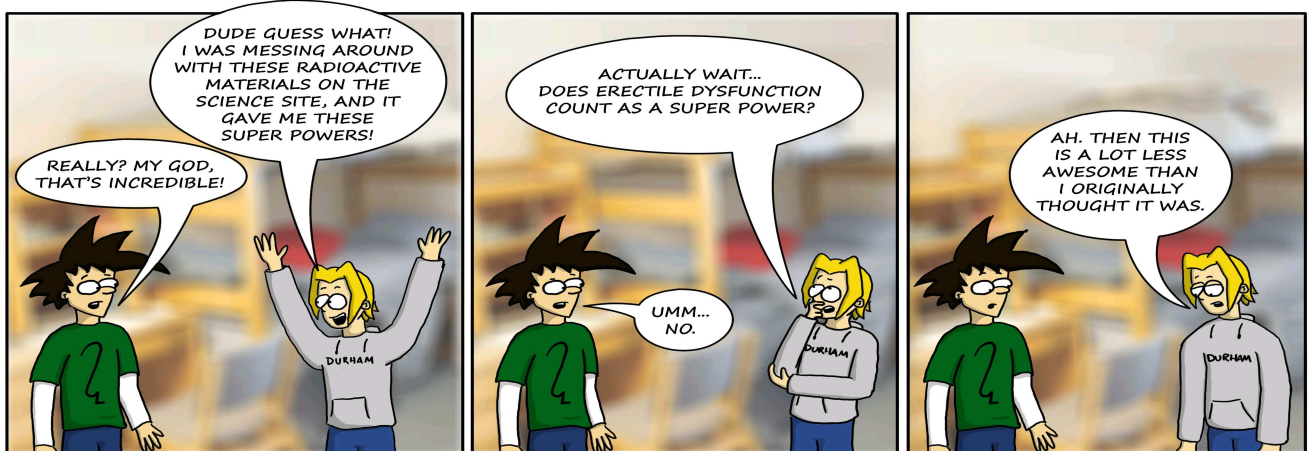
Unprecedented rates of Durham students have embraced Christianity as a result of the tireless slogan campaign of the Christian Union. An assault comprising of flyers, warnings emblazoned on clothing and fair and open debate has seen religious fervour spreading like wildfire throughout the city. Recent

STUDENT BOASTS OF LACK OF REVISION

First year English student Latricia Smark has left friends around Durham reeling with the revelation that she did "barely any" work over the Easter break. "It's just such a gutsy move - I could listen to her talk about it all day!" gushed one course mate. "After this, I'm going to look up to her whatever she gets in her exams." Unconfirmed reports

ALSO IN THE NEWS... GORDON BROWN DISTRACTS ELECTORATE WITH TALKING PENIS

PRINCETON TO BECOME 'DURHAM OF USA'



Dan Dyer

SHANNON PRAISED FOR NARRATIVE COHERENCY

Former missing schoolgirl Shannon Matthews is to be awarded Official National Treasure status by a coalition of tabloid newspapers, MH has learned. The nine-year old's appropriately-timed rescue warmed hearts across the nation last month, after a harrowing but ultimately brief disappearance.

"It's what you want from this sort of thing, isn't it?" explained renowned Missing Tyke expert Prunella Peerin. "Kid goes missing, kid gets found. Then we all get to go home for tea. It's not like that other nasty business where everyone thought it was the parents, and they never found the nipper. Where's the uplifting payoff there?"

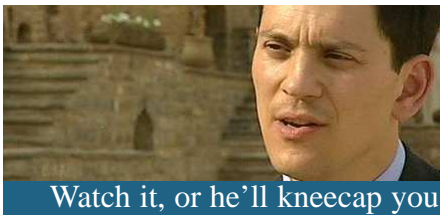
In the face of persistent rumours, a Labour spokesman was forced to once again deny that the Prime Minister is poised to declare an immediate election upon the discovery of an unharmed Madeleine McCann.

Robin Morris

GOVERNMENT IN-ACTION OVER TIBET

The Government has today formally announced it will pursue a policy of 'dilly-dallying' over recent Tibetan protests at Chinese rule. Seen as an extrapolation of Gordon Brown's policy of procrastination, the move will come as little surprise to those acquainted with his style of politics.

An inside source, who preferred to remain anonymous, "This has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that if we boycott the Chinese Olympics, they will boycott London 2012; we just don't care. Tibet isn't even a real country anyway... although I suppose that's the whole point."



Watch it, or he'll kneecap you

Foreign Secretary David Miliband said "Anybody who raises parallels with Ireland should be knee-capped."

Luke Blackburn

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE ADVISED TO 'CHILL'

A new document, compiled by an international team of advisors and endorsed by the United Nations outlines the need for highly strung Middle Eastern territories to take a more relaxed approach to each other.



Play nicely, would you please

"Man, you guys are so fucking uptight," noted esteemed diplomat and scholar Professor Robert Lacy from the University of Vermont. He goes on to suggest, "You should just sit back, have a beer and chill the fuck out. What are you arguing about anyway? My dad owns more land than both of you put together."

The document, entitled 'Learning to Share', claims that the tensions between Israel and Palestine could be resolved by the introduction of a friendlier atmosphere between the states. Proposals include "Playing more reggae music," "trying to see the funny side of it" and "participation in non-violent outlets, such as volleyball."

Pete Watson

CAMERON WANKER

A well known conservative wanker was reprimanded by Speaker Michael Martin for calling a fellow MP a "cameron". Such unparliamentary language has not been heard since former Deputy PM John Prescott referred to the whole Tossers

Party front bench as a "bunch of poncy fucking T**ies" Jackie Casey

BLAIR WREAKS HAVOC

The Olympic procession through London was brought to a halt earlier this month when Tony Blair infiltrated security cordons and snatched the torch. Barging Kelly Holmes out of the way, he carried it for three metres while bearing an expression of pure jubilation. He was then wrestled to the ground by security guards.



Scotland Yard have expressed their regret at the incident. "We just didn't think that former Prime Ministers would be a threat to general security," a spokesman said. Blair has issued a statement apologising for his actions, claiming he "just wanted a go."

Emily Kirkham

LAPSANG BAN THREATENS CIVIL LIBER-TEA

Following the success of last year's smoking ban, Health Secretary Alan Johnson will today launch a bill banning the drinking of notoriously smoky tea Lapsang Souchong in public places. Said he: "For years, ordinary folk who just want to drink their PG Tips with milk and eight sugars have been subject to the awful smell of this repugnant so-called beverage... like a cross between the Jorvik Viking Centre and poo. It probably causes cancer too."

However, critics of the proposal are citing it as further erosion of civil liberties. A group of toffs are already said to be preparing a legal challenge. Said their spokesperson, Gerald Bone-Ham-Carter: "The government have already stopped us smoking cigarettes, pipes, foxes and red squirrels. Now they want to ban Lapsang too. It's no respect to the valiant British soldiers who died swapping opium with the squinty-eyes for this drink in the great days of empire". Richard Hadden

STUDENT FAKES FOOTNOTE

Mark Thomson has been ostracised by friends and family alike after admitting he made a reference in a summative essay to a paper which he had used. The Psychology student was forced to reveal that the paper by Fitzgerald (1996) was in fact fictitious.

"I'm astounded," said an astounded former friend. "Here we are, all trying to work for a good honest degree, and he's treating it like a Geography GCSE - faking evidence left right and centre."

Emily Dukakis

ANTIQUITY 'NOT STREET'

University officials have been left baffled by a wave of apparently rap-induced withdrawals from Classical Civilisation modules. Second year Smithely Beakins tried to explain: "I was a model student, and genuinely fascinated by Greek culture. But then I got into hip-hop, and it suddenly didn't interest me any more - one day I just woke up and thought 'fuck the polis.'" Robin Morris

SARKOZY TO WED BRITAIN

Only a few months after his divorce from Celia Sarkozy, and mere weeks after his mid-fling nuptials with Carla Bruni, French president Nicolas Sarkozy has declared himself to be completely and utterly in love with Britain and plans to marry the island as soon as possible, according to Paris Match journalist Igor Souslesdraps.



Mr Sarkozy and Britain were recently photographed taking tea together, going on a rollercoaster and disagreeing on their opinions of Tony Blair. Richard Haddén

IS THE POPE CATHOLIC?

Fake explorer Bear Grylls was engulfed in scandal yet again last night. Following on from allegations that the adventurer stayed in a Hawaiian motel when he had claimed to be overnighing on a remote atoll, disillusioned producers last night claimed that Grylls demanded to be driven into the nearest town whilst filming in a forest. "Quite simply", the anonymous Channel 4 employee told MH last night, "Bear doesn't shit in the woods." Zaki Moosa



Shit-faced Bear-cheek

ZIMBABWE PHONE-IN SPECIAL

For your chance of electing a fair a democratic government, simply answer the following question:

Which of these great post-colonial leaders won last month's election?

- A. Coronation Street
- B. Robert Mugabe
- C. Emmerdale

CLUE:



Call 0900 123456 or text 81234.

Calls and texts cost Z\$1,000,000,000,000 and lines are already closed. All entries will be charged.

RUGBY TEAM DISCOVERS FOUCAULT

MAGNUS TAYLOR

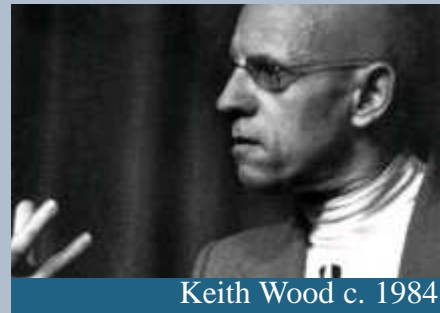
French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault, part-time sexual deviant and winner of 'Best Bald Man Who Isn't Really Old 1964-68,' has recently made an appearance in a more unusual context: the training schedule of St Cuthberts' Rugby team.

Captain Lesley Muscley-Probosis has reportedly taken to quoting Foucault's seminal tome 'Madness and Civilisation' during pre-match pep-talks, and on occasion has made his squad divide into small groups and discuss elements of Foucaultian discourse theory with reference to their attacking game plan.

Right-winger Hilary Manly-Armitts, normally an Aristotelean devotee, told MH that he was surprised but happy with the incorporation of modern French philosophy into his classical running game. 'I used to just think my play revolved around basic principles of sporting dualism: winning or losing; light and darkness; running or

standing still,' he said. 'Now I've realised that my interaction with team mates and oponents is a much more complex affair. Foucault has literally changed the way in which I approach the confined power based discourse of each match.'

Manly-Armitts was speaking from Sherburn Hospital's intensive care unit, following an ill-fated attempt to explain 'the relationship between knowledge and power in the context of scrummaging' to an opposition prop-forward last Saturday.



Keith Wood c. 1984

STUDENT READS 'ON THE ROAD'

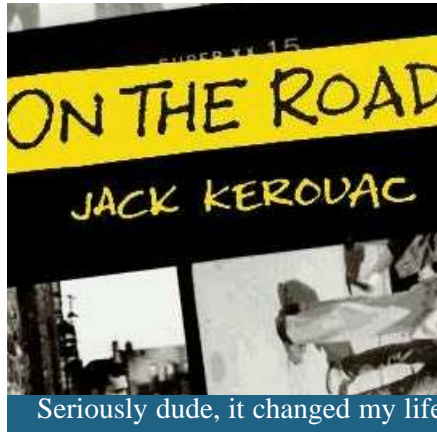
JACKIE CASEY ON DURHAM'S BEAT GENERATION

Last week Marcus Whitman, a politics undergraduate from Guildford, felt hemmed in by the endless search for materialistic gain and his three approaching summative essay deadlines. What he really wanted to do was to make a truly lasting social statement, to do something that actually meant something.

Marcus eventually settled on reading Kerouac's *On The Road*. In a single sitting. By the light of a bare 40 watt bulb. Lying next to the naked form of a girl whose name he'd probably never know. His mind was a whirl of spiralling frenzied verbs. Verbs which were fast, fast, like the speed of a pedal rammed to the ground and only Delaware to reach before nightfall. 'This was it,' he thought to himself. 'Take that society!' he screamed to the great God of the starry greed-soaked, sweet scented sky. Gone. Gone without looking back or even considering the thought of returning. The bulb flickered atmospherically and the benevolent pout of 'Miss February' (calendar acquired free in FHM) seemed to wordlessly approve of his every

move, careering closer and closer to him, teeth clenched tight in a grinding wet-lipped snarl. 'I'm going to buy a pair of 501s, stick my thumb out to whoever comes my way, and see where this too big world takes me.'

You'll be pleased to know that Marcus got two 67s and a first in his summatives, decided to do a law transference course, and is planning to go on holiday to Thailand with his girlfriend.



The MH Charity Project

This is not a joke (for once). Last year Britons gave more to a Donkey Sanctuary than every abused women charity in the land. Every year in the UK 1.5 million experience domestic abuse, 800,000 are sexually assaulted, and 100,000 are raped. If you've got some change to spare, go to www.womensaid.org.uk, and give them something.

women's aid
until women & children are safe

In exchange, we guarantee to do NONE of the following:

- Run 26.3 miles;
- Climb Everest
- Get in a bathtub of custard
- Put a plastic duck in the river
- Spell Committee with a 'K';
- Ask for direct debit details;
- Anything involving bungee/parachuting/abseiling/fire walking or any other perceived but actually non-existent risk

ROGUE REP IN METER MADNESS AT THE DSU

The DSU faces imminent gridlock after a crazed English finalist forced through a constitutional amendment stipulating that all DSU business must be conducted in Iambic Pentameter. The student, Ben Marlow (Cuth's), who apparently cracked after weeks of poring over *The Tempest*, responded to the passing of the motion with the rhythmically correct "Ha ha, let's see how you deal with this *shit*" before vaulting off the Kingsgate balcony.

The introduction of the arcane meter was greeted less enthusiastically by new DSU President Andrew Welch, who spoke to MH shortly after the motion passed:

"We don't know what to do about this now;

It could, you know, slow things down to a crawl.

Look at the minutes, they are a disas- oh fuck, that's already ten syllables, isn't it? Wank, wank, wank, they'll censure me for this. Give me five minutes and I'll get back to you."

The student reaction to the events has been muted, with most expressing surprise at the news that the DSU holds meetings at all. **Robin Morris**



Poetry in concrete form

OUTCAST FROM AN ANCIENT CULTURE

TOM WALKER GOES BEYOND THE SLOGANEERING OF THE 'FREE TIBET' MOVEMENT

The long bronze prayer horns, a bastard cousin of some Swiss yodelling implement, bayed into the Himalayan morning air. Drums as big as the wheels of an articulated lorry thudded out across the foothills. Prayers had started in Samdrub Darjay Choling monastery, a Tibetan refugee centre in North-eastern India, and they'd bloody woken me up.

It wasn't so much the Buddhist cacophony that was bothering me, though. It was more Outkast's Andre 3000, raucously assailing me from the open window of a monk's bedroom. "I know you like to think your shit don't stain, but..." Not, in all honesty, what I'd imagined to be the favoured listening of men who devote their lives to peaceful contemplation. But then, the four months I spent living with these refugees confounded most of my expectations of Tibetan culture.

Tibet is a particularly easy nation to romanticise. Images of smiling monks skipping through meadows, arm-in-arm with Richard Gere, troop through our consciousness. Shangri-La and the Dalai Lama appear to us as the last bastions of isolated olde-worlde innocence in an increasingly cynical global society. Understandably, when the West sees this innocence wrestled to the ground by faceless blue tracksuit-clad drones, it gets indignant.



Not so sacred traditions

But as much as this is about human rights abuses, what's really raised our

ire is the idea that the Chinese are forcefully destroying another culture – just count the references to 'cultural genocide' in a newspaper of your choice. Of course, Tibetans are harshly discriminated against: forbidden to carry pictures of the Dalai Lama; squeezed out of jobs by Han Chinese immigrants in Lhasa; their very language gradually eliminated. This is, rightly, the subject of international censure.

"It wasn't so much the Buddhist cacophony that was bothering me, though. It was more Outkast's Andre 3000"

But the unspoken assumption of much reporting on Tibet, that its culture would have been preserved unchanged were the Chinese not around, is an unfounded one. Faced with the seductive allure of American popular culture, even distant Himalayan states struggle to maintain their traditions indefinitely.

The remote Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan, probably as close a relation to Tibet as you'll find, became the last nation in the world to introduce television in 1999. A crime wave including murders, drugs offences and fraud – hitherto unheard-of events – followed. Many Bhutanese blame this on television. The editor of the national newspaper Kuensel, for example, has warned that the 'younger generation jettison traditional culture for whatever they are sold on TV.' The Tibetans I encountered living in India acted in a strikingly similar fashion.

Buddhism defines Tibetan culture – the Dalai Lama is both Tibet's spiritual and political leader – and so one might expect a Buddhist monastery filled of

refugees from Tibet to epitomise the reserved, frugal values for which the nation is famed. The younger monks, however, couldn't have been more different. It wasn't just Andre 3000. They were obsessed by everything that the materialistic bling culture of US gangsta rap symbolised.

Robes were ditched at every opportunity for more 'hip-hop' clothing (provided it was red), and they could as often be found break-dancing as praying. In their free time, they played



The Winter Palace

on Playstations and watched porn. The head lama so ostentatiously spent donations to his monastery on diamond rings and 4x4s that a rival monastery had been set up in the same village out of protest.

At the front line of the fight to preserve their own culture, having left a repressive authoritarian state to do so, these young monks didn't seem overly bothered about it. Is the West, then, unwittingly conducting a 'cultural genocide' all of its own? I don't think so. The monks freely choose to ape 50 Cent, and we are not responsible for stopping them.

Our affection for the concept of Tibet springs out of nostalgia for an imagined archetype of peace and virtue that may never have existed anywhere, even in the Himalayas. Whilst China may be doing lots of nasty things in Tibet, don't credit them with being able to destroy this culture. Cultures have a natural tendency to do this to themselves, whether we like it or not.

WHAT'S THE POINT IN STUDENT JOURNALISM?

MAGNUS TAYLOR ASKS SOME POINTED QUESTIONS

I like being on the Palatinate mailing list. It makes me feel both useful and important. Every few days I get a cheery email apologising for the number of summative essays I still have to do, and urging me to 'get involved' in Durham's thriving journalism scene. 'Become the vice-sports correspondent for Grey College, write a feature article about Ugg boots, or perhaps even a dreaded comment article (most probably about DICCU).

I think Palatinate must have some kind of quota system running with DICCU (or quite possibly God) by which they have to include a certain number of related articles every edition to 'keep the debate going' and prevent Christianity gently sliding into obscurity alongside feudalism and absolute monarchy as 'things which seemed like a good idea at the time.'

"I think Palatinate must have some kind of quota system running with DICCU (or quite possibly God)"

Occasionally, the mailing list throws up genuine flashes of excitement, like when Chris Wright, a disgruntled comment editor - a terrifying prospect if ever there was one - publicly announced his resignation due to some editorial spat about a cartoon (inevitably, on the subject of DICCU). Wright stormed off in a flurry of grandiose platitudes about freedom of speech and conspiracy theories, offering his services to a rival journalistic leviathan, Durham21, where he acts much as before, writing long and blustering articles about the 'issues that matter.'

There isn't anything especially wrong with writing comment articles about the 'issues that matter' - after all, they do matter - and I'm sure Chris is a nice enough guy if you can stop him talking about DICCU. Providing a forum for the opinionated and verbose is

definitely one of the main points of student journalism, and long may it continue!



The odd thing, though, is that I like Palatinate. It's like one of those old friends you have from home who never really changes - except maybe a new haircut here and a weird new girlfriend there. It isn't particularly exciting, but is still nice to have around. In a perfect world, it would occasionally express itself with a little more force. Or perhaps enter into an impassioned crusade about something that isn't the acronymically exciting trio of DICCU, DUS or DSU.

However, if it's supposed to be a reflection of our student community, then it's probably got it about right. After all, there isn't much going on in Durham apart from DICCU, DUS and DSU, and in these dull days we're so advanced we've forgotten how to have real opinions, or even really care about the news that is supposed to be 'relevant to students.'

The establishment is, by its very nature, boring. It has to do all the necessary establishment things like pretending to care about the DSU and recording minor college sport results. However, as with most well meaning attempts to engage us in the minutiae of low level politics and local news, the majority of us really couldn't give a shit.

The Sanctuary, by contrast, is

something I don't like. This isn't just because it isn't very good. That would be a poor reason to dislike a student venture, like starting a hate campaign about Derby County or Eddie the Eagle. I'm sure the editors and writers put a lot of effort in and their mothers are really proud of them, but The Sanctuary isn't really a student venture.

It is, in essence, nothing but a money-making tool for a Nottingham graduate, Tom Freeman, who maintains a string of similarly poorly received papers across the country. All of them are run primarily for the purpose of selling advertising space. The quality of the journalism in it seems to be of little or no consequence to Freeman. The paper is free as long as he can persuade his advertisers that people read it, he has no reason to worry about it.

The Sanctuary does not have a philosophy or purpose beyond that of making money. It survives on the great reserve of free labour provided by students, who are unique in the fact that they'll do something like this without being paid. It exploits our desire to 'be involved,' get in print, and fill our CVs. Its vaguely-associated mess of articles is neither a newspaper nor a magazine but simply The Sanctuary, cynical-money making in student journalistic form. Some of the writing can be pretty good, but it deserves a better home than this.

"The Sanctuary does not have a philosophy or purpose beyond that of making money"

So what is the point of any of this? What is the point in Mostly Harmless for that matter? It passes the time. Makes you feel special, like you inhabit some kind of a necessary role in some imagined student community. There is no real point to any of it, but we enjoy doing it and are proud of it, and that, if you'll pardon the pun, should be the real bottom line.

IN PRAISE OF THE INCOMPETENT MAN

SIDDHARTH KHAJURIA FINDS SOME POSITIVES IN ALL THE BUFFOONERY OF THE MAYORAL RACE

There's something refreshing about inadequate politicians. They don't have that veneer; that deft touch with which to skirt around an inquisitor's trickery. London's three candidates for Mayor - Boris, Ken, and the other bloke - are three such men.

Last week, BBC's Question Time showcased them to the nation. "SHUT UP!" squealed the Lib Dem man as Boris bumbled and mumbled his way to the end of a sentence. Unseemly? Perhaps. Though an acceptable barb in local political debate, it wouldn't ever happen with Gordo and Dave.

Dimbleby goes on to suggest to Ken that the Olympic bid was a "con-trick" to ensnare the government into regenerating the East End of London. You expect a side-step, a rephrasing of the question. Instead: "It was! This has worked just as I planned...", like the proud little boy who'd just elicited free candy from the hapless man in the corner shop. Nothing silver-tongued or

weasel-wordy about that one. It was an answer with which Paxman might well have skewered a ministerial career on Newsnight.



These colourful characters, however, can get away with character flaws and unseemly gaffes which would rarely pass muster on the national political scene. In the latest masterclass in unintentional buffoonery, Boris suggested to an Asian radio DJ: "I'm down with the ethnics. I'll out-ethnic you", whilst Ken repeatedly refuses to disassociate

himself from unsavoury characters of every ilk, seemingly trying to remain in touch with his 'revolutionary' past.

Cabinet ministers resign for far less. They live in fear of verbal slips and perceptions of impropriety. They're held to a standard which demands awkward answers to straight questions on a daily basis.

The instinctive reaction is, of course, that it doesn't quite matter as much when we're talking local politics. Boris can't invade Iran, or cast Scotland adrift, can he? Perhaps not. In spite of their defects and shambolic campaigns, though, there's something refreshing about a political climate which doesn't dismiss these men for their frank, often impolitic approach to the game. Ken might have five kids, Boris might have many more, but it's an election fought with far franker discussions about policy and competence than most.

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JUICE

PURE

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Ref:Mostly01

PURE

JUICING HOURS:
MON TO SAT 8 AM TIL 6 PM, SUN 9 AM TIL 5 PM



Thanks to all those who entered our caption competition. The year's subscription to Private Eye goes to **Michael Fox**



"That does it! Israel's gone too far this time"

Highly Commended:

"The Archers Movie"
(James Davis)

"One day son, all of this will be Moors"
(Luke Blackburn)

MOSTLYHARMLESS MUTTERS THE WEIGHT OF TRADITION

You won't have to look hard to find a student hack stating that Durham, for better or worse, is a traditional, small collegiate university. The university's rumoured desire to rip students from the spiritual heartland of the peninsula has only added to their numbers. But is the university really as steeped in tradition as the cobbled streets suggest?

The departments on Old Elvet, often cited as a bastion of tradition under threat from a money-minded Vice-Chancellor, are actually buildings, dilapidated by modern standards, that the University has only inhabited for forty years. The prime example is Old Shire Hall, the late 19th-century University Offices. The City Council sold it to us in 1963 – only one of many examples of the University's tendency to scavenge for abandoned buildings whose original function has been served.

At the time the University bought Old Shire Hall, Van Mildert (1965), Trevelyan (1966) and Collingwood (1972), let alone Stockton (2001) and Josephine Butler (2006), didn't even exist.

In fact, with the majority of the colleges, despite their inherited traditions and rivalries, barely sixty years old, large parts of the University don't really match up to the 'centre of history' image that the prospectus paints. Even the Union Society's much-vaunted debating chamber has only housed the Society since 1977. Yet each student's brief sojourn in the city allows them to build an assumption that what they see has existed since time immemorial.

Fostering these pseudo-traditions allow us to rest safe with the prestige they afford us. It allows us to avoid having to stand on our own merits as a university. What are we afraid of? Perhaps it's that, without this ancient image, we might find ourselves becoming members of 'just another' university.

Student Community Action

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FALLING OUT OF LOVE WITH THE SWISS

CORDELIA GRAHAM NARROWS HER HORIZONS

My great-grandparents went on holiday to Italy once. They never went back because they found it to be dirty. Instead they went to Switzerland. Switzerland, Switzerland, always clean, always tidy. The Marks and Spencer of Europe. Switzerland is a country of edges; the edge of peace, the physical edge of the Alps - it is the upper edge of civilisation.

**“Switzerland,
always clean,
always tidy. The
Marks and Spencer
of Europe”**

I always used to adore this country: it doesn't get involved in wars, the UN is deeply rooted there and it makes fit chocolate. I was in awe of the discretion and restraint eminent in its citizens, who keep a cover over the collection plate in mass and can speak at least three languages.

What's more, I loved that one can still smoke indoors, despite accusations of Switzerland being a nanny state, despite laws against discarding one's chewing gum on the street. 'Here's a country that can see sense,' thought I to myself.

Bearing this in mind, these holidays, soft packet of Gauloises in my pocket, I sallied forth to the nightclub(s) of Wengen, a town the size of Hexham in the Alps. Despite my father's complaints that 'no bugger gets up to do any work there', I was sure that there would be some form of civilised, quaint nightlife lurking, ready to embrace me and my amour suisse.



Once there, I took a look around. Although not packed with interesting enlightened types, there was bound to be some somewhere.

My first encounter was with a more bland breed of Durham graduate. 'Come on, Cordelia, you are abroad - go forth and leave perfidious Albion where it should be - at home.' So I found a Swiss, from, joy of joys, Basel. 'It used to be the Holy Roman Empire; he must be interesting!' exclaimed I in my head. I think I have come across a gem of a person (particularly one who was wearing a diamond-patterned jumper and smoking Lucky Strikes) who might possibly enjoy the occasional medieval throwback, as I do. No such luck: he advocated a heavy bombing campaign of Iran because 'Muslims want to blow us up' and didn't hold with university education. 'People might say that they care about tolerance, but, really it's you and your people whom you are going to put first', said he with an apathetic shrug. I was in so much tolerant shock of his intolerant views that I was unable to reply.

**“Come on,
Cordelia, you are
abroad - go forth
and leave
perfidious Albion
where it should be
- at home.”**

It seems an illustrious continental upbringing is not necessarily conducive to thinking like me. My veneration of Europeans is somewhat diminished - of course the opinion of one fool is not representative of an entire country, yet one fool is still himself. What's more, the only other Swiss I have ever had the opportunity of being intimately acquainted with once blew his nose on the nearest rock for a want of more suitable item. I realised that Switzerland wasn't quite the haven of civilization I once thought. Suddenly, perfidious Albion wasn't looking so bad.

FRENCH MISSIVE

I'm In France. Things are different here, a bit.

Times when I'd usually be bored I've suffered instead from l'ennui existentiel. They're the same, except you ask yourself not "what to do?" but "Why to do?" It's not a mood conducive to revision.

Second difference is the language. They're imprecise about things. They call lunch "dejeuner," but they call breakfast "le petit-dejeuner." What do they call a littler than usual lunch? Are we to understand that if they're only peckish, or had a large breakfast- "un grand petit-dejeuner" (note oxymoron) or if they just got up late, that they eat more than they want or don't eat lunch at all? What if the petit-dejeuner is larger than the déjeuner? What then? I asked an obliging Frenchman.

"Je ne sais pas." He said. "Merci." I said. "Merci, a lot." I thought... "Rosbif stupide" he thought. Then we got off the bubble-lift and I never saw him again. It was a thing that we had together.

Anyway, I had brunch. Thought I'd play it safe. "Le brunch." It was fitting; I'm brunch anyway, my beliefs are: Between atheism and agnosticism, then later there's deism for dinner. Dawkins calls it "Intellectual poverty." I call it brunch. Je suis brunch.

I haven't had much time to catch up with Lamoney, but the last thing I heard he was working on a new section to the "Brief Guide to Conversation." called "Some Popular Nonsensical Terms of Emphasis and How To Deal With Them: From 'I'm officially... adjective' to 'I'm so... insert verb in the progressive...again' touching upon the correct use of the three meaningless superlatives... Absolutely, completely, entirely."

Anyway. I had better get going. I'm existentially ennui'd stiff.

Oh-wevwah,
Yours phonetically,

James le Brunche

BRITAIN, BRITAIN, BRITAIN

REETTA HUMALAJOKI PONDERES THE GREAT BRITISH WELCOME

Two hundred days have passed since I moved to this blessed place. Two hundred days since I left my own, penguin-infested land. I decided to give up herding reindeer for a more civilised, advanced existence, in a place that truly matters. Finland once belonged to Russia, but as I have been duly informed, Britain once owned half the world. It's easy to see which place is more worthwhile. My semi-permanent change of scenery is, as such, proof that I accept this... right?

“Finland once belonged to Russia, but as I have been duly informed, Britain once owned half the world.”

All exaggerations and sarcastic undertones aside, I have on the whole, through a process of enchantment, disillusionment and ‘coming-to-terms with reality’, come to enjoy living here. I now appreciate both the perks and the problems with the food, ‘cultural institutions’ and, especially, the people.

But thanks to my excellent English and a deceptively American accent, I have stumbled on something which has ever since constantly come back to nag at me. That is the fact that the views I presented in the first paragraph, though rare, gaspshockhorror, actually exist.

Admittedly, I haven't had monarchists parading past my door waving Union Jacks and hailing my conversion to the British way of life (I as yet resist and still love weird things like salted licorice and sweating in a dark room). The unconscious slips one hears are far more worrying than such blatant shows of xenophobia.

I've endured listening to degrading references about all manner of “foreigners” Sometimes, these are followed by a sudden realisation and an apologetic “Oh no, not you, you speak such good English!” as if a language and the increasing use of phrases like “popping in” and accidental “mums”

instead of “moms” will make me sprout roots somewhere near Coventry and imbue me with a sudden understanding of who the hell William Hague is.

As I'm doing an English and History



degree, my language skills may make life a bit easier, but it doesn't make me any less Finnish. So the next time you allude to those incomprehensible “foreigners,” maybe you should stop to consider something.

Do you know how long that Pole/Chinese person/Borat-looking-fellow has been in this country? Can you imagine how difficult it may be for them to learn the language and even begin to comprehend the meaning of pubs, your electoral system, and the utterly illogical shapes and sizes of your precious currency? These things, despite the detailed explanations of her British friends, still have the capacity to bewilder an American-sounding Finn.

Maybe it isn't your responsibility to

“I've endured listening to degrading references about all manner of ‘foreigners’”

make those foreigners feel more at home in your country. After all, we moved to England to get to know your culture, not the other way around. But if you've just lived in one house for all your life and only been away from this Golden Island for a week clubbing in Ibiza, or a 4-day weed tour in Amsterdam, it might be to your own benefit to ask, just once, “So what's your home like?” and actually listen to the answer.

IN DEFENCE OF EUROPE

Europe doesn't really make history anymore, but the past is everywhere and finding it is the challenge. Next time you're in London, walk past Harrods, look on the other side of the road – the shops are raised, built on a pit full of plague victims.

Scramble up a Heidelberg hill in the dark with 10,000 other young people, like refugees in a news report, to party all night in a Nazi amphitheatre where Hitler used to orate. Go find a World War One shell in a field near Ypres.



Riga's massive indoor market is a place of infinite discovery and meat cleavers. Evening mass and the tomb of St Anthony in Padua confirm that secular Europe isn't actually as secular as the atheists would like to think.

Watch the passengers change as your train travels from central Paris out through the suburbs. Find the great train journeys on this continent before looking for them elsewhere: the night train from Vienna to Italy through the Alps, the Barcelona-Valencia line and its similar cliff-hugging twin between Exeter and Torquay, any journey on Germany's “kissing” ICE trains. Sometimes, even here, it can be a nightmare. London to Verona on a coach was hell, Mannheim-Paris not much better.

None of this is intrepid and adventurous in a Marco Polo, Bruce Chatwin or even Michael Palin style. But Europe, dull, safe, explored Europe, on dull, safe, explored European public transport, is actually not boring at all.

Zaki Moosa

NOTHING'S BETTER THAN REVISION

PETE WATSON WASTES TIME

I pick up my pen. Turning it over in my hands, I marvel at the sleek contours and smooth action of the retractable nib. A work of design genius. I wonder who designs pens? 'Made in China.' I want to go to China. Maybe I'll visit a pen factory. I put it down. My ruler becomes a motorbike in my hands, making a sweeping turn around a pristine pad of paper and getting some sweet air off a handy file. Hang on. That file is definitely not in line with the edge of the desk.

That's better. What a lovely file. I allow myself a proud little smirk - this is an excellent filing system I have going, and believe me, I've experimented with a fair few. I make a list of all the filing systems I have ever used, and pin it up next to the list of my top one hundred root vegetables. Is that a bit of dust? Oh bugger this, there is just no way I am going to be able to concentrate in a room this messy.

“I make a list and pin it up next to the list of my top one hundred root vegetables. Is that a bit of dust? Oh bugger this.”

I get up and straighten the duvet. Look around. Everything else is in perfect order, even the trinkets in my room are organised alphabetically according to their name. Maybe I could order them according to colour? How would I do that? Would I adhere to the colour spectrum, or base it on the names of the colours? I have so much to decide.

I consult my handcrafted 3D pop-up revision timetable, complete with colour key. Mauve means I should be doing what at 3.39? Hmm. Don't really like that one. It's not like I've stuck to the timetable so far.

Clock check. Five minutes have gone by. Time for a break?

No! Diligence! I have so much to learn!

Oh god I'm going to fail.

Failure. A word with such bad connotations, but the most successful people are the ones who dropped out of academia. Probably. I'm practically holding myself back by revising. What would I do if I failed? Maybe write a bestseller, or trek in the Andes saving orphans. I could come back, dripping with wealth and experience, and give a talk to some students on how to really be successful. Ha! Shit. Maybe I would actually have to go and work in Woolworths and live on the minimum wage. The people in Woolworths look really weird. I have to do some work!

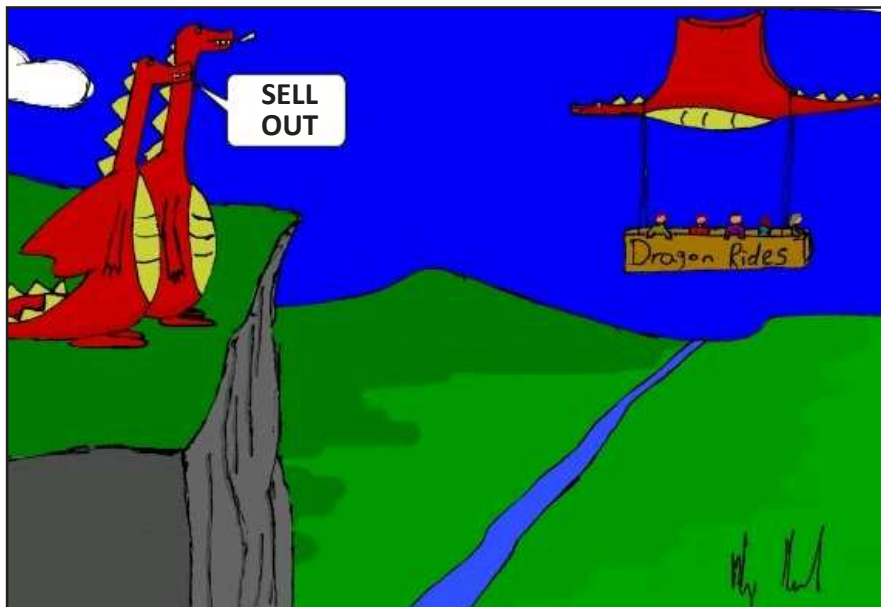
Pen. To. Paper. Good! Now move it. God my handwriting is good.

A title. I have a title on the page. I have outlined the subject I am going to learn. I'm pretty much half way there! This needs a careful choice of highlighter. The orange is too obvious, the blue acceptable but a little too subdued. The pink - well, this just isn't a pink subject. I replace my highlighters in the correct order in my smart stationary holder. There's nothing for it, I'm going to have to go and buy some more.

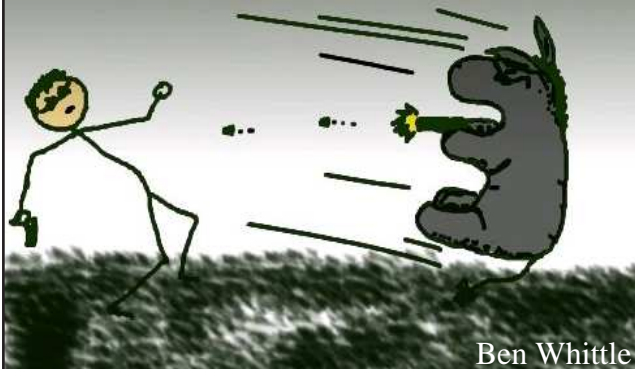
Maybe I can get some handy revision cards at the same time? They will definitely help me pass.

THE MH GUIDE TO PLAGIARISM

In formal examinations and all assessed work prescribed in degree, diploma and certificate regulations, candidates should take care to acknowledge the work and opinions of others and avoid any appearance of representing them as their own. Unacknowledged quotation or close paraphrasing of other people's writing, amounting to the presentation of other persons' thoughts or writings as one's own, is plagiarism and will be penalised.



With his gloomy outlook and acting skills at least equal to Keanu Reeves', Eeyore was initially considered for a major role in The Matrix



Ben Whittle

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MOSTLYHARMLESS NEEDS YOU



When the going gets weird, the weird start recruiting. Greeted by blank faces and offerings of strange, tasteless fruit, the mad men meander onwards blindly towards the coming Armageddon and their own inevitable destruction.

Alas, MH's current editors leave for the terrifying bleakness of the outside world in June, so the paper needs a new group of people to take it forward. After exams we'll be holding elections for editorial and design staff to run things next year. Now's a very good time to get involved if you want to play a part in the future.

As ever, if you want to: edit, write, copy edit, design, draw, letterbox or get involved with any aspect of putting together MostlyHarmless, drop us a line.

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LAMONEY'S GUIDE TO CONVERSATION: FLIRTING

MH CONTINUES THE SERIALISATION OF MARTEN LAMONEY'S INVALUABLE TEXTBOOK

Conversations are of types both many and varied. For this reason they are given special names which reflect the nature and purpose of the conversation. This is so that one does not confuse a "chat" with an "interrogation," or an "interview" with "elocution lesson".

“If one party thinks that they are having a conference, but the other thinks that it is "flirting", disconcertion is liable to follow on both sides”

When the mutual purpose of both parties in a conversation is to entice the other to have a sexual intercourse, the conversation is called "flirting." Notice that this must be the purpose of both parties; if one party thinks that they are having a conference, but the other thinks that it is "flirting", disconcertion is liable to follow on both sides. Consider the following dialogue between The Buzz-talking Businessman and the Punning East-End Strumpet.

The BTB: "I think that we should cut our losses. The Nasdaq has been doing somersaults like an acrobat on crack; the Dow Jones had gone

Cuckoo-loco-crazy, and don't get me started on the FTSE..."

The PEAS: "Nuffink wrong with a bit of Footsie, eh, Guvnah!?"

The BTB: "Brr...It's awfully chilly in here"

Akbar: "Yes, it's the ventilations system; they're remarkably efficient."

When flirting, bearing in mind what we have already established to be the purpose of this type of conversation, it is advisable to give an indication as to how good a sexual experience the other would have if they decided to have sex with the party. However, it is inadvisable to go about this in straightforward way. For instance it is not a good idea to say "I'm very good at having sex, you know." Even more subtle statements such as "I've got unusually large genitalia" are to be deployed with caution.

All people are insecure about themselves in some way: Attractive thick people are insecure about their intelligence; Intelligent ugly people about their physical appearance; those who are somewhere between these two extremes have insecurities proportional to their respective physical and intellectual defects. When you ask someone what it is they like about their sexual-companion, they respond "he makes me feel special" or "he makes me

“Even more subtle statements such as ‘I've got unusually large genitalia’ are to be deployed with caution.”

lose myself" or "When I'm with her I don't want to die." What this means is that the person is able to placate the other's insecurities and thus momentarily make their life less miserable.

Flirting is parasitic upon insecurities; this is why before

embarking upon a flirt it is smart to stand still in the darkened corner of a room and observe the intended for a



few moments, to take an inventory of pulchritude, nervous tics, tendencies to look at the mirror behind the bar or superfluously flick a strand of hair. Sometimes a chat-up line helps to break the ice; the following variations on old classics will be appreciated:

"Do you believe in love at first sight or am I going to have to stalk you obsessively until you feel so worn-down and beleaguered that you eventually acquiesce to the inevitability of my going to bed with you?"

"You must be an angel because you have wings and are hovering a foot above the ground, radiating an ethereal luminescence that is slowly blinding me"

"Last time I saw legs like that it was on my dining table at home when I was eating dinner. You've got half as many legs, but you're almost twice as beautiful."

"Is it hot in here or am I ill?"

The intended will laugh uproariously for approximately three seconds. This will allow you a short period in which to think of something to say. An old favourite is "What is your name?" This is an efficient way of establishing intimacy. Knowing somebody's name means owning a timeshare on their soul.



IF YOU SUSPECT IT, REPORT IT.

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE
TAKE PHOTOS EVERY DAY.
WHAT IF ONE OF THEM
SEEMS ODD?

TERRORISTS DON'T TAKE PHOTOS
FOR FUN. ONE OF THEM MIGHT
BLOW UP YOUR CATHEDRAL.
TAKE NO CHANCES, YOU ONLY
LIVE ONCE.



THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE
TAKE PHOTOS EVERY DAY.
WHAT IF ONE OF THEM
SEEMS ODD?

Terrorists use surveillance to help plan attacks,
taking photos and making notes about security
measures like the location of CCTV cameras.
If you see someone doing that, we need to know.
Let experienced officers decide what action to take.

TERRORISM. IF YOU SUSPECT IT, REPORT IT.
CALL 0800 789 321 CONFIDENTIAL ANTI-TERRORIST HOTLINE



**DURHAM IS 96% WHITE. IF YOU SPOT AN "ODD"
PERSON TAKING PHOTOS, CALL THE POLICE.
IT'S NOT RACIST TO BE SAFE.**

DSU DURHAM
STUDENTS' UNION

Durham
University

Durham University has launched an Anti-Terror campaign. Following the success of the Metropolitan Police's "If you suspect it, report it" posters (see inset), Durham's own campaign features hard-hitting facts about the activities of potential terror cells in

the city. In association with the DSU and the University, MH has spearheaded Durham's own poster-campaign. You can print your own copy of the poster from www.mostly-harmless.org.uk The University is encouraging as many

students as possible to get involved with the campaign. So, spare a few printer credits for the cause, and join us in pursuit of the vigilante justice which keeps our society safe from the oddities in our midst.

futureperfect*

8 June 2008, 1pm, The Racecourse, Durham

www.futureperfectfestival.co.uk

PENDULUM DJ SET
LAYO AND BUSHWACKA!
BLOG PARTY DJ SET, MC VERSE
ZERO7 DJ SET, JUNIOR JACK VS. SANDY RIVERA
CASPA AND RUSKO, GILLES PETERSON
HOWIE B, MR SCRUFF, HYPE, SHY FX
SUBOTICA SHED SESSIONS WITH ORIS JAY AKA DAROWAN
BILL BRYSON, A BIT CRACK STORYTELLERS
MARK JONES (LIVE FROM ZURICH), COBBLESTONE JAZZ
LEE WYATT, MELODICA, MELODY AND ME, CAYNARA
CHEAP ANTIQUES, GBD AND THE AIDEN'S THREE
DREAMSTATE CIRCUS, STREET PERFORMERS, DR. J. MC-SP
THE TWISTED SOUND SYSTEM, THOMAS BRISTOW
MR REZISTOR, AXA SOUND SYSTEM, NATIONAL YOUTH ELECTRIC ORCHESTRA
AND MANY MORE TO BE CONFIRMED...

This plan should give you an idea of what we are trying to do with the site. We are human - there are bound to be some changes along the way - but this should give you an indication. If you have something that FuturePerfect simply cannot be without please email: theideasfactory@futureperfectfestival.co.uk

futureperfect

8th June - Durham City Centre

