

# Kredstudent



The weekly newspaper of UKC's Students' Union

Tuesday 12th October 1993

No. 207

## Central Union Building - A Further Hitch

by Philip Parvin

Initial excitement over the news that Kent University was to receive a self-contained Union building was perhaps premature and largely in vain. In yet another twist in this seemingly never ending saga, it appears that the proposals laid down by the University and the Working Party set up to investigate the feasibility and potential of such a project were not as concrete as students and Kred first hoped.

UKC Students' Union has, since the late sixties, campaigned for a building external to the colleges which would provide a place for students to relax and which would incorporate areas which could be used for Ents. and Union business. Existing facilities are recognised as being insufficient for Union needs and as far as Ents. are concerned, the Union's selection of acts is constrained by the practical limitations of the collegiate system. This was especially noticeable in the Trinity term of last year, whereby only nine Ents. were booked on campus due to a noise ban in all four colleges throughout the exam period.

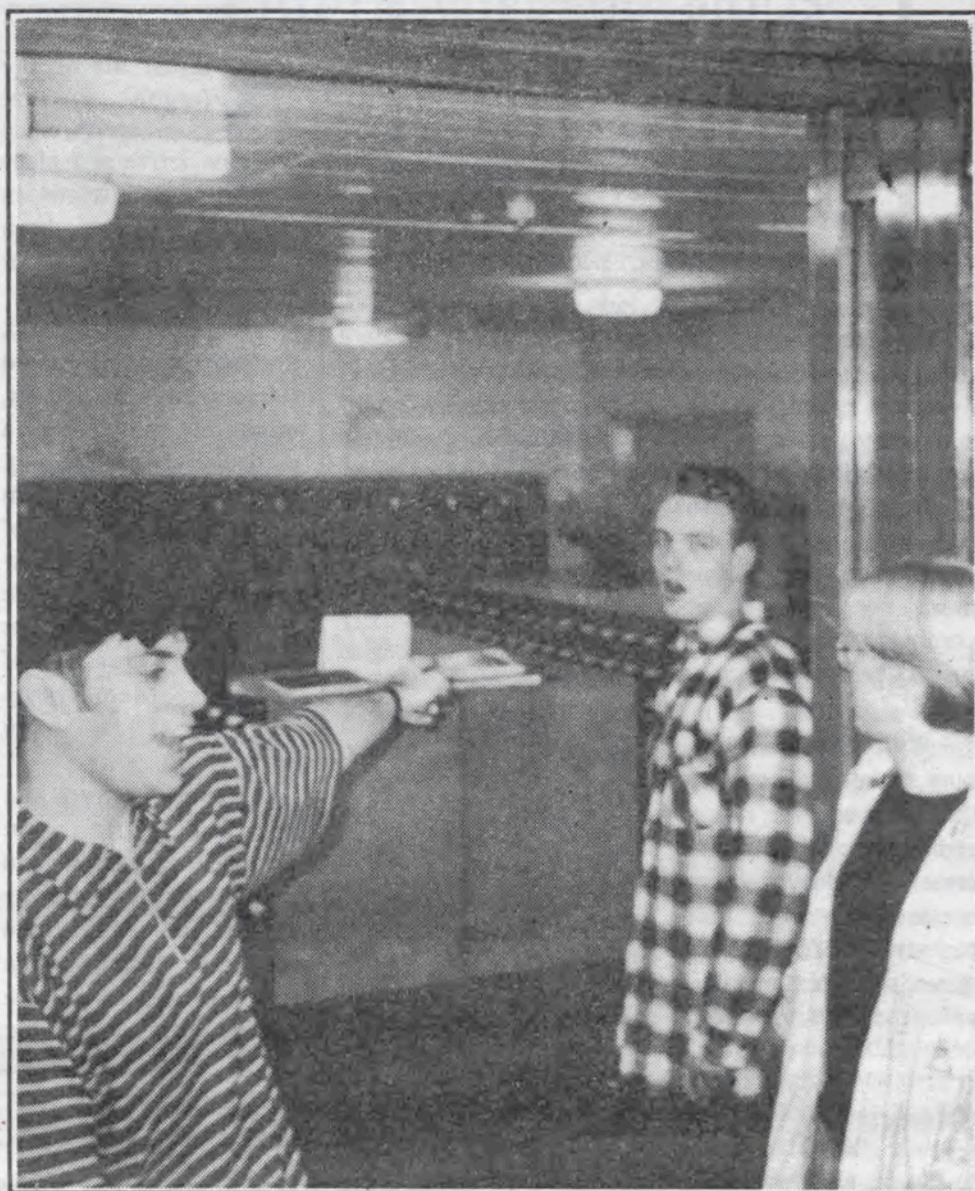
It would appear, however, that although firm pro-

posals have been delayed, there is cause for optimism within the Union. The need for active campaigning no longer exists, as the University [following the recommendation of the idea by the Working Party] has agreed in principle that the University is in need of a Union building. Following this agreement early last year, the University pledged £25,000 to be spent on a feasibility study of the project, which would investigate further the potential of such a large and expensive project as the one put forward by the Union. The building was to be named the University Centre in order that potential financiers would consider it a more viable investment and funding was to be shared by the Union and the University itself with the aid of a loan of up to 2m. which would be payable over twenty-five years.

The main stumbling block was to be encountered later in the year, however, following Government proposals to make the National Union of Students subject to voluntary membership. The resulting confusion following the proposed shake-up of the internal structure

of the Union meant that there was uncertainty as to exactly what the Union would be entitled to expect funding for and what was considered 'ultra-vires' [that is, external to its stated responsibilities]. There were fears that there would be complications in the actual design of the building because of confusion as to what the Union is and is not allowed to do under the new laws.

There is still a great deal that is unclear about the Government proposals and the effects that they will have on the long and short term activities of the N.U.S. on a nationwide level. The best that students of Kent can expect in the near future is the situation we have now. The University has stood by its acknowledgement of the need for a building external to the college system which would be geared solely towards the interests of the students who are under-represented by the practical limitations of college life, such as Ent., But it will be at the next meeting of the Working Party in November that it will become clear as to exactly how close UKC is to obtaining this vital addition to the campus.



A group of students' initial concern at the disappearance of the vending and social area

## Basement Removal

by Andy Burgess

Tired, worked-stressed students in the Templeman Library were shocked to discover that the social area in the basement of the library had been converted into a catalogue hall. What was once a vibrant and popular area to relax, socialise, and to have a cup of tea after having looked at a textbook for four hours, had disappeared. The fate of the library's social area was a long-running issue last year and opinions on the importance of "social space" for the library vary considerably.

Kred spoke to Ian Dickie, President of the S.U., and asked what the Union thought about the change. He was convinced that the basement area was a "vital facility" where students - especially those who travel some distance to work all day in the library - could take a break from study. He told us that the Head Librarian had been given "full control over the allocation of space in the library", and

that it was decided that the "social space" in the basement should go. Sure enough, over the summer the basement was fully converted into a catalogue hall. Whilst Ian Dickie recognised the problem of the severe shortage of space and resources available to the library, he was unhappy with the library's decision. The crux of the library's argument seems to be that the JCRs provide the "social space" for the students, but the Union did not "see eye to eye" on the matter, and protested.

The Union's protest led to the University allocating "social space" in what was the Gulbenkian Robe Store, which is a short distance from the library. This new "space" is the same size as the old basement area, but alas with the increase in the number of students - is no larger.

The University has assured the Union "that there will be covered access to the new social area".

It is now generally ac-

cepted that the library will eventually need to be expanded to cope with the increase in students, but as yet there doesn't seem to be much word on that.

As for the new social area, it is in the hands of Residential Services. Kred spoke to Margaret Smyth from the library staff and she said she hoped it would be ready by the end of October. All the old vending machines will be installed, plus a new sandwich machine. She told us that most of her colleagues in the library saw the need for "adequate social areas" and supported the students, but that space was at a premium.

As for the long term plans for the library, they hope to expand the library maybe towards the Registry. There is also talk of a possible extension of the Gulbenkian Theatre café towards the library. This expansion will provide "adequate social space". However, plans are only at a consultative stage and nothing is finalised.

## U.F.O. Sightings in Canterbury

by Martin Coward

The last two weeks' issues of Adscene (East Kent free Newspaper) carried front page reports, and detailed further eyewitness accounts of the purported sighting of UFO activity. This occurred in the Canterbury area between the middle and end of September. UFO sightings have been reported above the Cathedral and further out, along Sturry Road towards the A2/M2. Since Adscene reporter, Carol Davies published the

report (under a pseudonym) of her experience, details of similar sightings, reported to Adscene, have grown, currently standing at 22. One such sighting, detailed in Adscene, came from Dr. Althea Pearson who is a chartered psychologist (not a psychology lecturer as reported by Adscene) involved in counselling at UKC.

Although Kredstudent was unable to talk to Dr. Pearson about her sighting, we spoke to Mervyn Newell, co-

ordinator of the East Kent UFO Research Unit, concerning the general phenomena of UFO's.

Mr. Newell has been interested in UFO's for 35 years now, although the unit, a group of enthusiastic individuals, has only been in operation for 14 months. Mr. Newell's first reaction to UFO's, at the age of 12, was one of disbelief, yet now he is certain, that "at

Contd. Column 1  
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the highest levels UFO's are taken very seriously". Indeed, it is significant in his eyes, that most UFO's are spotted by trained observers - definitely not crank material - who are afraid to come forward in case of ridicule. "Ridicule is the authorities best defence", according to Mr. Newell. "It makes the reporter look a fool."

With regard to Canterbury, the research indicates that it has a lower rate of sightings compared to other areas, with many sightings occurring in areas of military activity. Mr. Newell argues that this implies either advanced military research, or that UFO's are particu-

larly attracted to such environments. The Canterbury sighting is especially interesting in that it is a "multi-witness sighting with the number of witnesses growing each day."

No students have come forward so far as witnesses, probably due to the activity occurring before the beginning of term. It appears however, that many witnesses are scared of ridicule and so many sightings may have gone unreported. It should be stressed that the phenomena is being treated seriously, and that, in the last few weeks, Canterbury has certainly been the host to a large amount of unexplained flying objects.

# Voluntary Membership - Everything you ever wanted to know ...

( but were afraid to ask)

by Ian Dickie

**A**midst all of the jargon that confronts you when you first arrive at a place like this, two words in particular will have been rammed down your throat at every opportunity.

Voluntary Membership, the government's proposed reform of Students Unions, might not sound like a particularly worrying thing. On the contrary, the term seems to imply some sort of new choice. A laudable new opportunity, the stuff of the Citizen's Charter you might think. The reality of Voluntary Membership however is far from laudable.

At present, when you join the University you automatically become a member of the Students Union, and therefore entitled to all the benefits and services which the union provides. This

membership is entirely free, and students are free to use the Students Union or ignore it as they choose.

Under the new government proposals, these services would be divided into "core" activities, ie those which could continue with public funding; and "non-core" activities which the union could only provide on an opt-in basis and which you would have to pay for out of your own pocket.

The current definition of "core" services is rather narrow to say the least, including only internal representation at a University level, basic welfare advice and sport. If the proposals become law we stand to lose all the union clubs and societies, all union entertainments, most union portfolios, *Kred Student*, and U.K.C. Radio.

We would also lose our

membership of N.U.S. and with it our national voice. Voluntary Membership would prevent us from campaigning on the most critical issues affecting students throughout the country. Issues such as student hardship, top-up tuition fees and the possible introduction of a graduate tax, are all directly relevant to students as the consumers of higher education, yet we could lose the right to influence these decisions.

What can we do?

The Students Union will be campaigning against the government's proposals, as we believe that all our services should be considered "core" and available to all, regardless of ability to pay.

We have already co-written a response with the University to the Department for Education as part of an on-going

consultation process.

Now the campaign is focused on lobbying M.P.'s to make them aware of the specific problems and anomalies which will result from the reforms. You can do your bit to save your union, by simply writing a brief letter to your M.P., outlining a specific concern. If for example you're enthusiastic about the theatre, you could ask why tennis is considered worthy of public funding when the Drama Society is not. It won't take long, and if enough people write letters it will make a difference.

Finally, look out for the stalls in colleges and at Freshers Fair, and take part in the campaign week later in the term.

Remember, it's YOUR union, and it's worth fighting for.

## News In Brief

A fire alarm at Keynes in the early hours of Wednesday morning much displeased residents.

The university late night mini-bus service, formerly giving priority to women, is now available to women alone. It is predicted that this will provide significant problems for male students living outside the area.

There are rumours that the government are proposing to cease the funding of university activities that are not considered to be core to university life. These seem quite likely to include Ents and social activities.

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**Kred encourages submissions from all students, newly enrolled or otherwise.**

**Our meetings take place in Keynes JCR3 each Monday at 6pm.**

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# Education Cuts

by J. Cruickshank

Despite the fashionable free-market and individualist rhetoric, the main changes in the distribution of wealth were due to the Tories making changes in direct taxation, resulting in the richest getting richer and the poorest getting poorer. Of course, Tory economic dogma believed that the poor were to blame for their lot. However, when this attempt at blaming the victim was put to the test, it disproved the Tories ideological conviction that they had uncovered "The Laws that Govern the Economy". Sir Keith Joseph made the [then] Social Science Research Council spend public money on assessing the view that the poor remained poor, because there was an inter-generational culture of deprivation - i.e. inadequate individuals were to blame, they had, in effect, an attitude problem. The SSRC findings though disproved this, and found that people born into poverty fell into it

- the cause of poverty was thus, contingent circumstances rooted in the structure of the economy and not, due of necessity, because of inadequate individuals. The balanced and non-dogmatic reaction of Sir Keith Joseph, was to cut SSRC funding and announce that the social sciences were not scientific, which is easy to do if you have an omnipotent purchase upon reality after uncovering some Economic Laws. And so it came to pass that the SSRC became the Economic and Social Research Council, with economics sagaciously furnishing the laws of socio-economic reality.

Anyone wishing to become a social science postgraduate will have to apply to the ESRC if he/she needs a grant. The Government recently increased funds for the ESRC by 20% and although in relative terms this might sound a lot, the actual number of awards are so low that in real terms, it is virtually

useless. Even if you get a first, there will be very stiff competition to get an ESRC grant. For a start, there are more social science post-graduate [research and taught] courses available than grants, let alone actual students.

Meanwhile, students, like others, are suffering from cuts in public spending, as a direct result of Tory economic mismanagement - examples including a library in need of many more books and a grant, which in real terms, has plunged in value. Of course, there are always student loans, but with high graduate unemployment and debt, would it be wise to get further into debt - especially when a student loan is not even sufficient to live on, for those in real need. Once, a student at UKC wrote to the student paper saying that the SU was unnecessary because students were a privileged group. The question begged - but unanswered by him - was, what

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do you mean by privileged? If he meant that we will enter graduate jobs upon graduation, and so have better jobs than non-graduates, then all he has given us is a logically fallacious tautology [viz. graduates are privileged because they are graduates] and this sidesteps the key issue of student hardship, barring access to able but poorer students. Alternatively, privilege could be defined as well-off students, with no money worries, in which case we get an attempt at a self-fulfilling prophecy [as well as another tautology] i.e. students are privileged because they have no money worries and because of the lack of said worries, they are privileged - so who needs to fight for students' rights?..

Now we have to face [increased] V.A.T. charges on books, papers and domestic fuel. The Government wishes to put into effect indirect taxes, to tax the

consumer and leave direct taxation alone - so no more regressive taxation changes, at least, not yet anyway. All increasing indirect taxation will do is raise the cost of living, whilst maintaining firms' profits and raising Government income to pay off their massive PSBR which was created by their incompetence: we pay for their mistakes - hardly a line in keeping with the espoused belief in the responsible individual who does not rely on others to compensate for his/her own mistakes.

It seems as if the Tories are trying to replicate the cause of relative structural decline in the British economy, namely underinvestment. Instead Britain is trying to sweat labour rather than have investment and wage-sustained demand. Despite the failure of monetarism, the Tories still believe that inflation per se is a cause of

economic problems; whereas hyper-inflation is caused by underlying problems and low inflation is a normal feature of capitalist economies. So, the Tories even manage to contradict the most important economic criterion of theirs and seek to raise the cost of living whilst keeping wages down - surely they should realise that other income policies resulted in an inflationary surge when the policy terminated? Perhaps they hope that the labour movement has been weakened so much that wage claims will rely on employers' not employees' needs - in which case we can look forward to chronic low-demand and subsequent low profits and low investment. In a climate in which the Government knows the price of everything [including insalubrious donations], but knows the value of nothing, how do you think funding for universities will fare?



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## No Room at the Inn

The University has come under fire for its student accommodation policy following beginning of term chaos at the Accommodation Office in Park Wood.

Many students - the majority final year students returning from a year abroad - went to their first lectures not having found permanent accommodation for the new academic year. Others complained that they had been obliged to accept squalid lodgings, or take somewhere that provided transport difficulties.

At the centre of the controversy is the University's Accommodation Officer, Mr J McDonald. He has chosen this year, when increased student numbers have put more pressure than ever before upon campus accommodation places, to introduce a policy whereby, to avoid complaints, first year students are only offered single rooms in college:

"Every year we get so

many problems from first year students who don't get on with the person they're sharing with", say the Accommodation Office.

The main victims of this innovation are returning fourth year students, who in previous years have always been offered a single room in either college or Park Wood:

"How can you expect someone to find a place to stay when they are out of the country?", said one.

"Things have been made even worse by the lack of communication between the University and us."

The University was considering placing some fourth year students in the Abbot's Barton Hotel, New Dover Road, yet no attempt was made to follow it up.

In the event, rooms at the hotel were made available for the Michaelmas term, though one student at least was put off by the weekly rent: £63! And once more many of the rooms on offer were dou-

bles. Even 7 days before the start of term the University were making no attempt to contact students, prevaricating to those who contacted them and refusing to guarantee anything concrete: in the end it seems that those people who complained the loudest got the best deal.

One student who returned from a compulsory year in France just before the start of term said:

"I feel really let down by the University. The Accommodation Office showed no sympathy and made promises over the phone that they had no intention of keeping. Although I had sent the right form in on time they claimed that they had no details of my situation. The University should not encourage students to take years abroad if it can't look after them properly."

*These are the sentiments of a returning 4th yr student who prefers to remain anonymous.*



# "So there I was . . ."

It's Freshers' Week again - uh-oh! - Nat's locked in a convent

So there I was, greasy fry up in my hands, a traffic safety information film on the television and outside it was still raining. It was somewhere around 2am and things were just not going well at all. By all accounts and past case histories, I should have either been dead on the floor, mumbling in a language I'd never been instructed in, or just about to receive the Humanitarian of the Year award from Mother Theresa. And what had occurred that had placed me in the lofty position of Man's Best Friend? I had saved a life, along with my friend Al, and we were surely about to be rewarded for our efforts. It was, after all, Freshers' Week.

Students, as a rule, do not really need an excuse to lose all control and act like complete gibberish, but Freshers' Week is a notable exception. The thing I've discovered is that 'Fresh-

ers' Week' is, in fact, a lie. It should be (more accurately) retitled 'Are you lost? I'll show you how to get back to your room' Week. All the fun of these occasions belongs exclusively to 2nd/3rd/4th years. Oh yes, freshers reading this will say 'well I'm going to enjoy myself' and of course you will, but to nowhere near the same extent as the rest of us. There is huge fun to be had misdirecting people to their 'vital' introductory classes, spreading scare stories of how your first year is the hardest you'll ever face and so on. Cruel, allegedly, but at least you get to return the 'favour' in the coming years.

On that first, hazy, hypertense night in your college (trust me, only the brave venture to a bar in another college, never in groups of less than 12 of your brand new 'best friends' (who you'll want to painfully disembowel in a few weeks, but you love them for now) and, consid-

ering that all the fun is happening on campus (and, in a never-to-be-repeated offer, it's all free) only the anti-social or terminally stupid go into town. The freshers are on the receiving end from the minute they tentatively walk into the bar and excitedly order a drink using classic statements like, 'I can get completely ratarsed and I only live 90 seconds away!' Oh, the follies of youth - you'd be surprised just how true 'Student Grant' is.

So, you're looking for someone you fancy who you'd like to . . . um . . . get to know better, shall we say, and what to do? Most obvious, yet prizewinning, move is to talk to them. A-levels, rejections from other colleges, lovers from home whose name you'll have forgotten by Friday, would you like another drink? - all of these are not just accepted, they are expected. It's scary how true that 'they're as lost as you are' cliché really is. And this brings me back to

my fry-up. Or is that 'brings back my fry-up?' Pass.

This shameful incident was not an anecdote from my Freshers' Week. Nor last year. No. Try your 'last week' button. Desperate for a double dose of fresher - fun, a small group of us had blagged our way into Christ Church College, as their Freshers' Week runs exactly a week prior to ours. Method: go up to door, looking offensively stupid (security people, even though they know they're not, love to feel intellectually superior at times. By allowing them to believe this lie, you will have a much easier time getting whatever it is they're being paid to prevent you from). "All are freshers?" "Yes." "Have you got your yellow tickets?" (Look scared.) "Um . . . no." "Ok, well, they're in your starter pack - ordinarily we wouldn't do this, but we'll let you in. Just remember them next time." "Oh, ok. Um . . . sorry." That's all. The words

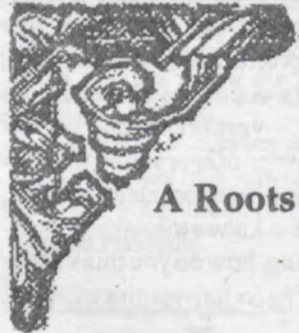
'candy' and 'baby' come to mind.

So, an evening of mingling awaited us, and by the time the mingling ended and the lights were going on, it was looking peachy. Me, Al, 2 girls and their hammered housemate. We leave. The minute she leaves the college walls, she drops down. Nearly dead. We drag her, she throws up on us. We carry her. We give up and call a cab. We pay for the cab. Meanwhile, the girls are being rubbish. We're saving their friend who can only chunder on our freshly laundered clotter and scream semi-conscious abuse at us. And it was raining.

Where was it written that helping this total stranger was required? Exactly. We were being Decent Citizens, Bloody Good Samaritans, all of that. We'd gotten her home (which, without being rude, they simply could not have done. We were being practical, they thought they were

Jesus or something, as all they could do was scream "walk!" at the girls) and home was Hell.

One of them tries to impress us with talk of her boyfriend's joyriding addiction (alert! she said 'boyfriend!' run away!) - how pathetic is that? Is nicking someone else's car and mowing down innocent pedestrians supposed to make me feel privileged to be in her company? Please . . . Meanwhile, the other girl, who I'd had my eye on, rapidly began to change as I sobered up, so that by the time I'd decided it was time to leave as we may as well have been locked in a convent, she looked disarmingly like the Swamp Thing. And it was still bastard raining as we walked the half hour home. If this is what you get for a bit of decency and kindness, remind me to be a selfish git next time around - they have all the fun. Probably.



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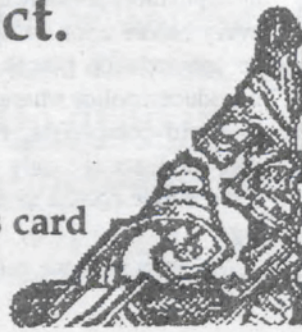
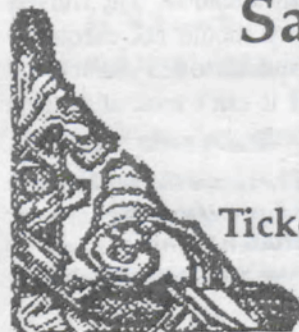
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# Kents Review

Your weekly pullout guide to the arts



## The year of Harvey

Nat and Matt, UKC's resident Siskel & Ebert, enter their third year of witty insight by casting their astute gaze over the best and worst films of the last three months ...

**I**t's been a most unprecedented summer season, in this year when Harvey Keitel has appeared in no less than three pre-summer pics: Lloyd Bridges has proved that the Six Million Dollar Man was possessed of the bionic equivalent of minor plastic surgery in *Hot Shots!* Part Deux, a mildly amusing sequel to an equally bland dumb-joke-fest, with only an Iraqi-killed-by-flying-chicken gag to really liven things up; Sly Stallone took more money than Arnie because his blockbuster was better than the Steroidally Modified One's wank-fantasy - even without a plot or the remotest sense of either logic or timing; Sharon Stone, with *Sliver*, showed that despite the hype surrounding her *Basic Instinct* performance, she can't guarantee a success - and, to spare you the experience of one of the worst movies of the year so far, Tom Berenger did it; and on our side of the pond, Kenny and Em, whom Hollywood like to think of as pseudo Royalty, yo-ho-hoed their way through a simply soopah! performance of Billy's *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is all very jolly and will doubtless thrill all but the ultracynical, but *Keanu Reeves*? Still to come are more late-summer offerings: *Dragon - The Bruce Lee Story*, a tremendous biopic with enough chop-socky and good humour to provide

even Joe Sixpack with some drama on a Friday night; *The Piano*, Jane Campion's affecting and highly atmospheric Cannes Palme D'Or winner (featuring, in the most bizarre piece of casting this year, Harvey Keitel as a half-Maori pervert with chin tattoos and musical inclinations); and *Rising Sun*, a truly terrible adaptation of Michael Crichton's Nippon-assaulting bestseller, which is confusing, pretentious and ultimately dull (featuring, in the least bizarre piece of casting this year, Harvey Keitel as a racist, chain-smoking, swearing sonofabitch bad lieutenant). But here, in slightly more detail than above, are the more notable releases of the summer period:

When the chase slows down, so does *The Fugitive*, Andrew Davis' pacy remake of the more cerebral 60s TV show, in which Harrison Ford is the eponymous quarry of Tommy Lee Jones' Federal Marshal, falsely accused of bludgeoning his spouse into an early grave. The first half of the film is pure pumping, pulsating adrenalin, as Ford escapes from the bus whose sole stop is the county gas chamber, and begins his cross-country flight from justice; things start to decline, however, when the running stops and the hunt for the mysterious one-armed man Ford believes to be guilty heats up, but this doesn't spoil the film. Set pieces abound, naturally

enough, but it is the performances that raise this film above so many of its ilk, with Jones on extra-sparkling form as the remarkably dogged Gerard. Vastly enjoyable, as long as you don't think about it too hard. Harvey Keitel is not in this film.

Another movie which culminates in its protagonist being chased by just about everybody is *The Firm*, based on John Grisham's tightly plotted but hastily written bestseller and starring Tom Cruise as Mitch McDeere, a hot-shot lawyer recruited by a staggeringly wealthy but exceedingly unorthodox law firm from which no one has ever departed. This has quality written all over it, from the superb Memphis locations, to Dave Grusin's atmospheric and stirring jazz soundtrack, with the icing on the cake being Gene Hackman's first post-*Unforgiven* performance as a burnt-out womaniser who takes McDeere under his wing, but at two-and-a-half hours, Sydney Pollack's adaption begins to drag its heels around the half-way point and doesn't pick up the pace until the last ten minutes, at which time everything seems to happen at once before the credits roll. The parts are great, but the sum of *The Firm* is ultimately limp. Harvey Keitel does not appear in this film.

Proving that you can be intelligent and still take \$100 million is Wolfgang

Petersen's superb *In The Line of Fire*, which confirms Clint Eastwood's career comeback from B-movie hell to the top of the A-list. In this racy and almost unbearably tense thriller, our Clint has to save the President from the delirious homicidal tendencies of the ever so slightly unbalanced John Malkovich, who gives the best performance of the film. There is the much ridiculed sequence which shoves Clint into authentic 1963-flavoured JFK footage, but otherwise, this really is riveting stuff. Rene Russo repeats her *Lethal Weapon 3* role and squeezes into some tight but severe dresses while Malkovich easily romps home with the *Expression of the Year* award (just after he has tested his home-made plastic gun). A solid film, aided all the more by playing on Clint's age rather than ignoring it, and the addition of an unsettling edge in that you're never really sure who will triumph. A great last line (the best since *Silence of the Lambs*?) to 'boot'. Harvey Keitel is not in this film.

Of the two most anticipated films of the summer, *Jurassic Park* and *Last Action Hero*, the latter movie comes off drastically worse than the former, and surely represents the final nail in the coffin of big-budget action packages dependent on star power (in this case, that of Arnold Schwarzenegger) and little

else. This woeful excuse for entertainment spins the practically unintelligible yarn of Danny Madigan, a plucky teenager who'd rather watch movies than go to school, who is given a magic cinema ticket which zaps him into the world of his favourite screen hero, Jack Slater, played by Arnie. Quite why he didn't transport himself into *Last Tango in Paris* or *Basic Instinct* is quite beyond me, as was this film, a noisy, illogical, badly paced and ultimately repulsive abomination which presents a wealth of interesting ideas and then buries them under about three times as many over-ambitious ones. The middle section, which takes place within the Jack Slater movie, is mildly entertaining; the "climax", in which "Slater's" characters spill out into the real New York City, is a miserable cinematic experience. Utter gobshite. Even Harvey stayed away from this one.

And finally to Spielberg's hotly awaited *Jurassic Park*. Place tongue in cheek and call it "*Jaws With Feet*", "*Close Encounters of the Prehistoric Kind*" or whatever else you like, but there can be no denying that this is a gripping piece of techno-horror from the most accomplished director at work within the genre. Its faults are thankfully inconsequential, from the overly episodic nature of the screenplay and the inconsistencies in the plot to tech-

nical matters such as the unclear nature of much of the movie's dialogue and the highly annoying performance of one of the leads, child actor Joseph Mazello. None of these factors affect the sheer spectacle of the movie, the plot of which should be familiar by now whether you have seen the film or not; the dinosaurs absolutely command attention, and are simply the first flawless special effects ever created, while the cast (in particular Richard Attenborough as John Hammond, the entrepreneur behind the park) set about the business of looking terrified with an impressive degree of realism, while also carrying with them none of the overblown sense of star power which surrounds both *The Firm* and *Last Action Hero*. The term

"rollercoaster ride" is now something of a cliché, but here it should be used without reservation; from the moment that the long-winded but necessary preamble is dispensed with and the T-rex roars onto the screen, causing the audience to leap from their seats due to a combination of exquisite shock and the fact that they've cacked in their pants, going to the cinema can never be the same again.

Harvey Keitel is nowhere to be found in *Jurassic Park*, but he can be seen this autumn in *Rising Sun*, *The Piano* and *The Young Americans*. Some dogs have their day, indeed.

### Union Films

8th Oct	Falling Down
10th & 11th Oct	Terminator 2
15th Oct	Bodyguard
17th & 18th Oct	Dracula
22nd Oct	A River Runs Through It
24th & 25th Oct	Peter's Friends
29th Oct	Sister Act
31st Oct and 1st Nov	Housesitter
5th Nov	Passenger 57
7th & 8th Nov	Single White Female
12th Nov	Bambi
14th & 15th Nov	Unlawful Entry
19th Nov	Forever Young
21st & 22nd Nov	Chaplin
26th Nov	Accidental Hero
28th & 29th Nov	Singles
3rd Dec	Groundhog Day
5th & 6th Dec	Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
10th Dec	Sommersby
12th & 13th Dec	A Few Good Men

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## Best Books : " Our Ancestors " by Italo Calvino

by Rob Hamilton -Jones

The vastness of Italo Calvino's creative imagination had made him Europe's most accomplished contemporary writer by the time of his death in 1985. "Our Ancestors", a collection of three short novels, is an example of the lighter, more accessible, side of his work; yet, at the same time, it includes traces of many of his most pronounced traces and themes.

The three tales are linked by their parallel titles, each of which seems like an impossible starting point for a story: "The Cloven Viscount" is torn in half by a Turkish cannonball; "The Baron in the Trees" ascends into the branches at the age of 12 and lives the rest of his life there; and "The Non-Existent Knight" is an empty suit of armour.

Archibald Colquhoun's translations from the origi-

nal Italian retain much of the precision, economy and, above all, harmonious sentence structure, that makes Calvino's written style at once both distinctive and inscrutable. The [still entire] Viscount prepares himself for the fateful battle: 'which began punctually at ten the next morning. From high on his saddle Lieutenant Medardo gazed over the broad array of Christians ready for the attack and raised his face to the wind of Bohemia, swirling with chaff like in some dusty barn.'

Note the way Calvino associates the battle between the Crusaders and the Turks with a punctuality that is more appropriate to the way Western society organises itself today. In fact, these three immensely quirky and enjoyable historical tales do have a modern relevance. The fantas-

tic protagonists' unusual situations can be seen as being representative of a more general existential position. For example, "The Baron in the Trees" also tells us something about human isolation: 'He would sit for whole hours watching [the farmers at] work from the trees and asking questions about seeds and manure which it had never occurred to him to do when he was on the ground, prevented then from ever addressing a word to villagers or servants.'

Shyness is something that Calvino suffered from himself as a writer. In these stories he hides behind the historical contexts, his narrators and the element of pure fantasy. Elsewhere, he dabbles with sci-fi and distances himself from the book through highly sophisticated schemes of multi-layered narrative.

But "The Baron In the Trees", the longest of the three, is also an early example of Calvino's ability to develop prodigiously what begins merely as a fanciful idea. In his later 'post-modern' work this allows him to instil the most contemporary intellectual ideas into fiction; here he manages to entertain the reader with the adventures of the arboreal Baron for over 200 pages without ever defying the interior logic of the story: hence, in death the Baron sails away attached to a hot-air balloon 'without ever giving us even the satisfaction of seeing him return to Earth as a corpse.'

"The Non-Existent Knight", Agilulf, is a warrior in the great Charlamagne's army. He feels no emotions but carries out his military duties flawlessly. This creation supplies some humorous

moments: when 'the widow Priscilla' unwittingly attempts to seduce him he enters her bed wearing full armour claiming that 'every night Cleopatra dreamt she had an armed warrior in her bed.'

'Don't you even loosen the sword from its scabbard?' counters Priscilla. 'Amorous passion knows no half-measures' is how Agilulf clinches the exchange. Such a reserved and dry response offered to the ironic accompaniment of a glinting eye is typical of Calvino's clever and in-offensive humour. It is typical of Calvino too that the other female character in the story, a knight called Bradamante, should also openly attempt to seduce our hero. Indeed, it could only happen in Calvino's 'oeuvre' that a beautiful female knight could fall in love with an empty suit of

armour. Calvino's women are nearly always presented as strident, resolute and generally superior to their male counterparts; however, none of them are ever developed enough for us to understand this attitude of Calvino's better. This is because Calvino's characters scarcely ever become anything more than functions of a delightful story. He devotes himself so committedly to our relationship with the world we live in that ultimately his consideration of our relationships with each other lacks psychological insight. A lack of warmth is always evident behind the charm. His fiction itself is like the 'Non-Existent Knight': it can tell us nothing meaningful about ourselves but it is efficient and thorough in completing what it sets out to do, always glittering impressively.

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" Post Historic Monsters "

Carter USM

by Neil Harrison

The two lads and drum machine from South London are back with another collection of three minute tirades on the evils of the world, and although the kids will be chuffed, I can't help feeling a tad disappointed. All the old telltale signs are there - stomping tunes and well-chosen samples, topical lyrics debased by cringeable puns, Jim Bob's awful voice and an endearing piss-head attitude to life - but there is a certain emptiness which makes it a perfect progression from "The Love Album". Maybe I'm expecting too much from them, but the first two albums promised something different in a small-time band with a perverse integrity and a message worth listening to, their personal approach to issues bringing them home even more vividly. I think they've mislaid the plot along the way, like so many before them. Anyway ...

The album is a mixture of the mediocre bog-standard aural assaults that we've come to expect, with a touch of sublime beauty and irrelevant rubbish. There are no real singles here, nothing to match old stadium-rattlers like "Sheriff Fatman" and "Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere", and "Lean On Me ..." is quite a lame offering for a band which has always relied on catchy singles to expand its audience. In fact, there is

little here to win over converts, the whole album merely serving as a gift for existing fans.

Carter have moved away from the sing-along anthems of yesteryear, and today's down-tempo efforts centre around simple ballads, which sometimes work and sometimes crash like Ayrton Senna after eight pints of export. "Suicide Isn't Painless" is a beautifully sincere song of support, whilst "Under the Thumb ..." is a love-song written in the only way that Carter know: 'And if this sentimental silly love song makes you choke, You can block your ears up and stick your fingers down your throat' ... thanks for that lads! Sadly, the vivid tale of inner-city racial violence told in "Being Here" doesn't click with the plodding bass-line and Jim-Bob's monotone, whilst "Spoilsports Personality ..." is awful and goes on for far too long with a weary instrumental play-out. Two all, and the jury are still out.

High points of the album come in the shape of "Travis", the story of a taxi-driver from hell with answers to everything and solutions to nothing, and "Stuff The Jubilee", an irreverential glimpse of royal life pushed along by a driving synth-pop melody. "A Bachelor For Baden Powell" is a heavy dose of vitriol aimed at a child

abuser in uniform - 'I'm only nine years old and the answer's NO!' - which harps back to themes aroused in "After the Watershed" and "Re-educating Rita". "The Music That Nobody Likes" and "Cheer Up..." will be treasured by existing fans, but will sound pedestrian to others. "Lenny and Terence" is the worst crap I've heard for ages (it's even worse live), where Carter discover heavy metal and it just degenerates from there.

Everything's a bit global for me. Jim-Bob is as lyrically cutting as ever, striking evil wrong-doers to the floor, but the bottom line is that two drop-outs from Brixton aren't going to solve the problems of the world, and that they should go back to writing about the grass roots problems of South London that they used to know so well. Name-checking Germany and America doesn't make you a stadium band, but it does alienate you from the very people that need the kind of support mentioned in "Lean On Me ..." That said, the album is excellent in the current musical climate (eight out of ten, no less), but still not yet a full realization of potential. All in all, those who approach this album with preconceptions, whatever they may be, will not be disappointed, but the open-minded will be left wanting just a little bit more.

review

The Levellers - "Levellers"

by Neil Harrison

In the dim and distant future, when we don't have a Tory government and everybody's happy again, The Levellers will be remembered for being the first real anti-establishment band that everybody loved - hell, I saw a kid of eleven wearing one of those shirts last week and he'd probably borrowed it from his dad. They've become the New Age Travelers that nobody would mind having parked in their front garden, and helped to make smelly dogs and considerably more smelly dreadlocks an essential fashion item for the Nineties. And why? An album called "Levelling The Land" must take the brunt of the infinite blame, with a gorgeous blend of folk revivalism and good-time dance-your-debt-away tunes that amount to a glorious celebration of lost English culture and values. To be frank, nobody much cares for politics when they're gigging their little hearts out, and this is why "Levellers" will never recapture former glory.

Yes, the world is unfair, the justice system is chronically flawed, science is unnatural and everybody's

forgotten about Chernobyl, but unless it's got a good beat, few people really bat an unwashed eyelid. The trouble is that the New Model Army have been saying the same things for ten years or more, and Justin Sullivan's poetry is far more eloquent than The Levellers' clumsy tirade. Without the audience-friendly music, the message falls, essentially, on deaf ears. "Levellers" is a move back towards "This Weapon Called The Word", and not one which I would recommend, either as a career move or for anarchistic didacticism as an abstract concept. Discuss.

But, hey, it's not all gloom, doom and depression. We still have "Dirty Davey", which is an essential encore to "The Riverflow". It is always a pleasure to hear whistle and fiddle combine to provide a lilting reel, whilst the story tells a tale of injustice and suicide through punchy verses and an all-too-true lingering refrain. The acoustic "Julie" begins superbly, a plaintive tale of a young woman and a dying world, but ends with a bag-

pipe solo from hell that leaves you fumbling helplessly for the fast forward button. The end of the album is propped up by "Belaruse", the first single from the album. Quite a departure for The Levellers this, beginning innocently enough, but soon developing into the second most surprising adoption of thrash guitars since Terence Trent D'Arby's last single; I wonder if Slayer have a copyright on that riff?

The rest? It's a bit thin on the ground really - only ten tracks to choose from ... who says consumerism isn't dead ... nice one lads. "Broken Circles" has a great fiddle part and "The Player" promises everything to me, but never quite goes anywhere. Apart from that things are bleak. Not awful, just mundane. To be fair, "Levellers" is starting to grow on me after a week in my car stereo, but it will ultimately end up on the 'Not Quite' rack of my record collection. A seven ... my advice, buy "The Love of Hopeless Causes" and catch The Sea in Eliot later this term for live performance.

reviews

by Matt Grainger

Squeeze : Some Fantastic Place

'Squeeze' have made a name for themselves as reliable purveyors of cheerful and vaguely cheesy pop, with bouncy tunes often obscuring the genuinely intelligent lyrics. The last example of this, the much-overlooked "Play" was as fine a concept album as any released over the last few years, but unfortunately, "Some Fantastic Place" falls far short of this standard. It's by no means a bad album, but after the witty excesses of "Play", it seems pedestrian and boring, a situation even the bizarre addition of Mike and the

Mechanics vocalist Paul Carack can't rectify. Still, "Everything In the Word" and "Talk To Him" are almost worthy of being pure vintage Squeeze and almost make up for the rest.



Jools Holland...no longer in Squeeze!

Wild Palms : Soundtrack

A really unusual record, this one, which hopefully sets the tone for the forthcoming TV series: thirteen

sweeping instrumentals by Ryuichi Sakamoto, inexplicably placed alongside five "golden oldies" from the sixties. Quite what Oliver Stone is planning on serving us up with 'Wild Palms' I can't imagine, but if this is anything to go by, it's going to be quite bizarre indeed.

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( This may be the future of the Union Newspaper. Government proposals will ban Students' Unions from spending money on Student Media, Societies and Entertainment, and on attempting to represent to Students anything that does not affect them on Campus. So, even if we were allowed to produce a paper, there wouldn't be anything left we were allowed to tell you in it.)