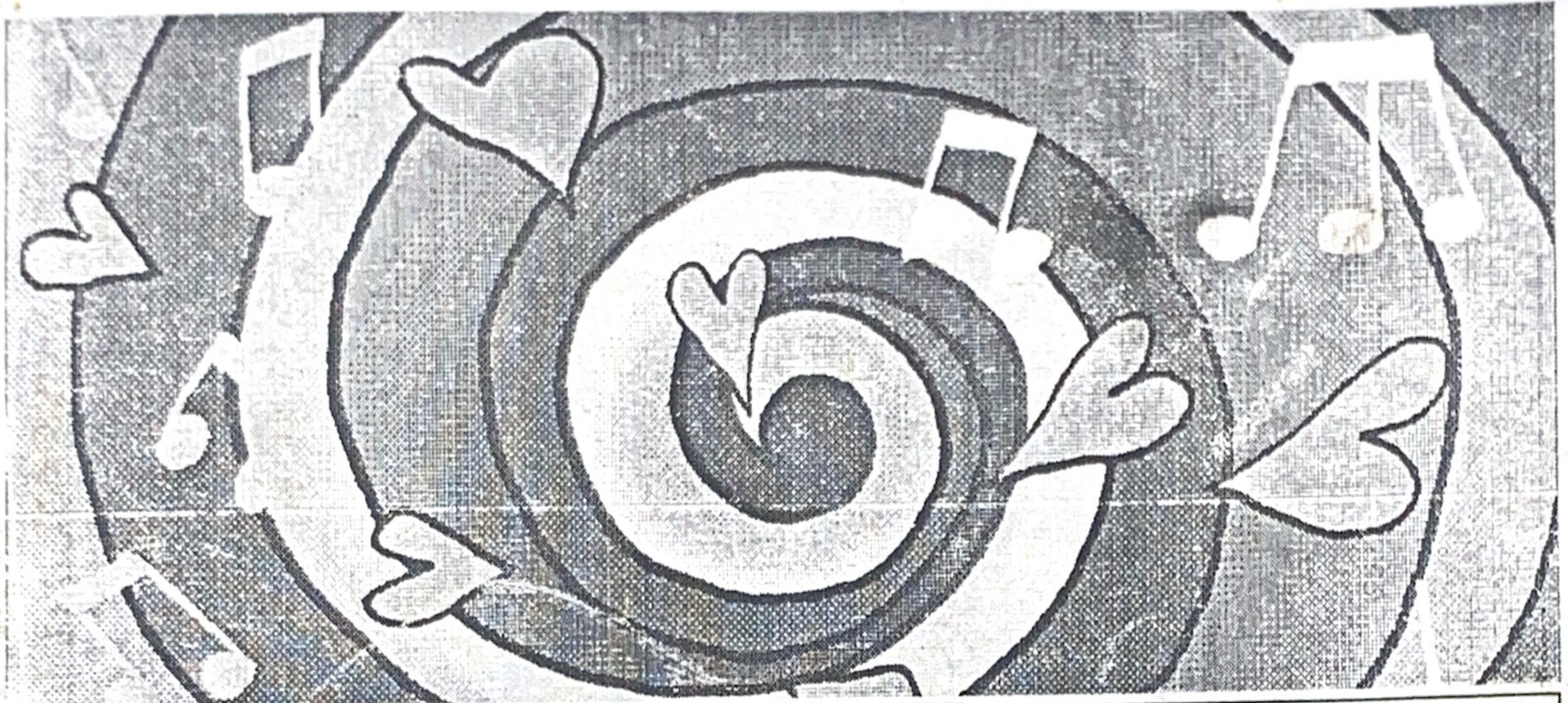


FREE TO FREE PARTY PEOPLE

tVC SOUND SYSTEM



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Crime Bill could fill 60 new jails

AS MANY as 60 new prisons will have to be built to meet the requirements of the Crime (Sentences) Bill, which completed its passage through Parliament before the election thanks to Labour support, according to unpublished Home Office figures obtained by the Observer.

The cost - more than £3 billion for construction and £1bn a year to keep the new jails running - would more than absorb the proceeds of Labour's proposed utilities windfall tax. Instead of spending the money on creating jobs, a new Labour government will find itself committed to straining every fiscal sinew to imprison a greater proportion of its citizens than any developed country except the United States. The figures, supplied in answer to questions put to the Home Office Research and Statistics Department, reveal that the predictions of the effect of the Bill on the prison population made by Michael Howard, the then Home Secretary, had no reliable foundation.

In a White Paper last year, Mr Howard claimed that the Bill - which introduces mandatory minimum sentences for repeat burglars, drug dealers, violent and sexual offenders, and abolishes automatic remission - would lead to a rise of 10,700 inmates by 2011. This rested on three assumptions, which until now have never been tested. The first was that judges would follow the Bill's instructions and cut all sentences by one third to compensate for the end of remission. The second was that harsher penalties would reduce crime by 20 per cent. The third was that judges would not adjust sentences upwards for offenders convicted for the first time, to produce a smoother sentencing curve.

Lord Bingham, the Lord Chief Justice, questioned these assumptions when he spoke against the Bill in the House of Lords earlier this year. The media already castigated judges for passing allegedly lenient sentences, he said. 'It requires little imagination to foresee the outcry there will be when a statute commended to the public as a tough law and order measure, leads to the imposition of sentences one-third shorter than the public and press are accustomed to hear.'

The Home Office figures show that if only a minority of judges fail to cut their sentences, the effects will be dramatic. A memorandum supplied to the Observer states: 'The estimate published by the White Paper assumes that courts will cut their sentences to 66 per cent of current levels... if the courts fail to do so... overall, and across all cases, each percentage point above 66 per cent would require roughly 600 additional prison places.'

An average new prison holds 600 inmates and costs £70-100 million to build. In other words, if the judges fail to cut sentencing at all, this will require 34 new jails on top of the 23 already envisaged by the White Paper, costing an extra £2.5-3.5 billion. Each additional prisoner costs £30,000 a year to feed, clothe and house.

The other White Paper assumptions are equally questionable, the memorandum reveals. There was no research basis at all for the claim that crime would fall by 20 per cent. 'Exactly what the deterrent effect would be is a matter of judgment... Ministers believe the effect will be substantial.' If it is not, this will create another 1,300 prisoners.

Finally, the memorandum shows that the Government's claim that judges will not treat burglars or drug dealers more severely is also mere assertion. Many judges, including Lord Bingham, believe a general rise is inevitable.

These predictions will not be affected by the amendment accepted by the Government 'which allows judges to avoid the mandatory sentences if they are 'unjust in all the circumstances' - the biggest effect on prison population comes from the abolition of remission.

At over 60,000, the prison population is already at an all time high. The police are already housing inmates.

Cost halts move to video police interviews

Animal rights activist given 18 years for firebombings

An animal rights activist was jailed recently for 18 years for a firebomb campaign. It follows the jailing of three editors of an animal rights magazine. Barry Horne, aged 48, was convicted of firebomb attacks against shops in the Isle of Wight in August 1994. No one was injured but it was alleged three million pounds of damage was done. He pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Judge Simon Darwall-Smith told Bristol crown court that Horne had shown no remorse. "This was urban terrorism for a particular cause by which you put communities in terror," said the judge, who accepted that Horne had not intended to injure anyone.

A supporter of Horne said outside the court: "the sentence is more than most child rapists and murderers would receive. It is politically motivated, and shows how much the authorities value property over life."

This follows the jailing of Noel Molland, Sax Wood and Steve Booth, editors of Green Anarchist for conspiring to commit criminal damage through the dissemination of the magazine.

The last Government has blocked the routine video recording of police interviews with suspects because it would cost more than £100 million to set up and run, according to an internal Whitehall memorandum.

However, Home Office minister David Maclean failed to disclose that decision taken four years ago when he "announced" trials were to be held into the scheme as an extra safeguard for suspects after the release of the Bridgewater Three.

The official Home Office circular to chief constables says two-year trials had been held. They were carried out by the West Mercia, West Midlands and Metropolitan police forces.

After evaluation of the trial results, the widespread introduction of video cameras was recommended.

But the Home Office blocked their introduction after estimating it would cost £25 million to set up and £85 million a year to run, with most of the money going on legal aid fees to lawyers viewing the tapes.

"In the current financial climate it would not be financially possible, to move to the video recording of all interviews which are currently audio taped, and chief officers are strongly discouraged from moving too quickly to the wholesale introduction of video recording interviews," chief constables were told.

Ministers decided on cost grounds that video taping of interviews with suspects should be "confined to the most serious cases in which there are specific, justifiable reasons requiring a visual record". The Home Office warned the police that any wider use of video taping "will cause them and all agencies in the criminal justice system to divert resources from other work".

That Home Office circular, issued on February 24, 1993, is still in force.

Alan Travis

Prisons to end body searches for lawyer

Humiliating intimate body searches of professional people - including lawyers and probation officers - who visit prisons are to end, the Prisons Minister, Joyce Quin, announced recently.

The "intrusive and degrading" searches provoked an outcry when they were introduced in December 1996 and caused walkouts by probation officers. There were more than 60 formal complaints about the way they were carried out.

The decision is believed to have come after the new Prisons Minister found there was no evidence that professionals visiting jails had abused their position by smuggling in forbidden items.

Lawyers and probation officers will now face the normal rub down searches and passing through electronic scanners when they enter prisons. Governors are expected to retain the discretion to order full body searches if they have serious grounds for suspicion in exceptional circumstances.

Security checks at the 135 prisons in England and Wales included intimate body examinations, removing socks and shoes, and being sniffed by drug detection dogs.

The measures were introduced and confirmed by the former home secretary, Michael Howard, after the two official Woodcock and Learmont inquiries into prison security after the attempted breakouts at Whitemoor and Parkhurst.

The move outraged lawyers and probation officers who regularly visited prisons and regarded such treatment as a slur on their professional integrity. In one case a prison officer started to search a woman's ileostomy bag. In another, a man was asked to remove his trousers after a medical pin in his leg set off the alarm.

Probation officers and lawyers have faced a long list of body checks every time they went into prison including examination of their ears, mouth and hair if they are visiting a maximum security jail.

Professional visitors are also logged on the prison computer, photographed and a hand impression taken. Women have also faced searches inside their bras and in the waistband of their trousers, as well as having to take off their socks and shoes.

The Prison Service justified the introduction of the checks, saying security was the overriding consideration and that meant searching everybody who entered a prison, from the home secretary downward.

Net 'needs tightening' on criminals

Police are looking at the possibility of new legislation that would allow them to monitor and intercept Internet communications, including e-mails, to combat professional criminals - and terrorists who could use electronic links to attack economic and political targets.

Professional criminals are also realising that they can make more money from software piracy than drug smuggling with less risk, an international conference organised by the National Criminal Intelligence Service has heard. It was suggested that there should be a creation of new laws which would enable police to carry out monitoring and interception of communications. Terrorists, it was argued found the Internet an obvious choice for their activities. Border controls could pick up semtex, but cannot detect computer viruses. Terrorist groups could cause economic damage without the risks they ran in planting bombs.

The NCIS had focused on five areas of such crime: hacking and economic espionage; fraud; electronic payment systems such as smart cards and electronic cash; the paedophile use of the internet; and software piracy including audio piracy.

Cannabis husband cleared

A man who supplied his wife with home-grown cannabis to ease her acute pain from multiple sclerosis was cleared on three out of four drug related charges by a jury at the beginning of April, this year.

Alan Blythe, a 52 year old cab-driver from Runcorn, Cheshire said he would continue to break the law although he considered himself to be in all other respects, "extremely honest".

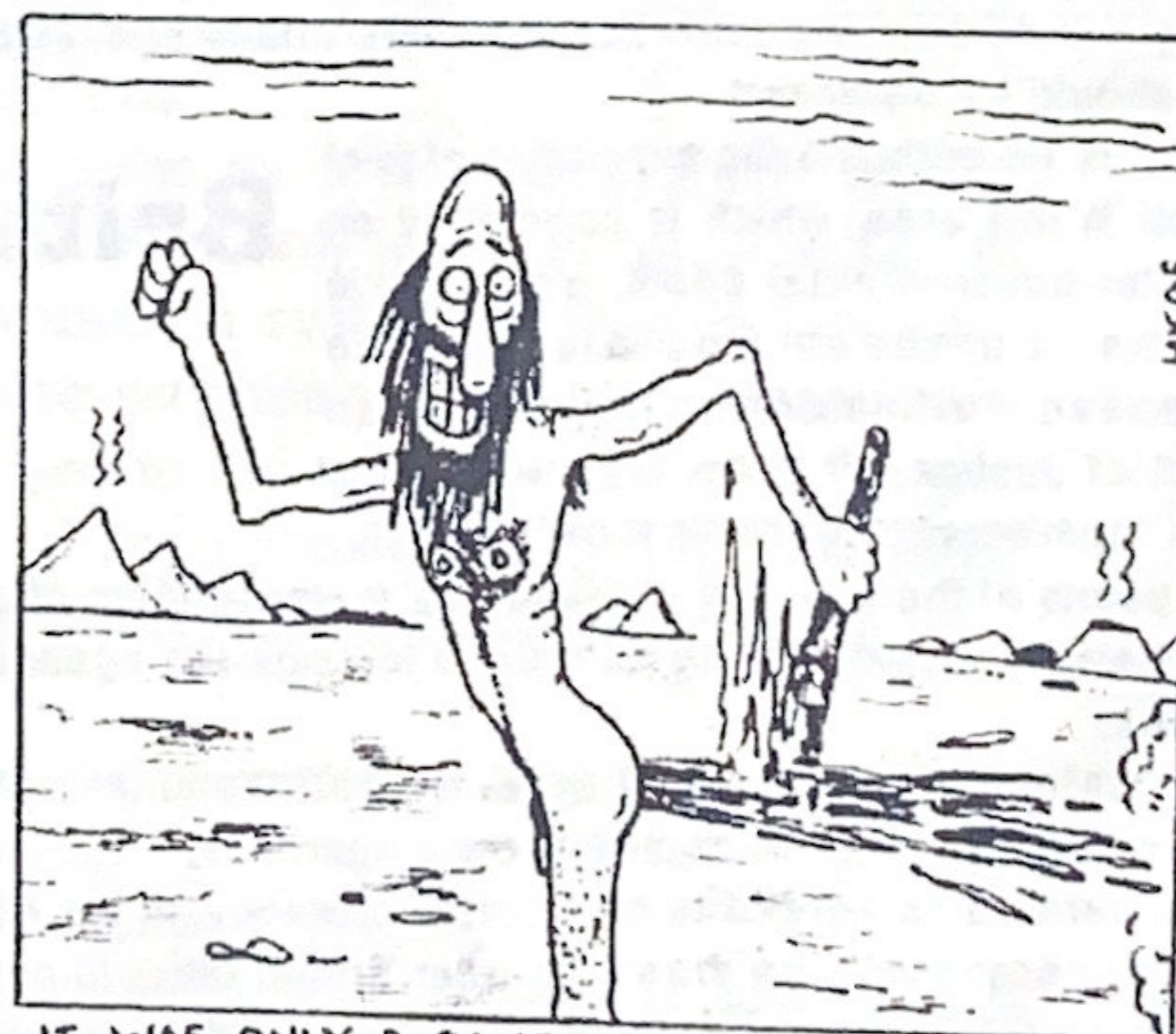
He said: "I have never stopped giving her cannabis and I never will. If they came up with any legal medication with the same effect we would use it. But they have not, so we went to the illegal trade to get it from there."

The couple tried cannabis after reading a magazine article, and said it helped his wife to eat properly and took away sensations of sickness. "The worse she feels the more she smokes."

Evidence from Roger Pertwee of the University of Aberdeen in support of the benefits of cannabis was read out at the trial. Cannabis has helped relieve MS symptoms in animals and a survey he carried out last year showed the drug "alleviated pain, muscle stiffness and muscle spasm." It helped patients to get a good nights sleep and get through the day. Six clinical studies supported claims of benefits.

The MS society called for more research. "We recognise that there are people with MS who obtain relief from very distressing circumstances using cannabis."

The jury's majority verdict will be a boost for campaigners for decriminalisation of cannabis.



IT WAS ONLY 2 DAYS AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF FIRE THAT NARG LEARNT TO LIGHT HIS FARTS.

The United States Court upholds Net freedom

The US supreme court authorised free speech on the Internet in June 1997, striking down a new law that sought to bar cyberporn to children. Internet activists hailed the judgment as an important victory for free speech that would keep the fast-growing global network of computer communication, now used by 50 million people, free from government supervision.

"Notwithstanding the legitimacy and importance of the congressional goal of protecting children from harmful materials, we agree (with a lower court ruling) that the statute abridges the freedom of speech protected by the first amendment of the constitution," said the court's majority ruling.

"The breadth of the restriction is unprecedented and the burden on adult freedom is not acceptable," it said.

The decision was a stinging defeat for President Bill Clinton, who strongly backed the 1996 Communications Decency Act as part of his reforms to "protect the family" before his re-election.

It made distribution to minors of "patently offensive" words or images on the Internet a criminal offence, and imposed maximum fines of 250,000 dollars and up to two years in prison.

This law is now unconstitutional and so void.

The Republican congressman Rick White, whose district includes the Microsoft headquarters outside Seattle, said: "This goes far beyond the issue of free speech on the Internet - it will have a major and beneficial impact on the future of the Net itself."

Phone tap rise after end of IRA ceasefire

Ministers authorised a record number of telephone taps last year, according to an official report published recently. Michael Howard, then home secretary, approved 1,073 taps some covering more than one telephone number - at the request of the security and intelligence services, and Customs and Excise. Michael Forsyth, then Scottish secretary, approved 228.

Lord Nolan, the interception of communications commissioner, said in his annual report that the significant increase was the result of the collapse of the IRA ceasefire and of police forces becoming "more familiar" with the potential of taps to prevent and detect serious crime.

However, he did not disclose the number of taps approved by Malcolm Rifkind, then foreign secretary, or those authorised by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the then Northern Ireland secretary.

Three reports were published - one by Lord Nolan, responsible specifically for tapping telephones and other communications, and two by Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, the commissioner who monitors general complaints against GCHQ, MI6 and MI5.

They say that in a small number of cases, the wrong person was targeted or warrants were wrongly dated, and that mistakes were made by telephone companies. But they confirm that not one complaint from members of the public has been upheld.

The tribunals are limited to receiving complaints from members of the public. Lord Justice Stuart-Smith made it clear that he believed their powers should be increased so they can hear complaints about vetting and unfair dismissal from the staff of MI5, MI6 and GCHQ.

Lord Nolan said that Mr Howard and Mr Forsyth approved a combined total of 1,301 taps in 1996, against 1,047 in 1995. He also disclosed that last year Mr Howard authorised 69 mail intercepts.

Britain has secretly agreed with its EU partners to set up an international telecommunications tapping system in co-operation with the FBI, it has recently been revealed.

The agreement covers telephones and written communications - telexes, faxes, and e-mail. To make tapping easier, telecommunications companies would be obliged to give security and intelligence agencies the key to codes installed in equipment sold to private customers.

Civil liberties groups, while agreeing that there was a need for such an agreement to fight against serious crime, said the plans raised a number of privacy and data protection issues and must be the subject of a full public debate.

Doug Henderson, the then Labour home affairs spokesman, expressed concern about accountability and said the rules of authorisation should be disclosed.

Britain is an enthusiastic supporter of joint action in this area, which is conducted on an inter-governmental basis, with no role for the European Commission, the European Parliament or the European Court of Justice. It is an area where the EU's "democratic deficit" is most evident.

Key points of the plan are outlined in a memorandum of understanding signed by EU states in 1995, which is still classified. It reflects increasing concern among European intelligence agencies that modern technology will prevent them from tapping private communications.

EU countries, it says, should agree on "international interception standards" set at a level that would ensure encoding or scrambling systems can be broken by intelligence agencies.

EU governments agreed to co-operate closely with the FBI in Washington as they work out detailed plans.

The memorandum was drawn up after British officials presented the EU with a proposal to "tag" individual subscribers to new satellite based telecommunications systems. They said governments must meet the threat posed by new international mobile systems which "will provide unique possibilities for organised crime and will lead to new threats to national security".

The documents have been unearthed by Tony Bunyan, editor of Statewatch, a research organisation which monitors the activities of police and intelligence agencies in Britain and the EU.

Alerted to the existence of the memorandum last year, Lord Tordoff, chairman of the Lords European Community committee - regarded as Parliament's most elective EU scrutiny body - asked Michael Howard, the then Home Secretary, for a copy. Howard replied: "It is not a significant document." It did not therefore meet the criteria for parliamentary scrutiny, he said.

"The committee's role is to attempt to fill the democratic deficit in the EU - that can't be done if it is kept in the dark," Lord Tordoff declared in response.

Britain to join FBI phone tap system

The National Criminal Intelligence Service has called for powers to monitor and intercept Internet-based communications, such as e-mail. Such powers must not be granted before a wider debate takes place.

The problem at present is that UK laws on the interception of all forms of communication have been overtaken by rapidly changing technology. This means not only that the police are seeking legal backing for their actions; but also that the safeguards for individual privacy are now wholly inadequate.

Access by law-enforcement agencies to telecommunications is clearly a legitimate concern in a time of rising organised, international crime. The Home Office maintains that the Interception of Communications Act 1985, designed for telephone tapping, also covers e-mail. This requires prior authorisation by warrant from a minister. However, it only covers e-mail which is transmitted on a public telecommunications network; communications on a private network (from an office, for example) are outside these controls, as may be mobile telephones.

In any event the need for a warrant for intercepting e-mail may be circumvented by the police requesting print-outs of communications from Internet service providers for "the prevention or detection of crime". There is a growing move to harmonise and extend the use of service providers as a way of gaining access to personal communications. This includes

proposals for harmonisation of licence conditions, so that law-enforcement agencies have access to a wider range of data, including customer-identifying data communications and all call-associated data.

Policing your screen

The communication would be supplied in decrypted form. Where a mobile phone is used, information on its geographical location would also be supplied.

Such proposals were adopted by member states of the European Union in 1995, although neither the European Parliament nor national parliaments were given the opportunity to scrutinise them. In contrast with other countries, no new domestic legislation or statutory regulation is required to implement these agreements in the UK.

The Telecommunications Act 1984 already provides the mechanism for requiring service providers to facilitate interception and supply traffic data. It allows the Home Office to direct a service provider "to do, or not to do, a particular thing specified in the direction" on national security or other grounds. However, unlike the new laws in other countries, there is no requirement to publish the full extent of these interceptions.

Closely linked with these requirements for access is the issue of cryptography. E-mail messages may be encoded by using cryptographic keys known only to the users. The DTI is poised to advise the Government on a proposal to introduce a system of "trusted third parties" to hold these keys. A significant element in these proposals is for law-enforcement agencies (including the security and intelligence services) to have lawful access to the private keys held by the TTPs. This is an alternative to the controversial (and eventually unsuccessful) attempt in the US to control cryptography through the mandatory use of a government-licensed device called the "Clipper Chip".

A state-controlled system of TTPs will offer an unprecedented potential for extending surveillance. These incremental changes, like the bugging provisions of the police Act, change the landscape of individual privacy rights in a piece-meal fashion.

It is time for a radical review, to provide a coherent framework of parliamentary control and human-rights safeguards for all forms of police intelligence-gathering.

Madeleine Colvin, legal officer at Justice

Inner cities get younger

Britain is increasingly divided by age, according to official figures released which contrast the "grey-ing" of retirement areas with the growing youthfulness of many inner cities. London is gaining a particularly young population, with most boroughs now having far fewer old people than average, and far more children.

Figures in *Regional Trends* - the annual digest of localised economic and social indicators produced by the Office for National Statistics show the South-west and Wales have the most pensioners, and London and Northern Ireland the least.

Compared with an average 18.2 per cent pensioners in the population, the South-west has, 21.2 per cent, Wales 20 per cent, London 15.5 per cent and Northern Ireland 15 per cent.

While across the UK 6.5 per cent of the population is under five, in London the figure is 7.2 per cent and in Northern Ireland 7.7 per cent.

Tony Warnes, professor of social gerontology at Sheffield University, says in a report published by the King's Fund that, in contrast to the trend in the nation as a whole, London's pensioner population will fall further from 970,000 in 1991 to 828,000 in 2011.

Regional Trends also shows that:

- * The North-east has the most people relying on social security, with 27 per cent of households claiming income support or family credit;

- * Scottish people watch the most television, an average 26.5 hours a week in Central Scotland and 26.1 in the Borders. The UK average is 25.1, the lowest - 22.1 - in the East;

- * People on Merseyside are the most enthusiastic about the National Lottery, with 76 per cent of households taking part in its first year;

- * The North-west has the best A level results in England and Wales, although Scotland and Northern Ireland do even better;

- * On average, someone living in the South-east travels 8,100 miles a year in Britain. Someone on Merseyside travels 4,900.

David Brindle

Regional Trends; Stationery Office; £37.50

'leisure noise'

ONE in four young people are exposing themselves to sound levels that can damage their hearing at clubs and rock concerts. Adrian Davis, of the Medical Research Council's Institute of Hearing Research in Nottingham, claims that in the 1980's 6 to 7 per cent of people aged 18 to 25 were at risk from "leisure noise", but in the 1990s this figure stood at 23 to 24 per cent. Prof Davis said there was no evidence at present that hearing was being damaged, but as they aged, people exposed to these levels of noise were at greater risk of hearing loss.

Proof at last that going to school is bad for you

The secret of a successful and fulfilled life is to fail at school, according to a book by a leading US educationalist to be published this year.

In Grace Llewelyn's research for *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, she found that 20% of the entries in America's *Current Biography Yearbook*, an annual list of people prominent in their field, had not attended a conventional school or had dropped out altogether: proof, she says that dropping out is the best all-round education.

The book, subtitled 'How to Quit School and get a real Life and Education' makes the standard claim of progressive educationalists that school stifles creativity and encourages conformism. The dangers are:

- School puts you into intense enforced contact with people your own age, discouraging you from making friends with other people.
- Schools create meaningless, burdensome problems for you to solve.
- Schools give you an incurable guilt trip.
- School conditions you to live in the future rather than the present.
- If you go to school you almost have to be a jerk to other people, to yourself or to both.

Llewelyn's imperatives are more colourful: 'Dance bravely and brightly. Learn to be a human bean and not instant mashed potatoes.'



TARQUIN WOULD OFTEN SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN HIMSELF!

Stadium rocks fall

Recently U2 cancelled its homecoming date in Dublin, on the world's most expensive rock tour for financial reasons. In the US, where patchy audiences have been underwhelmed, other shows have also been pulled, with the group's management blaming media negativity for poor attendances.

But it is not only U2. The deflation of PopMart is sending shivers through the elite handful of mega-rockers, the giant, bankable acts such as REM, the Rolling Stones and Metallica on whom the industry has cruised. Rock album sales in the United States have been 'flat-lining' for the last three years while the new boys of electronica and dance are fast making in-roads into the territory where the dinosaurs once roamed.

'There is a reason why rock'n'roll music is not selling the way it used to,' Bono told the *Washington Post* at the beginning of the PopMart tour. 'It's boring. There is no surprise. That's one of the reasons we called the record Pop, because we were so angry at the word "rock". We were looking around and saying: "What is happening here". This is 30 years old, this music, and the sound, the feeling coming from all these groups, just seemed so tired.'

The problem is the punters just aren't buying it. Observers suspect the public's appetite for extravaganzas such as PopMart has waned. In the absence of nostalgia-fuelled stadium tours over the last two years, there has been a growing number of festivals at which four or five bands perform for far less than the steep \$57 per ticket U2 are charging.

A similar phenomenon has been apparent in Britain with the increasing popularity of multi-act, weekend-long events such as Glastonbury, the Phoenix Festival and Tribal Gathering. Glastonbury in particular reflects the eclectic pick-and-mix of the postmodern fan, mixing dance, acid jazz and folk with traditional rock.

'It's the carnival, the circus, the grail is to give the audience something spectacular it really didn't expect.'

Unfortunately for U2, audiences may already have decided that no rock band is capable of doing that in the Nineties.

Peter Beaumont and Edward Helmore

Big Brother is watching you

Remember that CND march in the early 1980's? That speeding charge that was dropped? The time you and your partner had an Aids test? According to a report on privacy at work, all this information and more is hoarded by employers, often unknown to the person concerned. The report says that one in five employers is breaking the law by failing to register that they process personal data.

The Data Protection Registrar must be told by a company or agency of any such processing it does, and what kinds of data is kept, where it is obtained, and the people, firms or agencies to whom it is released - for example, to "social, spiritual, welfare, or advice workers".

"Often people hoard data wrongly," said Robin Chater author of the report. "Many employers keep intelligence files on people. It started in the late 1970s, when there was a lot of political ferment. People got in the habit of keeping information, especially on union members. At first employers needed to know who the union representatives were; later they kept records to see who might cause them trouble."

Privacy has become a pressing issue as technology make it possible to track people's every move. In marketing, medical, advertising, legal, financial and employment terms, everyone is a walking database. Your movements in shops and streets are recorded by remote circuit TV; cash points record the date, time and transaction; police cameras photograph your car and your office security card logs your exits and entrances.

Each technological improvement is followed by a scramble to protect privacy.

The Internet is the greatest research tool ever invented, but it also stores information about its users.

A subscribing company can monitor which websites its employees visit (recently Barclays Bank caught and disciplined staff downloading pornography). Most subscribers, if they have the time, can read every email passing through the system.

A worrying trend for many people is credit referencing. Agencies build up a credit record on you that can be consulted for a fee. It's based on who you live with, past payment records, information collected from banks, county courts and other sources about the way you manage your finances.

Smart cards that store large amounts of information are increasingly used as charge cards by chains such as Sainsburys and Tesco. A chemists' chain is reported to be planning a card to store the holder's medical record and prescription entitlement.

Details of health and financial circumstances could be mixed on one card. If you've got sensitive information from the DSS or the health authorities on a smart card, it could be used for example to refuse people employment or a driving licences.

At present, an employer may decline to interview a job applicant unless he or she produces his or her police record, a practice known as "enforced subject access". Everyone has a right to see their police record, but some employers abuse this by demanding copies. Under the new Data Protection Law, this will be outlawed.

However, any employer will instead be able to order a "criminal conviction certificate" showing "unspent" convictions, while a company that is registered for data holding can also ask for information on cautions and acquittals from a job applicant.

The civil rights group, Liberty, says that in some instances a person's criminal history is relevant to an employer but, where it is not, the new measures go against the principles of rehabilitation and privacy.

Concern over access and privacy has also been raised by another central computerised record, to be established by the NHS. It would need to be available nationally and to be continually updated, which may be a higher priority than security.

At present, patients can view computerised records, but not written ones. Doctors are currently obliged to divulge medical records to insurance companies on demand - with the proviso that the patient must be informed, may read the records and make amendments.

Insurance questionnaires are inquisitive, including questions such as: "Have you ever tried to take your own life? If yes, please say when and give details." And many companies, particularly banks and multinationals, nowadays demand a full medical from a potential employee. This usually includes a drug test.

A recent report by an independent research body in California, Snooping the Internet, suggests that the only way to stay ahead in the information age is to find out what they have on you before anyone else does.

Residents have plenty to smile about after pilot

makes hash of it

A small plane loaded with marijuana crashed into a Detroit park in April after being trailed by US customs agents for 1,500 miles. And when some residents decided that they could not be of any help to the dying pilot, they apparently helped themselves.

Gloria Johnson said she heard a boom, saw the plane hit a tree, and then crash into a field next to a school. The pilot was still alive when the neighbours ran to help, she added.

"There were big bundles of drugs and money all around the plane. The bundles of marijuana looked like two big suitcases."

She said she saw people leave the scene with some of the packages.

"A couple of guys came to help, then grabbed the bags of drugs and left," Ms Johnson added.

The authorities are investigating whether anything was removed from the crash site, a customs service special agent has said.

Police urge talks on DNA database for whole nation

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said in May, that he was prepared to discuss police proposals for a national DNA database for the entire population, although Home Office sources stressed there were reservations about the scheme on the grounds of privacy and cost.

At present the national DNA database is limited to people convicted or accused of offences. It contains information on 250,000 suspects and 27,000 crime scene samples.

Liberty are concerned that a compulsory scheme could only be established by undermining the privacy of individuals, that a DNA database might be used as a routine way of establishing identity, and the database might be in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Liz Parratt, campaign manager for Liberty, said: "This proposal represents part of a drift towards policing by coercion and away from our long tradition of policing by consent. A proposal like this is unbalanced, misguided and wrong."

Apart from practical problems that will arise through the introduction of such a system, there are more serious objections of principle. Civil libertarians are right to be wary of letting technology turn justice principles on their head. If everyone is assumed to be a suspect, that is a contradiction of the principle of innocent until proved guilty. Everybody would be on the list of suspects at every scene of crime. Equally serious is the error rate - both unintentional and deliberate. Some miscarriages of justice have involved serious allegations of deliberate error. DNA is no protection against the deliberately planted hair or saliva.

7 We don't need an all-inclusive national DNA database.

Deadly deceit

When the European watchdog on degrading treatment made an ad hoc visit to the UK last September, one of a number of cases of deaths in custody they looked into was that of Ibrahima Sey, an asylum seeker from Gambia who died after being sprayed with CS gas at Ilford police station following an alleged domestic incident.

The use of such sprays came under the spotlight in the inquest into Sey's death. Indeed, CS gas came a long way since it was first used against civilians in the UK by the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the Bogside and Creggan areas of Londonderry during the riots of August 13, 1969.

Such was the degree of public concern at that time that Home Secretary James Callaghan almost immediately set up a committee to examine the possibility of lasting medical effects on people exposed to the gas. Two reports, on medical and toxicological aspects of CS, cleared the use of CS aerosols in civil disturbances.

In April 1995, Home Secretary Michael Howard announced prospective trials of CS in spray form to enable police officers to defend themselves against attackers. But the introduction of sprays was sprung upon the public, as well as the medical and scientific communities, without effective debate.

Secrecy surrounding the adoption of sprays by the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB) of the Home Office strengthens suspicions that its deliberations started from the immutable but fallacious premise that CS is safe, and were biased towards acceptance. Street trials in 16 police areas in England and Wales began on March 1 1996 and have been co-ordinated by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Guidelines for use have been issued to chief police officers, but a request to ACPO for a copy has been ignored.

Comparisons of the situations in 1969 and 1996 reveal a number of serious and disturbing discrepancies, of which both the last government and the present one seem to be unaware.

Despite its common appellation, CS is a crystalline solid. For its use in Ulster, the powdered irritant was incorporated into pyrotechnic cartridges and grenades which, on combustion, generate aerosol suspensions. Exposure to the tiny amounts contained in a lung full of aerosol causes gripping chest pains of such intensity that breathing is restricted to rare and shallow gasps. It also causes intense pain in the mouth, nasal cavity, throat and, especially, the eyes.

Work done at the Chemical Defence Establishment (CDE) in the 1970s showed that a solution containing as little as 0.005 per cent CS produced immediate effects on the eyes, followed by stinging and burning of the skin. Despite this, the PSDB settled on the enormous concentration of 5 per cent.

Because sprays leave deposits on the skin, the effects of CS extend to the long-term, and are therefore in a wholly different category from those caused by aerosols. The irritant is almost completely insoluble in water. Consequently, the deposits are difficult to remove.

Reports from doctors in France, where similar CS sprays have been in use for some time, describe allergic sensitisation as well as painful and extensive blistering in a proportion of people exposed to sprays who were hospitalised for six days on average. Yet the Home Office maintains that CS presents no significant risk to human health.

In the same month as street trials began in the U K last year, Ibrahima Sey was taken into police custody, where a struggle ensued. He was handcuffed, sprayed with CS, and died shortly afterwards. If CS solution reached the respiratory tract, death may have ensued either from cessation of breathing or from cardiac arrest.

The ACPO guidelines indicate that CS sprays are issued primarily for self-defence and to contain violent subjects who cannot otherwise be restrained. But whatever the ACPO may maintain, its guidelines have frequently been breached, possibly because many policemen are under the impression that CS can do no harm.

As with the use of CS in Ulster between 1969 and 1972, the same error has been made in disregarding social dimensions. Today, sensitive relations between police and local communities have been jeopardised not only by indiscriminate use of CS sprays, but by the threat of use against juveniles and the elderly.

The suspicion lingers that pressure to retain CS spray in the widening array of devices newly available to control disorders comes from the police themselves. Anxiety to protect is commendable in view of the savagery of some recent attacks on the police, especially against women in the force. The PSDB may believe it has succeeded in producing a safe and elective incapacitant, but the distinction between science fiction and reality is easier for the scientist and the doctor to make than for the policeman.

The new Government has had the unenviable task of shouldering the legacy of a Home Secretary whose term of office was characterised by repressive measures intended to appease the backwoodsmen of his party. Clearly, fundamental errors of omission have been made over CS. The new Home Secretary would be wise to emulate his predecessor in 1969 by taking an authoritative and informed look at CS spray.

No change in licensing laws until next century

Pubs are to be allowed to open for up to 36 hours over the weekend of the millennium celebrations, Home Office ministers have indicated but more fundamental reforms of the licensing laws will have to wait until the next century.

It is believed the reviewing team will look at scrapping the law which bans supermarket sales of alcohol on Sundays, giving magistrates the power to decide the closing time in any one area, and brewing industry demands that pubs be allowed to open from 8am until midnight.



SINCE THE DECADENT 1960s, THE VALUE OF SOULS HAD GONE RIGHT DOWN.

Slow start for drug court

Britain's first specialised drugs court opened on May 5th, though a relatively crime-free bank holiday weekend saw no referrals to the US style sessions.

But police and probation staff remained confident that the experimental court in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, will be busy soon. Seventy per cent of the area's crime is committed by drug-users, according to the Home Office and West Yorkshire police.

DRUGS

Drugs '8pc of world trade'

The world's drug trade has grown dramatically over the last decade and is now bigger than international trade in iron and steel and motor vehicles, according to a United Nations report.

The annual turnover in drugs is estimated at \$400 billion (£250 billion) - about 8 per cent of international trade. By contrast, official development aid totals \$69 billion.

The World Drug Report, compiled by the UN international drug control programme, attempts to draw together information on the production, trafficking, consumption and health effects of drugs and efforts to tackle them. The task is made more difficult by the fact that every aspect of the business is conducted outside the law.

For the first time the UNDCP has attempted to estimate numbers of drug abusers. According to the report, 8 million people took heroin at least once during the previous year, compared to 13 million for cocaine, 30 million for amphetamine-type drugs, and 141 million for cannabis. Cannabis use is dwarfed by the 227 million people estimated to be using sedatives.

World production of coca leaf more than doubled between 1985 and 1996, while opium production more than tripled. Although seizures have also increased, a drop in the retail price of narcotics indicates that more are getting through to customers.

The report warns of a growing globalisation of the trade, with the traffickers taking often circuitous routes to get their product to market. Drug consumption is spreading to new areas. UN officials warn that Africa and the former Soviet Union face drug epidemics - with dire social consequences.

The report surveys the debate about policy options, including legalisation, but, perhaps surprisingly given the dramatic failure of efforts to date, recommends a familiar mixture of crop eradication, destruction of production facilities and interdiction of trafficking, combined with programmes to reduce demand.

Doctors profiting from illicit drugs

A small but growing minority of private doctors are making massive profits out of over-prescribing drugs to hard drug dealers who then resell them on the streets, according to a Home Office research report.

Some doctors are making more than a hundred grand a year out of this trade which is identified as the source of 'an important minority' of the illegal drugs now sold in London.

The report, *Tackling Local Drug Markets*, also says that such private prescribing has become the main route by which legal drugs such as methadone and amphetamines 'leak' into the hands of street drug dealers.

The research, by Mark Edmunds, Mike Hough and Norman Urquia, also confirms recent findings that half a million people in London regularly use illicit drugs and estimates that there are now 20 to 30 million illicit 'retail transactions' a year in London alone.

The study is partly based on 200 interviews with heroin and crack dealers. But the most startling finding is the disclosure of the scale of leakage. Large sums of money are to be made easily by issuing repeat prescriptions on a weekly basis to dependent drug users. The weekly consultation fee is usually twenty five pounds payable before the prescription is handed over.

Pharmacists can charge what they like for private prescriptions and the researchers found the average cost was seventy five pounds. Often prescriptions involve a high level of drugs such as 10 50mg methadone ampules a day. 'If the prescribed drugs carried a 33 per cent mark-up the profits to pharmacists dealing with high volumes of private prescriptions would also be substantial.'

The researchers were told of two sources of doctors with lists of more than 200 dependent users and said a client list of just 75 would yield an income of a hundred grand a year.

The trade is completed by the pharmacist allowing the drug dealer credit enabling them to collect half the prescribed amount of drugs, sell it and then pay off the pharmacist.

'We have no doubt whatsoever that this practice occurs on a regular basis in some chemists, and that the pharmacists know that some of the prescription is being sold illegally.'

The report says that closer controls on the operation of this private prescription system are needed to reduce the leakage.

But the study also recommends other ways of taking drugs off the streets, such as more police monitoring of the mobile phones used by dealers, encouraging shop owners, mini cab firms and park attendants to report street drug dealing, and tackling the link between street prostitution and hard drug dealers.

However it also puts forward more fundamental suggestions to prevent drug 'ghettoes' developing, including telling local authorities not to house individuals with suspected drug problems in the same area and spreading needle exchanges and dispensing pharmacists around to discourage dealers gathering in one centre.

Alan Travis

Drugs turn friends into enemies of the young

Too many friends may harm the health of young people by encouraging them to experiment with cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs, a survey into teenage lifestyles showed recently.

A third of 15-year-olds have tried cannabis, one in 10 had experimented with acid or amphetamines, and one in 100 claimed to have used heroin or crack, the survey found.

A third of 11-year-old girls and a fifth of boys were unhappy with their appearance, and more than two-thirds of girls at 15.

The researchers say: "Young people who smoked, drank alcohol or had tried drugs were much more likely to spend time with friends."

"Frequent socialising with friends was strongly associated with involvement in health risk behaviour. There was also evidence of much greater permissiveness from parents of young people whose health was at risk from smoking, alcohol or exposure to drugs."

The report concluded: "Health risk behaviour was strongly associated with negative feelings towards school. Smoking and drinking were associated with dissatisfaction with one's own body and poor perceptions of physical fitness."

The survey found that two thirds of 11 to 16 year olds had been offered drugs, and more than 40 per cent claimed to have tried at least one type once.

Nearly one in four girls and one in six boys were smoking every day by the age of 15, and by this age 96 per cent of teenagers had tasted an alcoholic drink.

The survey for the Health Education Authority by the British Market Research Bureau involved some 6,500 pupils from 108 schools, a third of which were in areas with a high percentage of ethnic minority students. The children questioned were aged 11, 13 and 15.

Two out of three of the teenagers had been offered illegal drugs, or had been with friends when they were offered them, and 43 per cent claimed to have, tried at least one type of drug.

Among the 15-year-olds, 35 per cent said they had tried cannabis, 11 per cent acid, 11 per cent amphetamines, 4 per cent ecstasy, 6 per cent magic mushrooms, 10 per cent amyl nitrates and 11 per cent glue or solvents. Three per cent of the pupils said they had tried tranquillisers, 2 per cent cocaine, 1 per cent heroin and 1 per cent crack.

Half of all the young people had been bullied, 18 per cent this term. One in four victims in the last term had bullied someone else.

Asked about smoking, 24 per cent of girls aged 15, and 15 per cent of boys, said they were smokers.

Three-quarters of the 11 year-olds had tasted an alcoholic drink, a figure which rose to 96 per cent by the age of 15.

Thirteen per cent of the 15-year-olds said they drank quite a lot or heavily.

Lager was the most popular alcoholic drink, followed by cider. Other beers were drunk by 15 per cent and wine by 12 per cent.

Chris Mihill

Cocaine case accused attacks police secrecy

BRITISH policing methods and the laws on disclosure became an issue at the trial in Holland recently of a man accused of running a £100 million drug smuggling operation. The man's lawyer claimed that British police operated in a "culture of secrecy" that made a fair trial impossible.

The trial of Curtis Warren, aged 34, from Liverpool, was moved from the central court in The Hague to a secure address because of claims of security risks.

Customs are also followed the case, which was seen as an example of international police co-operation. In the past there have been tensions between British and Dutch authorities, with the former suggesting privately that the latter are too lax on drug law enforcement.

Han Jahae, Warren's lawyer, claimed that evidence against his client was illegally obtained. The operation between Britain and Holland had been contaminated because methods used in the UK were not recognised by the Dutch authorities.

"British police are accustomed to doing what they want and operating within a culture of secrecy."

Defence lawyers claimed police raids carried out in Holland were based on information gathered by police in Britain through illegal telephone tapping.

British Customs and police have denied that the information came from an informant or from electronic bugging or a telephone company, but refuse to identify the source. This has provoked a call for a more detailed review of the evidence before the trial continues. Under Dutch law the source of undercover information is disclosed.

Magic cactus gets the nod

The Pentagon is to let the 9,200 American Indians in the armed forces use peyote, the hallucinogenic cactus of the South-West and Mexico which induces visions and distorted sight - but only for religious purposes, and not in ships and planes.

Those who take it will have to notify their commander when they have finished their ceremonies, to ensure that they do not put lives at risk while still under its influence. It stays in the body for 12 hours.

Peyote, which contains mescaline, was popularised among non-Indians by the British author Aldous Huxley when he lived in California in the 1950s. It has been used by American and Mexican Indians for at least 10,000 years and is a sacrament in the Native American Church, which has 250,000 members.

The new rule gives peyote the legal status enjoyed by sacramental wine in some Christian services. But Indians fear that taking their sacred cactus may nonetheless leave a black mark on their record.

Jail challenge to drug tests

Mandatory drug testing in jails is being challenged by lawyers acting for prisoners who say the tests are inaccurate and who may sue for the extra time they have spent in prison.

Hundreds of prisoners have complained to lawyers and the Prison Ombudsman. The challenges also have ramifications for employees who are sacked or not given a job after failing a drugs test, or for pupils who are expelled. Companies and public schools are increasingly making use of such tests.

The prison rules were amended in 1995 to allow mandatory drug testing of prisoners in response to the growing presence of drugs in jails.

Such tests were to be carried out randomly on 10% of the prison population each month. If a prisoner tests positive they can receive a punishment of up to 42 days on their sentence. In a year of testing between April 1996 and March 1997, almost 57,000 samples were taken, of which 24% proved positive.

The tests have already been criticised for encouraging cannabis users to switch to heroin or cocaine. There has also been criticism that there is little support given to addicts.

Prisoners also claim that some of the tests are inaccurate, either because they fail to take into account prescribed or other medicines or because the sample has been mishandled or confused with other prisoners.

The normal rules of evidence are that a document like a laboratory report is hearsay and if the prisoner wishes to contest it, he or she should be entitled to cross-examine the tester. The prison service has so far refused requests for this.

A solicitor, Simon Creighton, of the Prisoners Advice Service, has attempted to challenge this in court on two occasions but the prison service has settled on the steps of the court. He applied unsuccessfully for a test case to be heard on January 22.

"We are in the absurd position of having to issue costly proceedings on every single case that comes our way. Once we have the point decided by the courts the prison service may find themselves having to quash hundreds of disciplinary proceedings and even possibly paying compensation to prisoners whose sentences were extended. It could also mean that the whole policy becomes too expensive."

A spokesman for the Prison Ombudsman said they had received "scores" of complaints about the accuracy of the tests. The ombudsman also supports the argument that a lab test report should be seen as hearsay.

The prison service said when inmates were tested one sample was given to the inmate in case they wished to have it tested privately. In that way the prisoner could have an independent assessment.

Drivers face roadside tests as drug deaths rise

Driver's could soon face drug tests after official figures revealed that illicit drug taking has increased 400 per cent in the past 10 years among people killed in road accidents.

Most cases involved cannabis. There were no cases involving cocaine or LSD, and 'very little evidence' of ecstasy. The cases largely covered people between 20 and 30.

The figures from the Department of Environment and Transport show that tests on 301 road accident fatalities since October 1996 revealed that more tested positive for drugs than for alcohol. They are the preliminary findings of a three year survey which is being conducted with the assistance of coroners.

The roads minister said: "These figures are worrying and show raised levels of drug use among passengers killed as well as drivers." The Home Office was carrying out studies on a roadside screening device and was due to report this year.

They did not rule out new legislation, although they said it remained an offence for somebody to drive under the influence of drugs. The problem is that cannabis remains in the bloodstream for up to four weeks if it is taken by regular users, but its effect on driving is limited to 24 hours.

Of the 301 fatalities, 66 were over the legal alcohol limit, and 69 were found to have taken drugs - in more than 50 cases illicit drugs. And of those, 30 cases involved cannabis.

A quarter of the car drivers killed had traces of medicinal or illicit drugs in their bodies, and since a similar survey 10 years ago the presence of alcohol had fallen substantially.

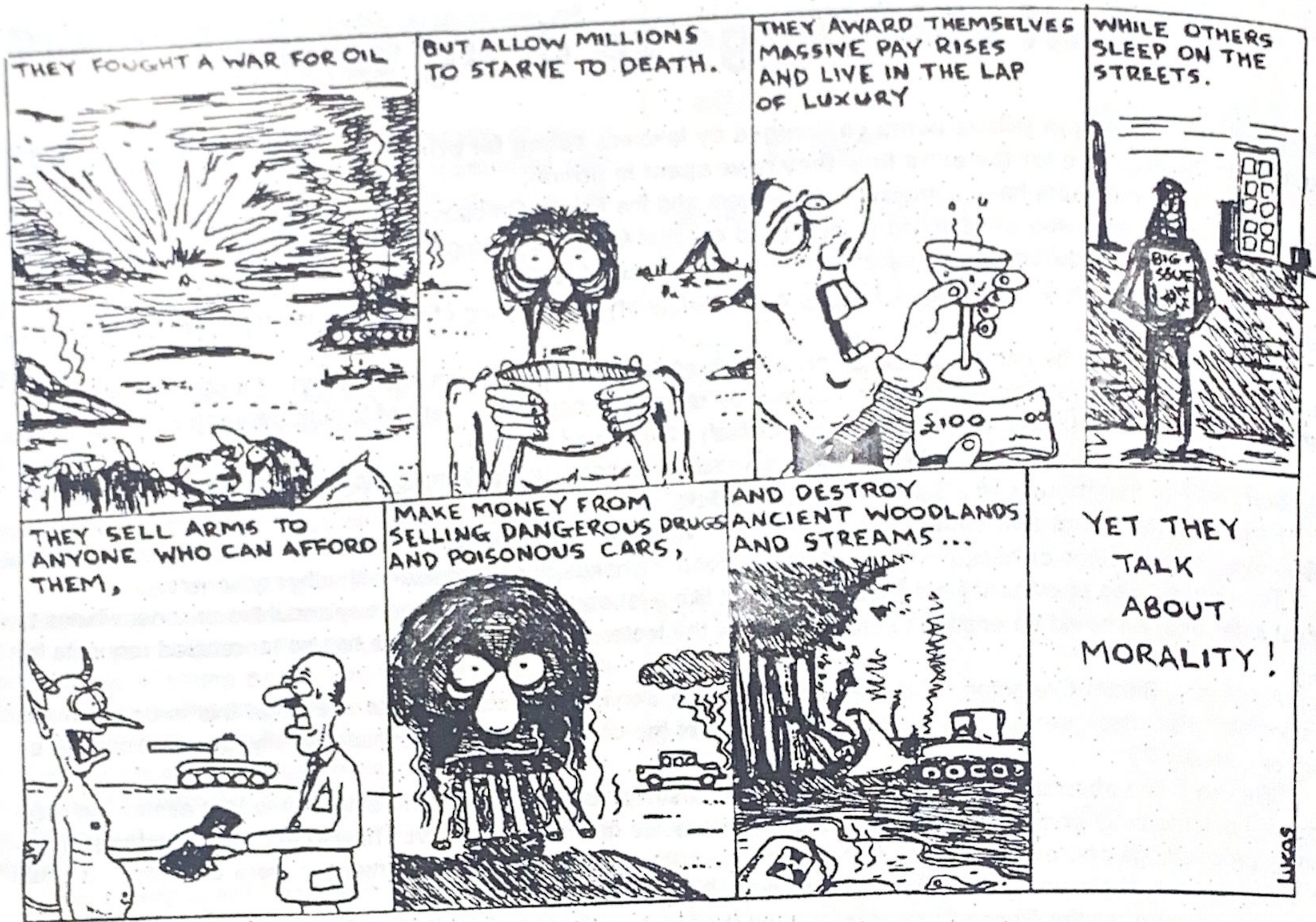
The Home Office said that the Association of Chief Police Officers had been examining drug enforcement measures in other countries and was currently considering how it could be made easier for an officer to recognise signs of drug impairment.

The Government is not planning to launch an immediate television and advertising campaign warning drivers of the dangers of drug taking, but it is likely to do so if the preliminary trend is confirmed. One senior official said: "This is like the drink driving campaign we started nearly 30 years ago. We need to build on that. It is going to take a long time to persuade people to kick the habit."

Paul Manning, the associations traffic committee secretary, said: "These early indicators show that the police service will need to increase its vigilance and look more actively for signs of drug use and not just alcohol when dealing with drivers."

He was encouraged by the progress being made towards getting a suitable roadside testing device. "Our advice to motorists is simple. Do not drive if you have taken anything that could affect your ability to drive safely."

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said the figures were "disturbing but not surprising". It may be necessary for doctors and pharmacist to give clearer instructions on the effects of taking medication.



Spot tests aim to curb drug-drive motorists

More than 5,000 voluntary roadside drug tests were carried out at the beginning of the year in a move by the Government to act on evidence that nearly one in five drivers killed in accidents is under the influence of illicit drugs. Police forces in Cleveland, Lancashire, Strathclyde and Sussex took part.

It was stressed that the trials would not test motorists for the presence of drugs, but to assess the suitability of the devices for police work. One was a wipe device which uses a sweat sample taken from the head, and the other was a saliva testing device.

Their accuracy and reliability was assessed separately to see whether they were sufficiently robust and practical for use by the roadside.

It was made clear that the Government would not hesitate to legislate if the results of the study proved action was necessary.

The results have not yet been published

Cannabis 'may lead to heroin'

Marijuana could be a "gateway drug" that primes the brain for dependence on harder drugs, scientists say in a report. Two groups of researchers write in the US journal *Science* that the active ingredient in hemp cannabis does its work in the same region of the brain and uses the same triggers as heroin.

This region, known as the limbic system, is where the addictive drugs nicotine, cocaine and the amphetamines are most active.

The research is bound to provoke controversy. Although marijuana is illegal, its use for recreational purposes is widespread.

Health agencies are also taking an interest in marijuana's medical properties. There is archaeological evidence that it was used as a midwifery aid in stone age societies. The Victorians considered it a useful painkiller. Aids groups in San Francisco have effectively cleared its use for sufferers, and scientists report its value in quelling nausea during chemotherapy and in relieving the torment of multiple sclerosis.

Neuroscientists in California have further discovered that people who get a "rush" from chocolate do so because something in the bar mimics the action of cannabinoids, which do the work in marijuana. Many campaigners argue that the drug could safely be made legal.

But a Spanish-Californian team and an Italian group tell a different story in *Science*. The Madrid-La Jolla group gave rats daily doses of a synthetic cannabinoid, and then made them go through withdrawal. During this time, the animals showed a sharp jump in a brain chemical in the limbic system called "corticotrophin-releasing factor". This is what makes alcohol, cocaine and opiate addicts suffer when they undergo a "cold turkey" cure. It may also be why 100,000 people in the US each year seek treatment for marijuana dependence.

The other group, from the universities of Rome and Cagliari, focused on the bit that matters most in cannabis, the ingredient tetrahydrocannabinol or THC. They dosed rats with heroin, THC and a synthetic cannabinoid. They discovered that although the cannabinoids have their own receptors or triggers in the brain, the drug pulls the same levers as heroin.

"Although our results do not provide direct evidence for a causal relationship between cannabis and heroin use," they say, "they are none the less consistent with this possibility."

Straw plans random drug tests for thieves

Plans to introduce US-style "district attorneys" and random drug-testing of burglars and robbers have been revealed by the new Home Secretary. Jack Straw said he would press ahead with plans for a pilot scheme to 'ensure that drug-addicted criminals undergo random drug -testing and mandatory treatment'. The measure appeared in last autumn's Crime and Disorder Bill.

Mr Straw launched a fierce attack on those who advocate drug legislation. "If we were to legalise these drugs, the amount of criminality arising from drugs would be even greater", he said.

He said that unpublished Home Office research shows that 360,000 of the 1.8 million people arrested each year - about one in five - are regular heroin users. Evidence suggests that drug addicts stealing to fund their habits accounted for £1.3 billion worth of property each year.

Labours detailed plans call for a new drug-testing and mandatory treatment order to be made available to the courts. "We want this order to be available to the courts not only for drug offenders but also for burglars and robbers", he said. "They would be required to undergo treatment which would include random drug- testing."

Random drug tests would be applied twice a week for a month, and the addict, if not found to be clean at the end of the process, will face mandatory three-month drug treatment. Continued drug use and criminal behaviour would lead to a prison sentence.

Although treatment is expensive - residential care can cost £2,000 a week - Straw believes it is cheaper in the long run than mass incarceration.

The method used by the researchers in the study - the taking of urine samples over a 21 month period in police stations in London, Manchester, Nottingham and Cambridge - makes the findings especially compelling. Heroin and opiates stay in the blood for less than 48 hours, so that an unknown number of other users who had not taken the drug in the two days before their arrest will not have been detected. Earlier small-scale research projects have found that 60 per cent of burglars, half of male and a quarter of female shoplifters were addicted to heroin. The findings have pointed to a level of heroin use three times as high as in America.

The orders have made the link between property crime and drugs for the first time.

Enter the dragon

One of the most prolific killers of newly released prisoners is a heroin overdose. Despite, or perhaps because of, the introduction of mandatory drug testing (MDT) into British jails in January 1996, heroin has become the drug of choice.

It is by now well known among prisoners that cannabis - the previous favoured drug - has a tendency to hang around in the body for up to 30 days, thus increasing one's chance of testing positive for an illegal substance. Heroin, on the other hand, can be flushed through the body in two to three days, making it an altogether more attractive prospect to cons who are facing months, years, or even decades in our austere prisons.

At a recent adjudication for an opiate test at HMP Albany, a governor-grade officer questioned the accused on why prisoners take drugs at all. In reply, the man serving seven years for commercial burglary - asked why almost every prison in the country has an officers club, where staff can go to have a few drinks and unwind after a hard 12 hours behind bars. If prison staff need a few stiff drinks after a 12-hour stint, is it any wonder that prisoners, who are in prison for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, also feel the need to escape the oppressive and brutal atmosphere in any way they can? The accused con was found guilty of having opiates in his urine sample and was sentenced to a further 28 days imprisonment.

The much increased security in our prisons has also played a part in putting heroin top of the prison drug menu. Up until three years ago, prison officers had a tendency to turn a blind eye to the smuggling and smoking of cannabis. It is a drug that tends to leave the user in a mellow state, unlikely to-go on the rampage assaulting screws and causing riots.

After the Parkhurst and Whitemoor escapes, and the Woodcock and Learmont reports into prison security, prison officers were given the kind of powers they had previously only dreamed about. Closed circuit television in every prison visiting room, sniffer dogs on every prison gate, strip-searching of prison visitors - including taking the nappies from babies and questioning young children about what they might be bringing in for daddy.

This increased security led to many seizures of cannabis, which, even when tightly packed, is a bulky drug to conceal. But heroin because it comes in powder form, is quite easy to conceal and smuggle. It is possible to smuggle a weeks supply of heroin into a prison under your tongue. If you try that with a weeks supply of cannabis resin you may find yourself needing assistance via the Heimlich Manoeuvre. So tightened prison security linked to MDT has combined to create a heroin revolution in Britain's jails.

To anyone who has spent time in a British prison, it is easy to understand how men facing the bleak prospect of time behind the walls of HMP might choose to try anything that might smash the drab routine of their lives and give them a kind of release, no matter how false and transitory.

The unfortunate fact is that, since the advent of MDT and the tightening of prison security, more and more cons are turning to the brown and white powder in order to beat the system and ease the pressure of being banged up for 23 hours a day. Every wing or landing in every prison in this country has at least two heroin dealers doing business on a daily basis. And, like the mythical Hydra, cut off one of their heads and another will immediately spring up to take his place.

Britain's prisons are in the middle of a heroin revolution that will greatly affect society in the very near future; more and more heroin-addicted criminals will be released, having seen nothing of rehabilitation. As you read this article, on the wings and landings of prisons another dabbler is about to boot his first joey. Whether he ends up dead of an overdose in some fast-food restaurant's toilet during the first 12 hours of his release, or mugging an OAP to feed his prison-acquired habit, is in the hands of fate. One thing is sure: the way things are going, he will not be alone.

In most European prisons where MDT is in operation, they have taken cannabis out of the equation.

Fooling the Bladder Cops

During a job interview, have you ever been asked to piss for your new employer? There was a time when your business was also your boss's business. At the turn of the century, company snooping was pervasive and privacy almost nonexistent. Your boss had the right to know who you lived with, what you drank, whether you went to church, or to what political groups you belonged. With the growth of the trade union movement and heightened awareness of the importance of individual rights, workers came to insist that life off the job was their private affair not to be scrutinized by employers.

But major chinks have begun to appear in the wall that has separated life on and off the job, largely due to the advent of new technologies that make it possible for employers to monitor their employee's off-duty activities.

Today millions of workers every year, in both the public and private sectors, are starting to be subjected to urinalysis drug tests as a condition for getting or keeping a job.

Drug by-products can be detected in urine, blood, hair, external residue and even perspiration! Drugs aren't the only things they test for; employers are using urinalysis to test women for pregnancy. Pregnant women are getting laid off or denied employment after taking such a test. Parents are spying on their children. The DOD Directive requires the military to screen all active duty members annually. If you don't want to be a victim of the drug war, this text will help you. If you are well known, this text may protect your reputation. I strongly recommend that drug users (pot smokers in particular) read this.

Drug testing is an unreasonable search, it forces people to incriminate themselves. It violates the European Convention on Human Rights. It boils down to an employer's right to know who s/he is hiring, as against an individual's right to privacy.

People should have the right to consume any substance they want, given that they are knowledgeable about that chemical. Employers, like everyone, have been affected by the propaganda given out by the government.

The only effective way to select workers is to evaluate their performance on the job. Drugs can actually improve performance. Aspirin relieves pain, allowing a worker to continue. Marijuana makes repetitive factory work more interesting. Stimulants will keep workers productive at the end of a long working day.

In March 1990 an article appeared in Scientific American which suggested that workers who tested positive for marijuana only: 1) cost less in health insurance benefits; 2) had a higher than average rate of promotion; 3) exhibited less absenteeism; and 4) were fired for cause less often than workers who did not test positive.

Too many important rights are being sacrificed by allowing drug testing to continue and there are too many problems with actually interpreting the data. The "metabolite" or urinalysis test screens for the presence of inactive byproducts of the "intoxicant", not the intoxicant itself. Results can vary on a number of factors, including metabolic rate of the person being tested, whether they are fat or thin, tolerance, fluid intake, the amount of any drug taken and its potency and the length of time you've been a user. All these affect greatly an individual's drug detection time.

Another problem with the data once it has been obtained is that a positive test does not indicate impairment. Whilst the metabolite test is fairly useful in detecting past use of cannabis, it is useless at detecting impairment, not only from cannabis use, but from a multitude of other sources including alcohol, lack of sleep and illness. If functional, on-the-job impairment is the concern, why not test for that. Devices that have been used for years to measure impairment in the lab are now available for public use. An impairment tester can be used every day, twice a day with no added cost, whereas each metabolite test used adds extra cost.

Metabolite drug testing is really an attempt to make private companies an auxiliary enforcement arm of the DEA. It is also an indirect tax on all of us, as the companies that use the test must pass the cost on to the consumer. Although impairment testing is almost as expensive, it actually delivers on the promise to make the workplace safer. Why do companies use a drug test then, when an impairment test would be more accurate at gauging any effect on their job, and cheaper? And what questions does this raise for the civil rights of workers?

Detection times of several drugs

Detection times of several drugs

Drug	Approx. detection time in urine using EMIT
Amphetamines	2-4 days
Barbiturates	
Short-Acting	1 day
Long-acting	2-3 weeks
Benzodiazepines	3-7 days
Cannabinoids	3-30 days
Clenbuterol (PE)	2-4 days (F1)
Cocaine	2-4 days
Codeine	2-5 days
Euphorics (LSD, MDMA, psilocybin)	1-3 days (F2)
Methadone	3-5 days
Methaqualone	14 days
Nicotine	? (F5)
Opiates	2-4 days
Peptide hormones (PE)	undetectable
Phencyclidine (PCP)	2-4 days (F4)
Phenobarbital	10-20 days
Propoxyphene	6 hours - 2 days
Steroids (anabolic)	
(PE) oral	14 days (F3)
parenterally	1 month (F3)

(PE) Performance Enhancers

(F1) 0.5 ng/ml by GC/MS

(F2) By RIA and GC/MS only. Not detectable by EMIT.

(F3) By HPLC, RIA, and GC/MS. Not detectable by EMIT.

(F4) 8-14 days was reported in earlier versions and was incorrect.

(F5) No data available yet. Detection time probably long because nicotine is fat soluble.

Note: Detection times vary depending on analytical method used, drug metabolism, tolerance, patient's condition, fluid intake and method and frequency of ingestion. These are general guidelines only.

There are four types of urine tests, a hair test, a perspiration test and a residue test. It would be helpful if people could somehow find out which test they are getting ahead of time. Below is a list of substances which are detectable and by which tests.

	EMIT	RIA	HPLC
Amphetamines	Y	Y	
Antidepressants	Y	N	
Barbiturates	Y	Y	
Benzodiazepines	Y	Y	
Cannabinoids	N	Y	
Cocaine	Y	N	
Ethanol	Y	N	
LSD	N	Y	
Methadone	Y	N	
Morphine	N	Y	
Opiates	Y	N	
PCP	N	Y	
Steroids	N	Y	Y

Y - detectable
N - not detectable
(blank) - unknown

Decreasing detection times

Increasing metabolism is probably the most effective way to decrease the time period that drugs can be detected in your system. Physical activity can increase your metabolic rate by as much as two thousand per cent. A high calorie diet is the next best way to increase metabolism. Consuming mass quantities of high calorie food will increase metabolic rate by up to 10 per cent. On the contrary, a malnourished (light) diet could lower your metabolism by 10 per cent. So exercise with intensity, and eat big.

Producing clean urine

THC is fat soluble, cleaning it out of your lipid tissue is very difficult. The only way to extract THC from fat cells is to exercise.

1) Dilution: hyper saturating your body with fluids will dilute metabolites possibly below the 50mg/ml threshold, depending on your metabolism. Be aware that creatinine levels are often tested and will

show the sample has been diluted. Diluting your sample will also produce clear urine and it may be rejected on colour alone. It is only necessary to start drinking just before the test, and drink at least eight hefty glasses of fluid (preferably water). Water does not clean any THC metabolites out of your system because THC is not water soluble. Do not overdo it or you could get water intoxication.

2) Creatinine level: Eating red meat will boost creatinine levels. If you eat a lot of red meat 3 days prior to the test, your creatinine level will be normal and the lab won't know that you've diluted your urine.

3) Colour your sample yellow by taking 50 to 100 mg of vitamin B.

4) Diuretics: To make you urinate more frequently. Coffee, cranberry juice, beer, iced tea, herbal tea and Pepsi are all good diuretics. Grapes are very good. Avoid salt.

5) Vinegar: Vinegar lowers the pH of urine. Amphetamines are excreted up to 3 times as fast when urine is acidified, so drinking vinegar could reduce the detection times for amphetamines. It will cause diarrhea and the effects on detection time are relatively insignificant.

metabolites to the colon rather than the bladder. "THC is eliminated primarily in the stool via bile acids. Both EMIT and RIA detect a secondary metabolite which is reabsorbed from the intestines. Thus a person with a high fibre diet will excrete a majority of THC (metabolites) in the stool."

7) Vitamin lecithin: A recent method that's still under development is to take vitamin lecithin. This vitamin breaks down stored fat and disperses it into your blood stream, to help clean out drugs that store themselves in lipid tissue, such as THC. It has been suggested to take vitamin lecithin on a regular basis to clean lipids of the THC metabolites, then quit before the test. Take it with vitamin B5 which aids in the process of turning lecithin into acetylcholine. Another solution is to take nutrients which help the body manufacture lecithin. Lipotrophics cause the liver to produce lecithin.

How to give a clean sample

Don't take urine from your first urination of the day. It's the dirtiest and can be heavily filled with metabolites. Urinate a couple of times before giving a test sample. Also, don't give the beginning or end of a stream. Piss in the toilet, then quickly stop and go in the cup. Stop, and shift back to the toilet for the last bit. Only give a midstream sample. Be sure to give just 60 cc's.

1) Exercise: Athletes have a big advantage over normal civilians. When fat is burned, THC by-products are released into the blood. This is the only way to get THC metabolites out of lipid tissue. Exercising between drug tests will clean THC metabolites from the system at a faster rate, thus lowering the detection period. It is important to stop burning fat cells near test time. On test day, it doesn't matter what's in your lipid tissue. What's in your blood and urine does matter. Exercise increases the amount of THC metabolites in the urine, so quit exercising a week before the test. Be lazy and eat big. This will put the body in an anabolic fat-storing stage. At this point, the buried THC metabolites won't escape and go into the urine.

Drug Screens

Some chemicals taken orally, supposedly will mask traces of drugs in urine. About the only proven drug that works is aspirin. According to Jeff Nightbyrd, there is testing industry data that taking 4 aspirins, a few hours prior to the test, might help you. "...aspirin interferes with the Syvia (sic) EMIT assay. It seems that aspirin absorbs at the same wavelength that NAD does which is how it interferes with the assay" (Clin Chem 34 (90) 602-606). Two reliable sources have tested aspirin and found it to interfere with the EMIT. In the future they will try to find a way to circumvent this test flaw. Until then, take advantage of the situation and use aspirin.

Doping samples

"Doping" samples consists of spiking the sample with different chemicals. Chemicals that defeat immunoglobulin/antigen binding will cause a false negative on the EMIT. Most of these additives only work on the standard EMIT screening, not on RIA or GC/MS tests. In many cases passing the EMIT is good enough, because they will never do a RIA or GC/MS confirmation on a sample

that showed negative. You can only rely on this method if you aren't being watched. If you are subjected to random tests you may like to carry the additive in your wallet.

Effective additives:

1) **Bleach (powdered):** Chlorinated bleach will test negative, and it's the best household additive. In an emergency, Jeff Nightbyrd recommends adding unscented bleach crystals to a diluted sample. It's recommended to grind the powdered bleach to a finer grain. ¼ teaspoon is recommended for a 60cc sample. For liquid bleach add 6 to 10 drops. Bleach will throw the pH outside the normal body range; so it may be apparent that the sample was tampered with.

2) **Klear (c):** Klear is a powdered additive. Jeff Nightbyrd, Ann Waters Pearson and Party Hut Enterprises currently endorses Klear. It is the most advanced and least detectable. Klear will clear up THC metabolites, as well as nicotine byproducts on the EMIT. If methamphetamines are present, Klear won't help. Klear is only designed to work on the EMIT, but will also work on the RIA when there is a good time span between the urine getting spiked, and getting tested. If the RIA test is not performed on site there is a good chance that Klear will cause a false negative. Two samples of Klear can be purchased from Martha Butterfield-Jay Foundation for 30 dollars. You can get Klear direct from Klear (the organisation) in the US.

3) **Water:** You can dilute your sample heavily with water. Don't confuse this with drinking water; you can also add water directly to your sample. Be sure to use hot water (between 91 and 97 degrees) as they will probably take the temperature of the sample. This method isn't dependable if they have sink facilities shut off. They may also listen to you, so pretend you're washing your hands!

Anything else will alter the pH value of the urine too drastically, or change the colour of the urine so is not recommended

Substitution

This method works for every urine test, every time. You simply give them clean urine (not yours). This works very well if you are not supervised. If you are to be supervised, try to talk them out of it, eg say "I don't want you to fuckin' watch me piss!". Abbie Hoffman, author of "Stealing This Urine Test," suggested leaving a few drops of urine on the seat or on your shoe as "an added measure of authenticity".

Substitution methods: There are three methods, but two are painful, and you have to be determined to use them. The most common way to sneak in urine is in a concealed container.

1) **Concealed container:** Simply conceal the urine. The first time you're alone with the container they give you, dump in your concealed urine. Be sure you can quietly open the container; the lab personnel may be just outside the door listening. You may be required to change into a gown. If so, a condom or douche bag holding the sample and taped around the thigh can be concealed under the gown. You can also run a plastic line from a flexible container and tape it to your equipment and even piss under observation. Females have been known to keep a condom full of urine in their vagina, and prick it to piss under supervision. Be sure to keep the sample between 91 and 97 degrees.

Where to get clean urine

- 1) Urine from a donor: You can substitute someone else's urine. Someone who you can trust, who hasn't taken any drugs in the last month.
- 2) Powdered urine: This can be obtained from the Martha Butterfield-Jay Foundation in the States. However you can also make your own powdered urine by urinating in a glass container. Let it evaporate. Then scrape the inside for concentrate. Just mix it with water before the test, and the sample will have the correct specific gravity, pH, colour etc.

Stealing urine

People have been known to get away with stealing their sample from the tray amongst the other samples. They wouldn't dare ask someone to re-test because they'd lost his/her urine sample. Don't expect this method to work if you're being tested for the military.

If you fail

If you fail the test, raise hell. You will be interviewed by a Medical Review Official (MRO), who will try to find out why you tested positive. If you fight it, your solicitor can "subpoena the proficiency testing records of the laboratory for review". These questions should be asked about the lab you are challenging:

How does the lab handle samples?

Are they NIDA/CAP certified?

Do they participate in appropriate proficiency testing?

What is their track record in the proficiency testing programme?

Have they ever failed a proficiency test?

What are the qualifications of the technical staff performing the test?

What technologies do they use to screen and confirm?

Jeff Nightbyrd is author of "Conquering the Urine Tests" pamphlet. E-mail <nightbyrd@l-link.net>; FAX 512/478-7706

Anne Watters Pearson (founder of the Martha Butterfield-Jay Foundation) is devoted to counselling and coaching people faced with urine testing. E-mail <oknorml@ix.netcom.com>.

reverse intimidation

If you do end up peeing for them, like a good boy or girl, this is a way you can make them think about what they're doing. Use reverse intimidation, and ask them questions they aren't prepared to answer.

What is the name and address of the lab that will perform the test?

Exactly what testor tests are to used?

For each test performed, list the type and quantity of specimens required?

For each test performed, list the percentages for false positive and false negative results.

Provide statistical justification for these percentages.

In the case of a false positive, what are the established procedures for retesting?

How many times will retesting be permitted?

What is the established procedures for resolving consistent false positive results?

What facility is going to extract the specimen(s)?

How much of each type of specimen is going to be extracted?

Are the lab and the blood extraction facility bonded?

What company carries their malpractice insurance and what are their policy numbers?

Exactly what information will be released from the lab to the employer?

It is required that all results be forwarded to me.

The employer is required to pay all costs involved, including those if retesting is required.

(Frequently wanted information on how to beat drug tests)

by Justin Gombos <jgombos@csun.edu>

What does it take to be front page news? Why was so much coverage given over to one 18-year-old girl one November? Please don't get me wrong; although I never knew her, I am certain Leah Betts was an intelligent and caring girl. I feel sorry for her family and friends that she is no longer with them. But though she was special to them and her death was tragic, why were the media so obsessed?

How about Shelley Collins? Does that name mean anything to you? She was only 13 in May 1992 when she was found dead in a supermarket car park; she had been sniffing lighter fluid. If you lived in Manchester then you might have read the small piece which appeared in the Evening Post, but she wasn't big news. From 1988 to 1990, 398 people - 283 of them under 20 - died from 'causes related to the abuse of gas fuels'. In over one third of cases it was the user's first experiment with the substance. In the same period less than 10 people died from 'causes related to the drug Ecstasy (MDMA)' - and only 4 of them under 20.

For people under the age of twenty the abuse of solvents caused more deaths between 1988 and 1990 than all controlled drugs combined. It accounted for 4% of the total of all deaths; nine out of ten victims are male. Ecstasy costs between £5 and £10, butane can be bought for as little as £1.30. Since 1985, it has been illegal for shopkeepers to supply a substance they believe may be abused, but between 1985 and 1992 there were only 47 prosecutions with just 30 convictions. Parents of children who abuse volatile substances have described them buying 5 or 6 cans of butane at a time - without being challenged.

Sales of these products - with certain restrictions - are entirely legal, and worth over £1 billion annually. As for the casualties, they tend to be too young, or too poor, to drink in pubs or to afford any other escape. Richard Ives, a consultant for the solvent abuse information project at the National Children's Bureau, comments, "Maybe sniffing is a kind of role people take up. When they have very low self-esteem, they take on a role that reinforces that lack of self-esteem." Solvent abuse is not a social activity. Children die in their bedrooms or empty school grounds, in garden sheds, bedsits or on railway embankments.

But Ecstasy is seen as a fun drug. Typical quotes seem to be "He was just out for a good time" and the like. As many as 500,000 people take Ecstasy every weekend at nightclubs and at parties. The vast majority enjoy themselves, but some do suffer problems as a result of use. Paranoia is frequently reported, but as Ecstasy is a Class 'A' drug (Maximum sentence in a Crown Court for possession is seven years and/or an unlimited fine. Maximum sentence for supply is life imprisonment, an unlimited fine and seizure of all assets) and the police are out to get you, that may be understandable. Some people also seem to be prone to panic attacks whilst using Ecstasy, a situation not aided by media attention on deaths. There are people who need to have medical treatment and yes, a few die. Since 1988 around 50 people have died of 'causes related to the use of Ecstasy'. Every death has been splashed over the front pages of every national newspaper. As a result, most users actively seek information.

But there has been a downside. Any drug campaign, or media interest, which targets one drug seems to give the impression that other drugs are safe. The Government's 'Heroin Screws You Up' campaign (1985) succeeded in promoting other drugs so well that between 1983 and 1993 drug use in Britain doubled. In the same way information about Ecstasy is not seen as applying to other drugs.

Research using Government statistics and coroners reports, rather than media opinion, shows that between 1989 and 1992 deaths

ECSTASY IN PERSPECTIVE

"One death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic"

at raves due to Ecstasy came to seven, but those due to Amphetamine totalled thirty-three. According to the researcher, Dr Russell Newcombe, "Speed kills on average twice as many people as Ecstasy, and in some years up to three times as many. But this has never been brought to light. I don't know why there is so much media attention on Ecstasy, perhaps because of the name, or because it is more closely associated with raves. I'm not saying it's harmless, but people should know the relative risks they are taking with all drugs."

Added to this, nightclubs can themselves be very unhealthy places. A recent study by the Ergonomics Society found that heat levels in many clubs were a health risk, raising body temperatures above World Health Organisation guidelines for the workplace. In one nightclub - which had good ventilation - the temperature was 84 degrees F with 70% - 90% humidity. After dancing for one hour in these conditions, the body temperature of clubbers had risen above 101 degrees F and they had lost, on average, one litre of sweat.

Computer calculations showed that if they had continued to dance for a further three hours, their body temperatures would have risen to 104 degrees F (40 degrees C). In 1994, three deaths occurred at nightclubs; they were all admitted to hospital with body temperatures of above 105.8 degrees F (41 degrees C). In a survey of nightclub regulars, 88% reported heat-related illnesses. If your body temperature rises above 42 degrees C, then your blood begins to form small clots which stick to your artery walls. This process uses up the clotting agent in the blood, leaving nothing to prevent bleeding. There are always tiny cuts and scratches inside the body and brain due to the body replacing worn and damaged tissue; normally these leaks are plugged by the clotting of blood. But above 42 degrees C this goes unchecked. Amphetamine, Ecstasy and exercise all increase the blood pressure, worsening the effect. If bleeding occurs in the brain, it can cause a stroke. If bleeding occurs for long enough it is possible to bleed to death. Heatstroke is the major cause of Ecstasy-related deaths in the UK.

Ecstasy is by no means a safe drug; but there is a risk associated with everything. The risk of dying whilst crossing the road is 1 in 8,000 in any given year - but we know to take precautions to lessen the risk. If you are taking Ecstasy or Amphetamine or Cocaine (particularly Crack Cocaine) in a club or whilst dancing at a party, you will be dehydrating. Do not drink alcohol, as it also dehydrates the body. Try to take regular rest periods (every half hour), replace lost fluids (drink one pint per hour) - it is better to drink small quantities regularly than a large amount all at once - isotonic drinks may be better than water (athletes drink them during endurance events rather than pure water). Before you go to a club, try to eat something salty or drink fresh fruit juice; this will increase the minerals in your body. If the club has a chill-out room then use it - most of them have air conditioning and seating which will help your body temperature normalise and reduce blood pressure.

Some people should avoid Ecstasy as they may aggravate medical conditions. If you suffer from: Hypertension, Heart Disease, Diabetes, Diminished Liver Function, Epilepsy, panic attacks, or have a history of Mental Illness, then you should avoid it. Also pregnant women should not take it, although there is no evidence that the drug affects the foetus or that it causes problems with the newborn.

Two people (as well as Leah Betts) have died from drinking too much water. Although this sounds unrelated to the drug, it is related to Anti-Diuretic Hormone (ADH) which is released when Ecstasy is taken. ADH prevents the production of dilute urine and, coupled with excessive drinking, causes water to build up inside the body cells. The brain readily soaks up this fluid and expands in the skull, causing brain damage and possibly death.

Animal studies have suggested that Ecstasy may be neurotoxic by showing a reduction in the neurotransmitter serotonin. However, there is a slimming tablet called Fenfluramine which causes the same reduction but has never been linked to a suggestion of neurotoxicity or brain damage, despite being widely prescribed for over 20 years. Most animal tests also used doses equivalent to between three and five times the human dose and were given intravenously rather than orally.

Since 1991, solvent-related deaths have begun to fall and in the last year for which figures are available, they were only 57 compared with 151 for 1990. However, it is still more than one every week and higher than all Ecstasy-related deaths since 1987. The fall in numbers may be related to lack of media interest which could enable solvent abuse agencies to help provide information without distraction.

So, if Ecstasy kills fewer people than speed, solvents or paracetamol (200 per year), may not be neurotoxic and is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands every week, why are the papers so obsessed? Perhaps it's because Ecstasy is the tabloid's baby. In 1976/77, the Sunday papers and the tabloids were full of scare stories about the Methamphetamines (the chemical family which includes MDMA, MDEA and MDA); as a result they were all banned under the Misuse of Drugs Act. This was a full ten years before Ecstasy was ever used as a street drug in Britain and eight years before it was banned in America. Britain was the first country in the world to ban the methamphetamines and has some of the strictest prohibitions on them. Something our tabloids are obviously very proud of.

Barry Mills

Information is patchy and largely speculative to date, but a growing band of psychiatrists such as Sue Ruben, in Liverpool, are reporting that a rising number of teenagers are suffering Ecstasy related mental health problems. It is estimated that 1 million people aged between 17 and 35 take E each weekend in Britain. If only a tiny proportion of them fall mentally ill, that's still an alarming number.

Press of the so-called "love drug" has tended to focus on dramatic cases of comas and death, such as the tragedy of Leah Betts which prompted the campaign led by Leah's parents warning that Ecstasy can kill. Yet such a concentration on the extreme side-effects of Ecstasy may be something of a red herring. More people die from swallowing aspirin or alcohol each year than E, and the total of Ecstasy deaths (figures vary from eight to 20 a year) is almost insignificant compared with the 30,000 annual alcohol-related death toll.

But death is not the only way to be "sorted" by E. "There is clear evidence that Ecstasy can have a neurotoxic effect which causes clinical depression in some people," Sue Ruben says. "The chances of dying from E may be low, but the risk of severe side-effects is greater and more worrying."

In June a study by Valerie Curran, reader in psychology at University College, London, gave firm scientific evidence for a trend that had previously only been suggested anecdotally - that Ecstasy is linked with depression and diminished concentration. She set up a "laboratory" in a London nightclub and tested clubbers' moods and behaviour. She found that Ecstasy users had substantially more difficulty

The agony of ecstasy

counting backwards than clubbers drinking alcohol. While drinkers quickly recovered from their hangovers, E users slid into an irritable and anxious depression a few days after taking the drug.

Curran's study has been backed up by research by Michael Morgan, a psychologist at the University of Wales, who found that many E users suffered memory loss and displayed impulsive behaviour. Taking Ecstasy he says, is like having "a chemical lobotomy". He estimates, that 10 per cent of people aged 20-30 taking Ecstasy could be affected.

Pure E consists of the stimulant drug MDMA, so it comes as no surprise to doctors that users feel a come-down when its effects wear off. What is alarming psychiatrists is that MDMA appears to be having an adverse effect on serotonin, the chemical in the brain thought to play an important part in controlling emotional stability and coherent thinking. Ecstasy acts by overstimulating the release of serotonin, so leading to a depletion of the chemicals reserves.

Low serotonin levels are associated with suicidal and impulsive behaviour, Morgan explains. "If you add to this the evidence of memory loss, then we could get a million-plus young people who have more severe mood swings and are more prone, to suicide, with premature dementia symptoms similar to Alzheimer's disease. We could get 17-year-olds exhibiting aspects of geriatric brain function." If these are long-term effects, then the wider impact could be catastrophic. "Single-handedly it could have severe consequences for our economy and for the country because of the cost to the NHS of looking after these people, the waste of education and their potential loss to the workforce," he says.

This bleak view of the future that the lives of a sizeable portion of a whole generation could be blighted - is not shared by Valerie Curran who believes that only certain susceptible individuals will suffer the severe side-effects of E. "Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of drugs than others. There could be a host of different biological, social and psychological factors causing this."

The truth is that in this murky world of illicit drugs, with research in its infancy, nobody knows for sure what will be the impact on regular users nor upon how many Curran's was the first "controlled" or scientific study, but even then, she says, it was impossible to know the exact ingredients of the drug the clubbers she tested were taking. And she adds that there is no proof that Ecstasy "causes" depression and memory loss; the only certainty is that there is a link.

She is continuing her research to find out whether the psychological damage is long term and whether sufferers can recover after a while. But in the meantime, this pioneering research is being overtaken by events. Drug users are changing their habits and presenting new problems.

A growing proportion of Ecstasy users have now moved onto multiple drug use on a single night out. While the side-effects of Ecstasy are only beginning to emerge, casualties of such drug cocktails are already turning up in hospital accident and emergency departments.

"City centre hospitals are increasingly at the frontline of this development," says Christopher Luke, a consultant at the A&E department of the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. "We regularly encounter patients who are psychotically violent or delirious as a result of taking cocktails of drugs. This is becoming a nightmarish problem with deranged young adults, who are profoundly violent towards the staff, presenting most weeks."

The other recognised trend is for excessive over-consumption of E, which may lead to a further depletion of serotonin left in the brain. Sue Ruben is worried that this could make it harder to treat the depression because antidepressants like Prozac require the presence of serotonin to work. A further problem is that many drug users fail to inform their psychiatrists that they are taking E.

"If they don't tell us then we may go ahead and prescribe antidepressants which might be harmful when mixed with Ecstasy and other drugs," she says.

"The problem is that young people are reluctant to talk to their GP or a psychiatrist about drugs because they're illegal and because they feel embarrassed for having taken them. The psychiatric profession as a whole needs to change its attitude towards drug-taking - it needs to be more open if we are to help these young people."

Some users do make use of confidential phone-lines such as Manchester's drugs advisory service, Lifeline. But the specialist counsellors are often reluctant to advise callers to seek psychiatric help. "Firstly, there isn't much psychiatric help out there for young people who've taken drugs like Ecstasy," says Lifeline's Alan Haughton. "So I wouldn't want someone who desperately wants help to be disappointed by the lack of resources and the lack of an understanding approach."

"Secondly, it is difficult to tell whether someone is having a bad time on drugs or whether they are having mental health problems which need to be treated. There is no MOT for your brain; there is no quick fix to find out if you have the blues or clinical depression." Alan Haughton believes that if we are to protect people from potential harm we have a moral duty to find out more about the long-term psychological effects of E. But he doubts that research will be funded.

"In the scale of funding, Ecstasy comes very low in the drugs hierarchy compared with drugs like heroin," he predicts. "Those in authority will say, 'Who cares whether this vast group of young people may well suffer problems of depression in the future when other young people are dying from drug-related incidents today?'"

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of young people continue to pill-pop every weekend. Their enjoyment is intense and instant. But what is the pay-back? To know its full extent we may have to wait another decade.

Petra Coveney

Children taking heroin as first choice drug

Children are now taking heroin as their first choice drug, and some use prostitution to pay for it, Keith Hellowell, chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' drugs subcommittee and Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, said recently.

Speaking at the publication of the annual joint police/ Customs drugs seizure statistics, Mr Hellowell said that seizures of heroin had gone up 41 per cent.

"Heroin is now the first choice drug of many young people." Whereas in the past he had not encountered addicts who had taken heroin before any other drug, young people were now going straight to heroin, he said.

The average age of prostitutes had dropped to 17 or 18, and around 50 per cent of them were addicts. Some as young as 13 or 14, male and female, used prostitution to pay for their habits, he said.

Seizures of ecstasy were down, although he said it was too early to say if this meant less was being used.

Dick Kellaway, chief investigation officer of HM Customs and Excise, said that Customs had seized a record 79.9 tonnes of drugs with a value of £501.2 million.
Duncan Campbell

Legalise drugs says prince

The monarch of the tiny and usually conservative principality of Liechtenstein has become the first head of state to advocate the legalisation of heroin and cocaine.

Prince Hans Adam II said in an interview with the Swiss daily newspaper *St Galler Tagblatt* that the state could buy narcotics direct from the producers, cutting out the black marketeers.

Officials in Liechtenstein were quick to distance themselves from their monarch's views. "If you want to know more about this you will have to ask the prince himself," said a government spokesman, Jehle Druno. "But he has gone on a two-week skiing holiday."

Liechtenstein is a hereditary monarchy, but the prince shares power with a 25-member parliament. Mr Druno stressed that the government had no plans to liberalise drugs. Prince Hans Adam is one of a number of international figures - including the billionaire financier George Soros and the European Commissioner Emma Bonino - to express a loss of faith in anti-drug policies.

In neighbouring Switzerland until a year ago, addicts could openly buy and sell hard drugs in a designated area in the centre of Zurich. Prince Hans Adam said the "needle park" experiment failed partly because those using it still had to buy drugs on the black market. The prince, aged 52, mentioned that as a young man he was offered hashish but never took any "because I never had enough pocket money".

How popes enjoyed high office

Several senior figures in the Vatican at the turn of the century were keen consumers of a wine fortified by cocaine. Popes Pius X and Leo XIII both enjoyed drinking a tonic of wine laced with cocaine invented in 1863 and known as *Vin Mariani*. Leo XIII was so fond of the drink he gave the manufacturer, a Corsican called Angelo Mariani, a gold medal.

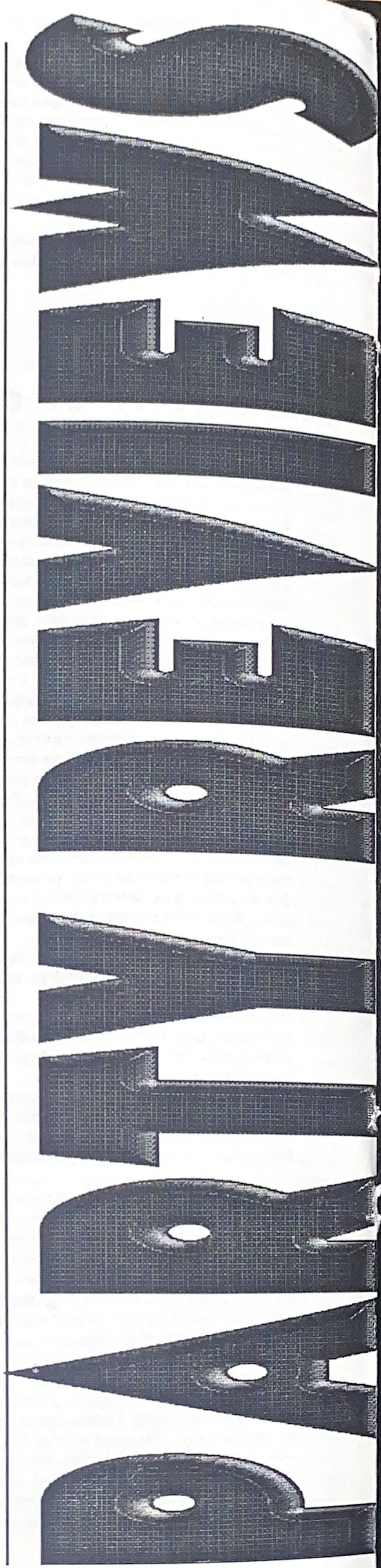
Woody heart saver fools US pot test

A food fad popularised by Woody Harrelson threatens to undermine the cannabis tests to which US workers now have to submit.

Hemp oil, a fashionable dietary supplement believed to reduce cholesterol and ward off heart attacks, can show up in urinary samples as THC. It gives no high, but its ability to produce suspicious cannabis traces in urine was spotted in 1996.

A court martial in Delaware last December acquitted a US Air Force sergeant of smoking pot after he argued that a positive test came from his use of hemp oil. Federal workers who face dismissal for using pot, may take the same line.

Hemp firms are trying to reduce the product's THC levels to untraceable amounts, fearing multi-million dollar writs from people wrongly sacked after hemp-induced positive tests.



'Paradise

Sitting here nearly a year later and writing (or trying to) a review of 'Out There' in France my most immediate recol-

lections of the 'trip' was of getting pulled on the way back by French customs and having our 'body cavities' probed, by rubber gloved fingers. And this after a week of extremely loose bowel movements in the flora and fauna using living vegetation as loo roll. They fined us the rest of our money for; possession of a trip, which 'fell' out of my pocket when I was made to turn it out (this despite not having tripped for, oh, 3 years!) and a small piece of hash found on the van floor. Everyone on site and their mother used the van to skin up in; apart from us cos we didn't have any hash all week until some kind soul gave us a small lump before they left for Blighty.

The antics of our French chums meant we missed our ferry. There was only 2 a day. One in the morning and one in late afternoon, and we'd missed the morning. So we bum around town. 6 hours to kill, not much dough to kill them with, but all starving hungry. We alight on the cheapest food preparation establishment and try and convince ourselves that eating an anaemic cheese and mushroom omelette, with chips so white and soggy they look, and taste, as if they're made from melted candle wax is a rewarding culinary experience.

Get home. Eventually. Gratefully open door and slump into the oft imagined comfort and splendor of our flat. Switch on light. No leccy. Shit. Unload van, in pitch black. Avoid (try to) the moist little parcels the cats have left dotted around the carpet. Quick turn out of pockets reveals total lack of cash syndrome, due to the attentions of our Customs chums. Oh well, we'll have a quick smoke then, and just

go to bed.

Find that the little lump of hash we'd been given and stashed so we could have a nice calming smoke when we got back, after our arduously slow 10 hour journey, was the bit that we ended up also getting fined for. Decide to admit defeat. We give up, and feel our way along the pitch black passage, ignoring the dark, the poverty, the cat piss, the cat shit, the fact that we were actually more comfortable in the tent we've just left in France and the overpowering smell of methane exuding from our bed clothes, as the images from the last week flicker in front of sleep starved eyes..

We arrive just as the sun is setting over the beautiful Brittany countryside to find that the 'meandering river', 'sparkling joyously in the summer sun' with 'glistening trout jumping in the moonlight', was really a stagnant stream, running through a land filled site. A 'land fill site' that had only been 'land filled' three weeks before, rather than the recommended 3 years. Feel that headache caused by the strangely overpowering and quite disconcerting smell of methane gas that permeated the atmosphere, leading the few who were together enough to bring gas canisters to spend the whole weekend checking them for leaks. Luckily I didn't have to do this, having neglected to bring any cooking utensils or equipment of any sort, in the naive and hopeful, but very much mistaken belief that there would be 'loads of places to eat'. There were, but they all sold chips. Well apart from the British travellers who did the wicked cooked veggy breakfasts with burgamix and baked potatoes. And the French stall that did a most amazing bowl of Chinese noodle soup. All freshly prepared in front of you, with fresh coriander, fresh noodles, tomatoes, tofu and a whole host of lovely ingredients, served with a smile. And the Pendragon food tent which churned out 3 meals a day for a week.

A tractor turned up 3 times a day for the first few blindingly hot days, to spray water on the ultra fine dust barely covering the land fill, just to stop it and the newly sown grass seeds from blowing away. Total soil erosion. Luckily it started to rain really, because the site was starting to resemble the set of Mad Max. And instead of settling in our choked lungs it now stayed on the floor and made mud. Lots of it.

We erected the marquee on the last of the blisteringly hot days, before the couple of

days of chucking it down rain. Which, in the circumstances was definitely the best way to do it. Despite impressing upon everyone, before they crashed out, the importance of setting the marquee up before the full on heat of the midday sun hit us, by 2.00pm, in the searing heat of the next afternoon, it's still not up. Penny has already fallen drunk, and head first into the stream, going for a swim no doubt in the 'lake of me' that divides the festival into two parts, 'Pikey Site' and 'Paradise'. The latter being up amongst the trees, away from the dust (later mud) and most importantly the smell of methane. However, it transpires after the first night that all is not well in 'Paradise', once the cover of darkness falls. Situated bang on top of a hill, halfway down the length of the site, Paradise has a few acoustic problems with the 5 various keen techno tents that proliferate down stream from our love tent. Once darkness settles, Paradise is besieged by a cacophony of nose bleed and toytown techno, an oral fate we are saved due to the warm, soulful tones that emanate from our tent during the whole weekend drowning out any other noise. Paradise's daytrippers are heard to moan about their lack of sleep intermittently throughout the week, but who said anything about sleeping at a festival anyway?

By the time the marquee was up, it had started to rain, so many more moments were spent sticking pieces of gaffa over the holes in the roof. Two days into the festy, the rig was finally put up, only to be taken down again and put back in the van, because of the rain pounding in through the sides of the marquee. The next morning it was still pissing down, so tarps were blagged and hopefully tied up, resting on tall posts to increase the amount of shelter from the rain. The rig was brought back out, and the **Quadrant** boys turned up from **Nottingham**, introduced themselves as **Kel** and **Kev** and fucked off down town for the first of their mammoth drinking sessions. They had some alleged **Mixmag** photographer in tow called **Henry**, who spent much of the time trying, unsuccessfully I might add, to get off with anything that moved. Yes eventually even other men. And we didn't see him take any photos either.

Having challenged the **Nottingham** contingent to a drinking competition, we proceeded to drink all our beer and wine two days before the rest of them arrived. In the pissing rain. Rolling about in the mud, balling and shouting. The **Kent** posse numbered about 30, and new peeps were turning up all the time, and as Thursday slopped into Friday, everyone began to relax and slip into festy mode, and over, on the mud. Apart from little **Woody** who screamed when he saw the toilets, and spent much of the week desperately wanting to go to the loo, screaming 'It's seeping out, it's seeping out', a bit like

Big Lyd in best behaviour shock?

Free party in Cambridge - Saturday 18 April

spent the whole time in a fervent of alcoholic bravado (so no change there then), which quietened considerably when he fell down the hill, too drunk to fuck, straight into the path of an oncoming tree. **Scouse** arrived with minutes to spare. His passport had turned up that morning, he'd managed to blag a lift, although their car broke down and they'd promptly lost all their money before even leaving **Dover**. **Austin**, fresh from losing 4 stone on the H plan diet, arrived just in time to tell people that they should sort their lives out, swap consumerables with **Oz** for his gayer than camp shirt, and provide yet more legendary lost it stories to be added to his not inconsiderable repertoire. Most of these revolve around the usual axis of getting fucked up, crashing out, waking up, minus all money, clothes etc. You know, in the grand old tradition. Also spotted; **Becky 'Teeth'**, **Austins** ex missus, with new tits, acquired through childbirth. **Kapp** sharing his French tarts with anyone who asked and plenty who didn't, and returning from the supermarket, which was a couple of miles away laden down with trolleys full to the brim with booze, at least twice a day. People falling asleep in the blistering sun when the rain finally stopped and achieving those embarrassing sun tans you get whilst shite faced and outside. You know, half a bright red face, one bright red leg and a garish forearm. **Rick 'Industry Standard' Digs 'deep down'** falls asleep whilst still standing. 'How long before I'm on?' he says. 'Four and a half hours'. 'Oh, not that long then. I'll wait'. **Simon DK's** first words on arrival; 'Got any lively?' The **Quadrant** boys back from another drinking sesh 'down town' deciding to mend their speaker drivers with bits of carefully applied gaffa tape, then dropping the driver on the floor to much guffaw, before it could be safely screwed back into the speaker.

However as the weekend developed it seemed an unsurmountable line developed between the site that still had grass and thus nice places to sit and **Pendragon**, and bouncy-earthed, mud-dust which stretched as far as the eye could see beyond our love tent. We were situated just on the divide and for some instinctive reason people don't really like chilling on a few thousand million tonnes of rotting cack. Anyway, forget all the jipes. Some of us did and had ourselves a rollicking fine time, where we met loads of new people of all persuasions, drank ourselves stupid and laughed ourselves silly. Night after night after night after night after night. There's something strangely liberating about being stuck in a field with a few thousand like-minded souls, refusing to wash or change outfits for a week... the euphoria of which only starts to fade as you hit the ferry home, shriek 'Who let that family in here?', and try and pretend that that awful smell that envelopes the croissant queue isn't you.

With a few last minute drop outs, the crew numbers 3 meaning we can all sit in the front of the van and listen to music, rather than in the back listening to **Louie** and **Barry**. So we end up listening to **Rosie** instead, as we casually meander our way through Britain's Eastern counties, never going above 60 in our trusty, fucking massive hire van. 'Oh look! There's a horse'.

Despite the snails pace we arrive in **Cambridge** within one and a half hours, but then spend the usual 2 hours trying to find our destination. Three point turns in residential cul de sacs, with cars parked on either side of the road, in the dark, in a Luton van, with no power steering certainly gets the old blood pumping. We pile out, and into **Grant Plant's** pad; await the deliverance of a stapler, watch **Stars In Their Eyes**, and then it's off to the venue, a really nice old deserted Inn in a tiny village just outside of **Cambridge**. Via a guided tour of **Long Stanton Army Base**, and a few other detours we arrive at the venue at 10.15pm. **Oz** is on at 11. The rig is out of the van, and set up with **Oz** putting his first tune on by 10.45. That's because we didn't have **Louie** plugging all the speakers in wrong. Then unplugging them. Changing all the leads. Then getting the changed leads mixed up with the original leads, so plugging the same leads back in again, stopping, scratching his head, getting more leads out of the lead box, then getting them confused with the two sets already out, and so on. Ad finitum, until everyone in the crew is so hot, sweaty and stressed out we fall out. But not for long.

Sitting in the venue, unbidden memories come to the fore of **The Ship**, at **Faversham**, in it's (wa)hey day. Just the size and shape of the room, with all the old oak beams, mind, nothing else. One refuses to be reminded of the nest of old boys who used to inhabit **The Ship**, every waking and sleeping moment, before it sank under the combined weight of **Walter's** neuroses. Well, burnt under them actually.

Reminiscing aside, I collapsed onto a bench right by the speakers. The room was filling up with people pretty quickly and **Oz** was playing a stormer. I felt knackered after my first drive for nearly a year. But the music sounded so excellent, I could feel my diaphragm moving violently back and forth. I responded in the only way I could. I staggered onto the dance floor and was viciously sick down the sleeve of my top, just as **Grant** and **Rosie** both decided to approach for a little chat. Surreptitiously flicking chunks of half digested food from my fingers, I hoped neither had noticed. But I felt a lot better.

The dance floor was staring to look a lot more interesting. People bouncing around in high heeled trainers and top club togs. 'Look at that really tall girl' says **Rosie**. 'It's a bloke **Rosie**.' Then through the throng appeared **Polly** and **Dick Flemming**, **Polly** looking relieved that she hadn't been killed on the back of **Mr Flemmings** bike. **Mr Flemming** looking wrecked and with **Didi** and his brother in tow, worse the wear for too lusty an appreciation of the instant wanker dust. So no change there then. They were followed by **Big Lyd** and **Mademoiselle Soixant-Neuf** already pissed up and lairy after their 14th bottle of red wine. Well our 14th bottle. With quite a little posse now staking its claim to a small corner of the sick drenched dance floor, we started getting down to business. Staggering around uselessly and talking complete shite in other words. Soon our numbers were swollen still further with the arrival of our London hombres; **DJ Detention**, **Tom** and **The Lovely**; and **Anders** and **Isa** who had casually strolled over from the next village but one. And he was still the tallest at the party.

We revelled in revealing the weekend warrior in all of us. Well, some of us revealed something to some of us.

The **Cambridge** lot are well chummy if a little well dressed. We all looked like tramps in comparison. But then we look like tramps in **Whitstable** too, which after all is inhabited solely by wandering congregations of drunken tramps masquerading as artists, writers, D.J.'s or musicians. None of us are renowned for our dress sense. None of us are known for anything, other than being drunken tramps, which is not particularly remarkable in a town full only of them. **Oz** has done his **Bobby 'I'm on pills, for me nerves' Chariot** impression, once again to a turn, and is followed by **Grant Plant** (pronounced Gr'aren't), who plays a groovy thumper of a set well and truly chilled down from his former top-o-the-nighter **More Tea Vicar** style. Indeed much more like the **Grant** of yor; like when he last played for us at that free party down the **Warren** a few years back. We rejoiced communally in our Luddite love of vinyl. **Patrick** was going to go a bit techy but carried on in the general housey vein set by the DJ with the bouncy hair who's name we've forgotten.

It was then I thought 'I'll just pop into the kitchen and see who's out there...', and ended up welded to a chair and a conversation for the next few hours, until the police came in and politely stopped the party at 5.30am. So off the sounds went and off we went too. Via a quick chill out in **Anders** and **Isa's**, on the way to which one of the cars caught on fire (don't ask). And then it was another slow, yet quick journey back to **Kent**. A big thanks to **Grant** and his crew for a top nights entertainment. That's the trouble with hobbies. They're like heroin. It becomes so there's not time for anything else.

All back to mine

Problems with the post-club home soiree by Robert Newman.

No More

Mr All back To Mine. It's always the same. You think it's gonna feel like your birthday party, but by the time you get back to yours there's somehow only ever two people you actually know, and ten loser, druggie scumbags sizing up your gaff and drinking all your liquor. And because you're in a flat full of strangers, your own home doesn't feel like home any more. The other night, while informing one of my guests that alas, no, I didn't have any Alcan foil, but would he and his friends, however, care for some tea to go with my last bottle of Famous Grouse, I was suddenly aware of the browbeaten expression on my face; it was the hangdog, fucked-over expression of a Salford publican when the local gang have forced an impromptu lock-in on him. Happy days.

As these low-life wasters refuse to take the hint that you'd like to retire now and would they like hackney-carriages summoned, your conscience hands you a polaroid of the room. Up till now you've been thinking that if a picture was taken of the scene in your front room it could be entitled something like "The Great Artist As Truly Comprehensive Soul Able To Mix With All Walks Of Life". But the picture you see is "The Lost, wasted years of Bullshit, Druggie Conversations. Soul in ruins. Cushions fucked-Up. Freefall".

Clearing up the next day you're struck by the impersonality of the litter. It's

different when you've had your own, actual, proper friends round. When tidying up after your friends, your flat becomes a scrapbook. You think, "Here is the cassette box Martine was holding when she came up with that excellent joke about Brett Anderson. Here is the ice-cream Sid spilled before coming up with the phrase "I've totally chocolated me strides". Here are the splinters of the wine glass I was absent-mindedly chewing while my ex-girlfriend phoned her boyfriend, but the morning after the morning after the all back to mine...well, this could be the floor of the Electric Ballroom after an Angelic Upstarts gig. And looking at all the many empty bottles of wine and spirits (dark butt-ends dissolving in the last stale dregs), you remember how carefully you chose the wine because it was intended for when the woman you love next came by. You remember that that crate of Kronenbourg was what you were storing up for when your friends came round to watch the Umbro Cup. What I'm trying to say is that the most depressing thing about an all back to mine isn't that your liquor has gone down the gannet gullets of ungrateful, tedious strangers. No, the most depressing thing is to do with what those empties symbolise. It's this; your future has been drained of all the

intimate, cosy or celebratory occasions in which those bottles where to be a part.

What were you thinking? Why did you behave like a kind of loved up Travis Bickle; All the animals come out at night; whores, dopers, junkies, sick, the scum, the filth. Hey everyone! All back to mine!" What made you say "All back to mine"? Think back. The lights came on and you felt like your flat was a bully waiting to give you a hard time if you went home alone. Better to face that bully with some friends or whoever. It turns out, contrary to your plans, that it's whoever. Next morning of course, you feel just as empty. The only difference, you realise - as you notice a hi-fi shaded patch of slightly lighter wallpaper - is that now that now the flat seems strangely empty too. Two smaller patches of new-looking wallpaper form an outline the size of speakers, and on the floor, under those lighter shapes of wall, is a neat dust-free square.

There is, of course, another, more shameful reason that prompts the cry of "All back to mine". You think some woman might come back too - I mean, it's the law of averages, innit? Maybe the same woman who found you unappealing or completely invisible in the club will see you in a new light back at yours just as soon as they see that clip-framed Secondary School Watermanship Certificate 1975.

("one width of the pool, then one in pajamas, plus being able to tread water for 20 seconds, girls.") But no, for some reason the all back to mine is as oestrogen-free as Supergrass. There may be a girl necking with her boyfriend, or that other denizen of these occasions...the absolutely terrifying loony woman. (She has a full pint-glass in her hand-bag. She has vomit in her teeth. She wants to phone her brother.) But mainly the chilly air hangs grim with testosterone.

And oh what bollocks is spoken! One of my guests (of the "I thought he came with you?" "no, I thought he came with you" variety) took 40 minutes to tell us the plot of a Stephen King story. Forty minutes of this: "And then...the man...or was it the woman? Anyway... they go into this house... No, they don't, they leave this house, oh no that's not them that's someone else." At every interruption from bored, tired, broken listeners he would a) say "but it's got a brilliant ending, right, a brilliant ending," and b) double the volume of his voice. As dawn broke, he finally said: "here it is, right, this is the brilliant ending right, this is brilliant right... Oh what was it now?... No it's gone... Sorry." They leave. You turn in. You wake up in a skip that once was a home. Oh well, you may have been bored but at least you weren't lonely, you think. Then you notice a Watermanship -Certificate-shaped patch of wallpaper that's a shade lighter than the rest of the wall.

Moody in a

hire van

7th Heaven - The Works -
27/3/97

10.35pm. Depart Canterbury train station on full tilt for a rammed rockin' start to the bank holiday weekend, full of sweaty, writhing, grinning bodies. Woo-hoo!

10.36pm. Arrive at The Works door and notice a small lump of previously forgotten stash whilst emptying my pockets for the bouncer (who I don't recognise and must be new). Think "he won't check my pockets, not in 'ere."

10.37pm. Said bouncer sticks his hand straight in the same fucking pocket (first one!) and gives me that "ooh, what's this then" look. Me: "All right, you've found my gear just let us in".

Tosser: "Nooo mate, yyyou're out" and opens the door like some cheap fucking game show host. Cunt.

"Give me my gear back then?"

"Shall I call the police?"

I think this isn't a good time to argue as I want to bottle the fucker, but this probably wouldn't be good form outside a mate's party, so I retreat to the pub to get someone to fetch tvc's own Paul 'Big Trouble' Anderson from inside the club.

11.40pm. After much sulking and consideration of violent reprisals, I was back outside The Burks with 'Big Trouble' (cheers Bev), being told I had more chance of growing another arsehole than kicking off my Easter festivities inside.

11.45pm. I'm given van keys by Paul and find 3 cans of Fosters under the seat. Cheers Rosie. Nice.

12.00am. After Rosie has put the radio in I find drinking and smoking fags slightly more enjoyable. "So, is it busy?"

"Yeah, packed!"

"Smashing"

"Anyway, I'm going back in."

I'm joined by Tall Paul and we kick it to Mary Anne Hobbes, while he tells me the disturbing news of a theft inside the club and I tell passers by the disturbing reason I'm looking moody in a hire van.

2.00am. After 2 and a half hours sitting in this poxy motor I've discovered Mary Anne Hobbes is a block rockin' DJ, people who go in The Bizz don't wear trainers and that ALL bouncers are cunts.

Nicky's discovered you can't trust pikey birds and the whole fucking night's been a total write off and not the usual celebration of how twisted we can get in 6 hours. The rest of the weekend was even fucking worse!

poor dear, he was having a bit of a whitey

Fruity Antics - Club Loco, Bristol September

Hmmn, it's going to be an interesting (?) journey, in a car, for 200 miles, with "Needle" Cage and Huge "Ness-Abounds". Thankfully, though, they are both on their best behaviour, as Oz and I kick back in the rear, drinking pop and eating our snacks before we even leave Whitstable. We're all on the ponce so far, hoping that once we hit Bristol we'll be able to blag a tenner to at least buy some drinks to start the evening's relaxation off.

A few generously delivered cheese toasties later and many blond bottles, courtesy of Richard's step sister Jane and we're already sloshed and ready to hit the party streets of Bristol. Huge and Richard are still being incredibly well behaved, so we all make the most of it, including them.

Oz carries his records into yet another bar, as we wait for the club to open. Richard has nearly talked his pregnant step sister into coming clubbing with us. She's already drunkenly considering it.

Half an hour later and she's propping up the bar with us in the club. Huge has set his equipment up by the decks and is grinning expectantly, slapping his thigh in anticipation of the night's pleasures to come. Oz is realizing just how drunk and off it he actually is. Needle is sitting on the floor, head in hands. We all laugh and point at him indulgently, shocked at how quiet he is being.

Oz is playing and Huge is positioned in front of his equipment. He fiddles with his knobs as Oz slips gracefully between 12"s. Needle has awoken and is stumbling staggeringly around the quickly clearing dancefloor. This is more like the behaviour we had been dreading, and he warms to it like a champion. Huge is already pulling his best move out of his little box of tricks. Dave is surrounded by a bevy of impossibly young, beautiful and blond 17 year old Canadian girls. As usual. "17 year old girls may be beautiful, but they don't have personalities", lies Nick to Huge. Huge has eyes and ears however, only for Oz. Needle has warmed up, somewhat. As we look over, we notice, with horror, that he has his arms entwined around one of the young lovelies waists. We don't have the heart to tell him it's Dave. Basil is subdued and Iain is stumbling around in time honoured messy fashion with Tara.

The DJ playing downstairs is Def E. I remark to Basil how Iain told us it was because he was deaf and ask how he can DJ when he can't hear. "I suppose he feels the beats", I cringingly say. Basil looks at me with pity. "No he's def", and then gives me a quick slang lesson. "Oh", I exclaim, strangely deflated. "I don't know any skating slang", I explain. "I've got to go now" Basil replies, hurriedly, and shoots off.

Needle has started to disgrace himself. He has shouted "Oi sexy" across the room at a young woman. He seems to have forgotten the very young women and has moved into the twenties age range now. Hopefully he'll be asleep soon, we reassure ourselves.

Oz has been greeted by Jon da Silva, who he studied at university with, 12 or so years ago. Hello, replies Oz bemusedly, not recognising him even remotely. Iain rushes across and fills him in. "Oh, Jonathon Hibbert...."

All too soon it's 5 o'clock. Needle has been under the illusion that it was only 2.15am for the last five hours as his watch had stopped. He looks a tad desolate as he realises yet again that the women will all depart without the dubious pleasure of experiencing his charms. You drive 200 miles and still can't pull..

We stumble to the car and back to Tara's. As Oz falls from the car, he lurches up against a tree and throws up. Poor dear, he was having a bit of a whitey but we all laughed and gesticulated in a most unsupporting manner.

We all stagger up very steep stairs, pass around luke warm beer, and then fall asleep on all our hosts available surfaces. And yes, we still forgot to bring our duvets.

Thanks to Iain, Basil, Tara, Dave and Chris for another top night out. The journey back seemed an unusually long 3 hours....

mental

*Giddy Up with Giddy Fruit
- The Lenton, Nottingham
DIY 8th birthday - Free party, In the Sticks,
Nottingham*

The Giddy Fruit posse are one of the many excellent Nottingham crews that've sprung up from the DiY fountain. In many ways tonight totally breached house's origins and its peaks and in others the whole thing hasn't changed a bit. Instead of a few hundred devotees the scene has probably grown to 10,000. Who knows? It's not really something discernible. Certainly, record sales have risen, the numbers of producers, studios, record shops and DJ's have risen but on this scene, as well as others, something stronger is there too. The discernible element. It's there a-simmering. The whole reason for this phenomenal growth. It's a big fuck off security blanket hand stitched panel by panel. It is a real live ad where everyone holds hands and sings together, a cornucopia of mental tentacles. Phzzz!

I can hear it now, oblivious to distance.

Ring. Ring.

Ring. Ring.

-Hello.

-Hey, man. It's Alex.

Now, I know two people called Alex. One I used to hang out with when I was 25. Him, me and a couple of other guys - Big Dave and Alan if you want to be precise - used to get wasted and listen to music a lot. Alex's mum ran a small deli shop in New York "Limey's Lunch Box" (I kid thee not) and Alan's dad... well we won't go into that right now but suffice to say he was in a position to allow him to live his life unhindered.

The other Alex I'd met at the Out There Festival in France. A once beautiful organism set amid tranquil countryside now rehoused on a land-fill site. TVC and Quadrant gave a soundsystem five high. Kinda. Putting 5K in a piece we got the privilege of hobnobbing with the DIY boys and Pendragon. Over five days we listened to music, talked, drank and ate all our money and had a jolly good time accelerating all known socialising trends by any means necessary. The usual palaver of exchanging bits of paper happened but you don't really expect much to happen from it, Do you?

-Alex man, nice to hear from you. How's it going?

-Fine, yeah, listen man. How about you and another DJ come up from Kent to Nottingham and play up here? We got a little club and it's really nice.

Last time we went Nottingham, it was the Quadrant Boys' night at The House. Flow were giving each other a four deck masturbatory session in front of 300 odd people all as bendy as the Flow boys. Upstairs we had an altogether different affair; Rubberneck's Ian and Nick (Nick rushing off to hospital mid set to catch the birth of his baby) and Oz kept it well chugging. The next day saw a Quadrant back room of Kel, Morph and indeed it seemed the whole damn posse provide some alternative entertainment to Guru Josh in the main room as 2,500 students kicked in the new term with a rather hot and mental Freshers' Ball. A reluctant drive back south gave us plenty of time to absorb a whirlwind 24 hours and dream the prospect of a return visit.

-Just give me the date, I blurt out.

-Mind it finishes at three so we'll have find some

thing after.

Not 2 hours later and Rick Digs is on the phone saying that very night they are having their 8th birthday party and would we like to come. Later someone tells me that it will be their first free party in Nottingham for two years.

We arrive at the house on the directions that Alex gave us over the phone after a chuggingly munchious 3 and a half hour drive. No Alex but Lucy (the co-promoter) would be along later. Meanwhile meet Paul, Gav and the others have a glass of wine - yes don't mind if I do - smoke? - yes please - Blind Date or that documentary on natural disasters that repeated from Tuesday night? Blind date, right. Oh God, it's hilarious this week, isn't Cilla the highest paid woman on TV?, wouldn't it be funny if they had a naked one, or a gay one? No? Never mind coz it's time to go to the Club now. Yeah, we have one space. Squeeze in here. Don't worry about parking on the double yellow Timo. Nah! Look. They've all done it so it must be ok.

-You a Geordie? - says the landlord of The Lenton - that ship they've got up there, the one that's a disco. The original one of that - coz the current one is the third - the original one of them is docked up on the Firth of Clyde. Oh I. The second one was sold to Rank Leisure for a massive profit. How do I know? I was talking to *****, the owner at a do in London. Come up he said. So I did. Nice. A few bars and couple of dance floors. Nice job.

-If you want a drink says Alex just put it on my tab. Which I did. Timo on the orange and lemonades coz he was driving and me and Nick on the old Forsyth Saga.

Casual P started the warm up after shouts from the floor. Now we know why he's called Casual. Timo and Oz did their 2 and a half hours with a bit o' funky techno to jacking house vibe. My how the floor filled. Nobody dances in here 'till 1 o'clock. My trance trews, get up there. Lucy finishes off with a nice blend of lovely garage vibes.

-Right, says Lucy, we'll rendezvous back at the

Gothic Cottage then it's off to **DIY's** 8th birthday party.

-Ok. Yes we have one space.

It's the middle of winter. It's been raining. And we are driving through the **Nottinghamshire** country side and its around 4am. Hey the rains stopped though. The clouds still block out the moon but it is really mild for this time of year. We'd heard via mobile that police had roadblocked all access. So what. We just parked up and walked with the records. Well some did but I didn't cos my records are heavy, I'm a lazy bastard and it was, ooh, all of 1 mile, if that, and I'd already played that night and I'd left them back at **Gothic Cottage** so they'd be safe. As soon as I got there I regretted it straight away. Bastard.

DIY had 2 stacks of speakers all the way up to the three sided barns ceiling. Very thoughtfully they had these down to a reasonable level. There was no taking the piss evident here. **Ralph Lawson**, 20/20 main man and all round good egg, who must have done three hours or so, flew the flag commendably before **Pete Woosh** took over just before we left. **Giddy Fruit** outside in a smaller set up justified their name tag coz by seven am they were all just, well, giddyng it up like billy-o. Oh how we laughed.

Earlier they was around 15 of us, all from different directions, met up together on the road between the blocks. In front of us The Party, which we could hear clearly by now, but in front of that -two fat fucking middle aged coppers with a big torch- shouts one female voice in our crowd. -Yeah- someone agrees.

-Let's steam 'em- someone else shouts. -Raahh!- go the crowd and, in scenes reminiscent of the great descent on **Stonehenge** in 1988, we casually walked, nay sauntered past these two bewildered fat middle-aged cops with a big torch.

-I wouldn't go down there if I were you- says one. -They've got a van and are arresting everyone that goes down there-.

-Why-.

-Because what you are doing is illegal-. We illegally walk down the road to... nothing, but the party. Yeah! Think I'll have a quick dance to celebrate. What's that? Of course I've got some **Rizla** come and sit by the fire where it's warmer. What's your name again? Oh yeah...

another tired evening of abuse

April 20th - East Kent

Fucking excellent. **Throb Felt**, **Si Stonehouse** and **Oz** had a great time. The **'Hole in the Wall'** reunion being in full flow, as it were, reliving more innocent, halcyon days of yore, as all the emotional horror of the previous weeks seems to be calming down and everyone is in a 'business as usual' mode. Shit-faced frolics and the off-loading of the same old stories that every week seem more hilariously exaggerated than the last week. Ho ho. The bar bill returns to normal, despite a few anomalies. In one month's time **Cabbaged** has a break for the summer and not before time. Relentless, remorseless promoting provokes its own particular brand of psychosis, and looking back on the countless reviews its inexorable descent seems apparent through the lines. **tVC** has had the euphoria years ('86-'93), its come down years ('93-'95), its post-come-down reassessment, ('96), its try to attain the euphoria years again but get burst into a thousand tiny psychotic pieces ('97-?). Paranoid that I am, I'm repeatedly told by the new members that every thing's ok, we're doing well, the best is yet to come, you won't give up, don't give up now, you can't give up now! It's collective 'coz if one of us falls we all do. We're partying like there's no tomorrow, and there may well be none. We think yeah, yeah, yeah. Gulp, gobble, snort. Hedonism as pure narcotic is the hardest of all to give up. The impending great news story has no-one, ever, discussing it. What? *Us* discuss politics or current affairs? They'd rather tell yet another hilarious story about puking their guts up coz they've OD'ed on some shite narco stimulant. Apathetic and with no political balls **tVC** slumps through another tired evening of drug and alcohol abuse till they end sitting in a room, staring bleakly ahead, blankly, not talking, not communicating, *but* the records keep on playing. Wired out of their fucking heads. Rock bottom. Sleep a dream away, till the real late AM, when exhaustion and zzz's beckon and unconsciousness is such a sweet relief that it'd be great to stay there forever. But, the post-euphoric, post-comedown, post-psychotic, (hopefully) pro-political summer of '98 must swagger onto its knees ready to stand up together for that last great sucker punch - the Free Party season 1998. Up the revolution. Seriously, what else have we got? What's the alternative? We've been so busy putting everything into the sound system, the dreaded contemplation of what we'd do if it ever failed doesn't bear thinking about. It's a scary, black hole, big. And our toes are on the edge of it...



OCCASIONALLY REALITY WOULD BURST INTO BILL'S
HAPPY CARTOON LIFE.

that's a funny one, Ronny

Chunky 5 - Stoke Newington N16

From the edgy chill of **Brixton** to an **East End** gangsters former club, the search for some underground deep house in London continues,

"There they are", says the cool groove **Chunk**, decked head to toe in their new line of 'Lech' designer togs. "There. The two bullet holes." Free-forming images of **Barbara Windsor** guffawing "That's a funny one, **Ronnie**", to the sound of weapon's discharging into people's faces on the steps of this once luxurious venue the week before; the ruff, gruff party image of the **East End** took one step forward tonight.

The passives. The fluffy Bunnies. Political intent stepped out and steeped in the dancefloor. Free party ethics swallowed by constant remorseless, relentless oppression, reborn and redefined for the late '90's. The club nights a hastily constructed winter retreat from the balmy sunrises give a brief glimpse of country. A chance to show, with the flow, you know. Side pleasures to come.

The spacious, friendly venue quickly filled with a most smart set of deep appreciators. The downstairs room quickly becoming a seething ceiling of pumping limbs, swinging hips and unfeasably large pupils, all jostling and swirling in a fogged grin you could have driven a space ship through. The master of the fluro-3D-art-attack-tastic himself, **Nagual** here tonight, top-o'-the-pile, rocking his DJ credentials to the cool groovers, licking up his warmth, as pure as it can be. **Philip**, for it is he, from **F.L.Y.**'s big beat off shoot **Subvert**, holds court and wigs the converted and subverts non-believers. The vibe is laid back, full-on and, damn it, just sooo right. The sound of the new baby for the summer '97 discards it's fragrant nappy and walks straight into full blown adolescence. Cheeky, eventful and you really don't know what the fuck's coming next. Putting the fun back into frolic this kitten leaps and twitches like it's chasing a piece of wool across a gorgeous meadow. **Chunky** boy **Stonelove** finishes off with a blistering 2 hours of more of the same but different. Top vibe guys.

Quickly blating upstairs via the totally sumptuous bar kitted out by our very own **Oomph! Posse**, there's just time to catch **Chunky** main man **Jes**, dish up the last hour of his usual dubtastic deep n' 'ard smorgasbord of wobbly b - lines, rockin' kicks and smooth garage gratings, carefully sprinkled for good effect to the enthusiastic crowd. Missed **Terry Francis**, but **Oz** and **Adam**, working well together as usual, provided sterling warm-up to the two big boys. More please.

People wise, there was a good sprinkling from the **Kent** stalwarts; **Ski** and **Dotty**, **Scouse**, **Sara** and **Emily**, the **HQ crew** - **Polly**, **Holly** and **Mike**, Pikey boys **Paul** and **Robin**, **Lisa** (out of **Africa**, and a real joy to see her on the dancefloor again), **John** and his new friend **Jane**, **Dover** sploshers, **Lindsey**, **Macka**, **Kev**. Loads of new faces met, with talks of future couplings between various promoters. Can't wait.....

'Fuck Glastonbury'

The day of the 'Fuck **Glastonbury**' piss up dawns. For all of that week, seemingly night and day it has been pissing down. We have exaggeratedly all enjoyed watching the **Glastonbury** updates on the news bulletins, glad that our real excuse (too lazy) for not going to Glasters now has a convenient outlet - the torrential rain. We greet each other in the rain soaked streets, howling with self-satisfied, smug laughter at how sensible we are not to have gone, at what an awful experience we are sparing ourselves. Unfortunately our mirth dries up somewhat when it appears that our little bash down the **EK** will also be threatened by aforementioned weather. The barbie will be ruined, we cry, late Saturday evening, maybe **Max** will lend us his oven and kitchen, before we suddenly remember we've forgotten to get any food. **Nick** rustles up a huge pot of stupendous home made baked beans, which her and **Oz** proceed to eat at every opportunity, especially upon a drunken return from the pub. Just oiling the wheels for tomorrow...

Wake up to see a grey and gloomy sky. Not as grey as it has been though. Watch footage from **Glastonbury** and laugh fondly at all the daft bastards who forgot to take any suitable footwear. Go to the toilet. Again. And again. Maybe we shouldn't feed all our friends those baked beans after all....

At 11.35 we make the move to the pub. The day starts at 12.00 and we still have all the equipment to move, the barbie to light, the computer room to set up and shit loads of beer to drink.

It still hasn't started to rain. We tie a hole filled tarp tentatively against a small corner of the garden. The rest looms expansively. If it rains it'll be a total waste of time, especially as **Max** won't even let us play music in the pub till 7.00, in case we 'upset the darts players'. **Lisa** and **Nick** decide to fuck the barbie off and use the oven. **Turtle** takes control of the outdoor cooking. Everyone mistakes the barbie for decks and presumes he's mixing. However, it still hasn't started to rain, and the place is filling up. Considerably. **Nick** and the **Lovely** shovel food down their necks at great speed to enable their first pint, which they're soon well beyond. The kitchen begins to look a bit messy, and yes, quite a few chums have already partaken of the beans.

Soon all pretence at the barbie is tossed aside as the ravages of alcohol start to become noticeable. **Lisa** is weeping in the corner. **Nick** has fallen over 3 times and stood on a dogs back. Which in return bites her. Someone has put wood on the barbie, which now resembles a bonfire. But everyone is managing to feed themselves and drink lots of beer and feel good about the fact that they are not shivering in some miserable tent up to their ears in shit and mud. And still no rain. For the first time in a week it steadfastly refuses to rain. And we make the fucking most of it. All day. With our friends. Top beer. Chilled sounds. Large company. The only well behaved participants are the children who sit all day glued to the computer screens in the computer room while their parents prat about outside. Spectacular.

We absolutely love bouncers

Saturday April 11 Pendragon, London

Bad move. Buying a case of wine that is. 'Oh, I know! Think of all that money I'll be saving'. Or, 'If I normally drink 3 or 4 bottles a week (oh yeah!) then a whole case should last a month' (arf). Or, 'If I go clubbing and take a bottle (or two) with me, then, gosh, I won't spend as much money at the pant crappingly expensive club bar.' And so on.

It's all self deception, of course, of the highest order. A lie. What really happens is this...

'Keen' is the only euphemism I can use about the Tyssen Street security and still keep my legs unbroken. Every gig here, **Mark Sinclair**, the **Pendragon** main man, emphasises over and over, 'The security are nothing to do with me! The security are nothing to do with me!' You may occasionally read a word on flyers that you don't understand - stringent. Usually attached to the word search. They don't have that particular phrase on the **Pendragon** flyers, but they should. On the front.

'Excuse me. Excuse me'. Push. Push. It's always a terrible and demeaning experience pushing past a queue of slow moving people, heartily sighing and shuffling in the cold still air. 'Excuse me. Sorry'. Push. Shuffle. Push. Shuffle, till at last two rough south London cuts of prime beef, with an IQ somewhat lower than an orange between them are in front of us. With manners to match. 'Uhh!' says one. 'Hi', say us, all bright and breezy and excited. 'DJ and party of four requesting speedy VIP-esque entrance', or something like that. 'What's in the box?' he says, pointing to one of two record boxes. 'Records!' 'Well, open it 'n' let me see', he says without moving his teeth apart. With his vocabulary stretching to four letter words, the people behind, already resentful because we pushed to the front, let out a collective sigh and prepare for the long interrogation ahead. The lid is lifted and the records revealed. 'What's in the other one?' 'Records'. 'Open it,' he says whilst having a merry frisk. As if he's gonna find a pill or a tab by intimidating people with two massive shovels running up and down the side of their bodies. The box never opens. Yes, you've guessed it, it's chocka. 3 bottles of red wine. A bottle of vodka. A carton of cranberry juice and 2 x 2 litre bottles of water. Whoops. Do they look pleased with themselves? 'You can't bring...', 'Yeah, we know, we know'. Turn around. Push.

Shove. Excuse me. Clubbers titter and look at us sympathetically. We're all united against the door staff. They're not clubbers friends. We return our booze to the sanctity of the car and ponder on the problem of unfriendly security at venues. Often as the venue becomes more popular and starts to make more money, security that may have started off relatively relaxed become more and more over the top. We know that they have to be seen not to be condoning the taking of drugs in their premises, but it is really time that they recognised the fact that people wouldn't be staying up all night in their frequently quite cruddy, toilet-paper-free-zones, without the aid of some form of chemical help, that helps us to stay awake all night in not the nicest, most hospitable surroundings. They have to realise that without all these clubbers that spend not just the 12 quid to get into their fire trap venues, but also the 3 quids for a bottle of beer and 2 quid bottles of water, they are fucked. And if they start being too rude to the punters, for too long, then everyone just starts going elsewhere. Once a place becomes renowned for arsey security, it's really hard to get people to go back there again. Ask **Brian Jones** at **The Works!** Now no fucker goes there. Even the straights have moved on! Even the arseholes object to be treat like shit by door staff. If a promoter is paying these meatheads wages, they should have a say in how the door is operated.

Inside I see **Mark Sinclair**. 'Oh, Mark, them bouncers outside...' 'The security are nothing to do with me,' he says and rushes off to sort out one of the other 1000 immediate problems that occur every five minutes as 'showtime' approaches. I go buy a drink. Crap my pants. Do that several times during the night. Spend all my money, then go home and drink all the record box. So ending up, still, with no money and drinking twice as much as I normally

would. Clubbing, ey?

That was last time. This time we arrive extra early. Our mood is buoyant. 'We're gonna save a bomb tonight!' Safely ensconced in the diplomat no-mans-land behind the decks a bottle is cracked open. I have two sips of wine pass the bottle to someone I know and love and don't see the bottle again till it's empty. (Meanwhile she has spent much of the night trying to retrieve it from **Big Lyd**.) I repeat this several times and then go to the bar, crap my pants again, and hand over all my money.

Jaques Peretti's rather witty club column in **the Guardian** that Saturday describes **Pendragon** as 'the best techno party in Britain'. We don't know about that, but as a roving band of confirmed house heads **Pendragon** is one of the only techno parties we go to, so to us, it is the best techno party in Britain. Even if we spend 8/10 of the party in the increasingly excellent house room. The review is shown to **Mark**, who turns around and shows the DJ who is playing. He reads. He looks up after a moment and says, 'I know'. The cat's out of the bag. At last. From their early humble beginnings with paper, one coloured flyers and small venues with 200 people, jump 5 years to the massive spectacle that is the current **Pendragon**. That's a lot of parties, a lot of grind and a lot of sweat. Let's make some hay.

The stunning success of the techno room belies the slow progress of the house room. The first parties were mainly one room affairs and as a second room inevitably came the music was very much a mixed bag with ambient and left field D.J.'s playing alongside the house D.J.'s. So one moment you'd be flapping and stomping away and the next you'd be clicking finger symbols, lighting joss sticks and gently swaying your head. Eventually though some in house D.J.'s emerged. **Mutley, 4D, Derek Patterson, Phillip Bastienne, Oz**. They've never played all together but every party at least one, or if we were lucky two, would get to play.

New years Eve 1998, and for the first time an all house line up. Oh, how that room rocked. House style.

Tonight's guests are **Digs and Woosh**, from Nottingham's **DiY** collective, the deep house scene's unsung pioneers. It was these guys, via their excellent free parties, that first turned on a lot of the current crop of deep house talent. And here they are tonight in the flesh. Listening, talking; ever so polite. On top form. True, tired pro's. And, dare we say it, fucking great D.J.'s. Funked up fuckers. They had this hardened techno paradise liting to seamlessly seagued strains of a funky-jazzy-dubby-garage-hybrid-with-a-spank that is all their own. It's soothing fluidity pulling them strings. The floor breathes and rises as one in a steady pulse for 3 short hours. We try and do our bit and turn the volume up a wee small notch. Seventh heaven. Indeed.

4D warming up plays a blinder. 'Wow, Ford you're playing well, what you been doing?' 'Practicing', he drools. 'A lot!'. **Bertie** finishes off the last two hours with what everyone, even himself, describes as 'a mixed bag'. It's still deep, make no mistake. In contrast to **Digs and Woosh's** soothe, this is a lot darker and harder. More edgy. More techno flecked. Urban. London. Experimental and excellent. The techno heads are straight in on it.

Marc with a 'c' and **Jess** from **Loop** are down, celebrating Marc's birthday. He's sporting the same type of glasses, sans glass that (male) **Sasha** will try and wear down the pub the next night. Except he manages to look cool and not just like Gary Glitters chum. They are both being very well behaved. So far. **Maurice** has not managed to slope off to the van and indulge in a little knob twiddling, tuning into his fave rave, radio 4 land. This despite the fact that he has only had one hour's sleep the night before after being out on the town with **Rowan** and her man. They had a bet he would be asleep by 12. He isn't and appears to only just be warming up. It later transpires, after he has spent the whole day in **Whitstable** boozing and carousing, and then turned up that evening at **Cabbaged** with his hair washed and brushed, that the fragrant **Judith** has gone to **Australia** for a couple of weeks. Outside their house, scaffolding has appeared in preparation for **Maurice** repainting the exterior of the house. But the state he's in by the amp rack means he won't be coming round till Thursday. **Tracey** and **Rhia** dance expectantly for a while then give up on the old pulling malarky and sulk behind the decks. Female **Sasha** gives her new hair do a whirl whilst we meet **James** from **Hanky Panky** who we've been exchanging letters with for a couple of years but never yet met. **Richard** fondles **Polly's** breast region, and **Louie** falls in love with **Jayne**. And as all us hardened, old cynical romancers realise, it may soon be time to pass out the old pink, heart shaped sick bags again. **Nick** loses her voice (we wonder why). **Leon** avoids all the photographers and nearly gets thrown out by our lovely door watching chums for being 'naughty', but is fortunately rescued by **Rosie** who is not, as **Richard** notices, wearing her 'fuck me boots' tonight (that's not 'fuck me' boots but fuck-me-boots). **Maurice** drops his bottle of whisky, and smashes it. And **Barry** admits, that he 'doesn't know if it's because he's getting older', but he 'preferred the house room.' (It's funny actually, coz not another eight hours later and yet another former confirmed trance head admits the exact same thing! Spooky.) Wow, breakthrough at last I hear you ask? We'll know when he stops giving his techno trousers an airing. That's the only reason we listen to the music we do, because you don't see aging men in such unsuitable trousers and most of them thankfully keep their tops on. Although there's a worrying preponderance towards sporting baseball caps instead amongst the 'older boys'. Especially the ones from 'Fav'.

We all stomp away till an abrupt scratching of needle upon vinyl halts the sound. We all look around, about as pissed off as cool peace loving clubbers can be and spy our favourite apparition. A Tyssen Street security person type thingy, pointing a stabbing finger at a bemused **Bertie**, who shrugs his shoulders and afterwards says, 'He only had to ask.' It's 7am. Welcome back to London. To reality. To once again arcane licencing laws that stop the fun. Stamping their authority. The fun ends NOW. It's enough to turn you into a political animal. Any wine left? No, **Emily's** drank it all. Never mind, there's half a case back home. Let's grab it and hit the beach, ey?!

grabbing breasts, groping groins

"Pond Cottage"
January 25th 1997 - Kent

The usual 'loaded' lads didn't bother coming to this great party, but several of their brethren, further down the evolutionary ladder more than made up for their absence. Dispensing with the beastly, unpleasant flirting rituals (such as 'hello') they get straight down to work on the dancefloor, grabbing breasts, groping groins and emitting guttural groans, followed by a 'dirty' laugh and much eye contact with each other. Unfortunately sitting down and actually talking and getting to know an individual woman as a person seems inconceivable. It appears that a great deal of their experience - especially emotional and introspective experience - has to remain unnamed for them. Their chief means of self expression is consequently through action. So, perhaps, a hand thrust on your groin may mean "I have deep feelings for you that I cannot express verbally". It could equally mean, "I hate women" or even, "I'm a sad, socially inadequate, emotionally crippled virgin, on strong drugs". Sometimes, for men, the easiest - and sometimes the only possible - form of conversation is that which describes action (like a football match, for instance). Such subjects, which preclude anything directly personal supply the content of most of the conversations being carried on by lads.

Yet there is a warmth in such conversation and good friendships can be made and sustained by it. It's as though (as **John Berger** said) they bend over the subject to examine it in precise detail, until, bending over it, their heads touch. The shared expertise becomes a symbol of shared experience. A, dare I say it, an intimacy.

And intimacy is what it is all about. The desire for it and the fear of it. We all develop rituals, customs, ceremonies for the the express purpose of gathering together, having shared experiences, creating times and spaces for specifically designated functions that allow us to be intimate, touch and talk all within the permitted boundaries.

Apart from this, all the usual drugged up episodes were extended and developed in this, the most convivial of settings. Not as mad as some of the Pond Cottage parties have been, it still provided moments for the scrapbook of life. Chief amongst these, the simple pleasures gained from being



"Plotted Up" - The Real Chill

-the TVC chill out in full glorious technicolour - (with thanks to Boy's Own 'zine)

5AM- The club's great. A house vibe of gorgeousness taking somewhere else. The other room banging away like billi-o. No reparitic respitic cool beats ahead horizon rise. The junglist-hip-hop-break and beat massive are sound asleep or moved on to better parties like. Pissed up Charlies attempt one last desperate pick-up stroke touch-up knowing they're going to fail fulsome. The cool women gather at the back biding their beautiful time and ripping it. Jocks nearly warmed up juggle that witty repartee and obscure tune-up-manship whilst filling weighed down pockets with beer stash all chilled with its destiny written. Bodies still slowly sway and feet tap out that last great drum pattern long since receding pastwards fastly. People hanging and looking for a vibe stand mid between the guys and the gals.

To come; a wobbly, unseen landscape flashing past whilst behind box van screens they sit on stacks of speakers holding on to metal slats and attempt to smoke and hope they are taken somewhere good and warm. Meanwhile not quite mood shattering white light hastens a hasty tidy up, all expectant and, cough, expectorant.

6AM- By the time the gears loaded up by the hard crew of few and a curious respect is achieved by receiving none at all two distinct groups have since formed and never the twain etcetera. True people just 'know' not sort the venue. Excitement frissons. Hangers on and have-nots hover.

7AM- Back at the Ranch. DJ's and dancers split acoutrements and much zen ritual with no fuss ensues. Unspoken. Those that have; give, and those that don't; receive. Club behaviour cast at the door. We're all here now. Don't you see. No more inequality. Even as a sifter.

Coffee smells, ground and always fresh, begin to drift round. Decks are unpacked and set up by many hands in just a few minutes. Chatter and laughter intermingles with thick green smoke. These people are used to each others company. Are used to clubbing. These people are special. Their day has just begun.

Others rack em out and wrack it on thick and talking bullshit like they think and know they're clever. It's not so much the relish of the actual talk itself more the sheer vitality of interaction, in any form, that they love. Here. Now. Love through talk. Always better in than out. All slightly fucked up together. "Funny you should say that! But I was beaten as a child too". Group therapy on fast forward. Wild. They talk and talk fast and crack the red wine -which is the preferred tippie of the after hours glider set- and begin the descent into bollocks-land; a land where everyone talks fastidious, everyone talks at the same time and no-one ever listens because they have all heard the same stories from each other last weekend. And the weekend before. But it does not matter. Really. The sheer joy and pleasure given a bout of sharp manic savagery and taken at all times with love from all is pure. A rapid absorbsion of everyone's life story and fuck up in one long sentence, and it is totally, bloody, exhilarating.

For a while.

The Love people and the Fast people divide into small huddled outrageous groups with occasional forays into the room of darkness and music DJ's.

8AM- Decks highjacked by DJ-Up-And-Coming or DJ-Piss-Take ("I could do that - giz a go!") or DJ-Lets-Play-Your-Tunes-Coz-I-Ain't-Got-Any-Myself. Every party has one. TVC has six.

On a good day.

The vibe dissipates quickly coz the thing they don't realise is if people are leaving the dance-floor or worse the venue then you, the DJ, are to blame. It's your fault. And, no, it's pointless getting all insecure on us again and blubbing but it's the bloody truth so get off the fucking decks now and let someone else who knows what they are doing have a go.

Oh good they're all coming back

Phew. The vibe doesn't want to lose anyone so early

8AM- This is a big time for the fast posse coz the Co-Op's open and 15 crates of 99p per litre cooking wine (only the best will do) are dragged in for the morning 'let's stun a buffalo' sesh. Or the post-morning 'let's have another three lines each shall we?' sesh. Loads of the fluffy bunnies get scared and move to another house just in case they are the next on the list and are shredded by the, er good humoured chummley cheese graters.

You know the hippies when they have their big meetings prevent everyone from talking at once by handing some sacred staff around? The Stick of Truth or something. And how when you have the stick only you can speak and must speak from the heart? Well how about one for powder posse? Only it would be a cheese grater! As they speak, in turn, they have to make fake cheese grating movements by their own ears.

Rivers of blood and tattered flesh!

9AM- Only one DJ left in the E room but he soon gets bored of playing to himself and goes home to bed. DJ I-Knew-I'd-Get-A-Play-If-I-Waited-Long-Enough takes over.

9PM- Twelve hours later and the posse are down to a hard core of six. The vibe is a little more scarey than it was. Barely noticing the fact that everyone else has fucked off they start laying in heavily to anyone who's not there or won't have another line. Questions of integrity are brought to the fore. "Lightweight" tends to be the favourite word around this time. Because twelve hours have past they begin to recycle the same stories they told earlier only with a little bit more embellishment coz they think the others will have forgotten that they'd told the very same story at the very same time the week before. The booze runs out so they persuade the person with the money to take them out to the pub.

The person who's house it is breathes a sigh of relief that they didn't stay there for three days. And nights.

11PM- Well tanked up now they fancy a change of venue so go to any house but their own (What! It'll get trashed, man!) and that has a set of decks. By now their brains are so fried they sit in wide eyed silence occasionally uttering some coarse well meaning tirades aimed at the "Lightweights".

6AM- Have another line.

7AM- Doze fitfully for an hour. With eyes open.

8AM- Get up and drive to work.

9AM- Die horrendously in a car crash coz, for some reason, you fell asleep at the wheel. Or, preferably, arrive late for work, argue with the boss, puke up, take a long lunch better still a half day, go home, take two paracetamol, sleep for two days

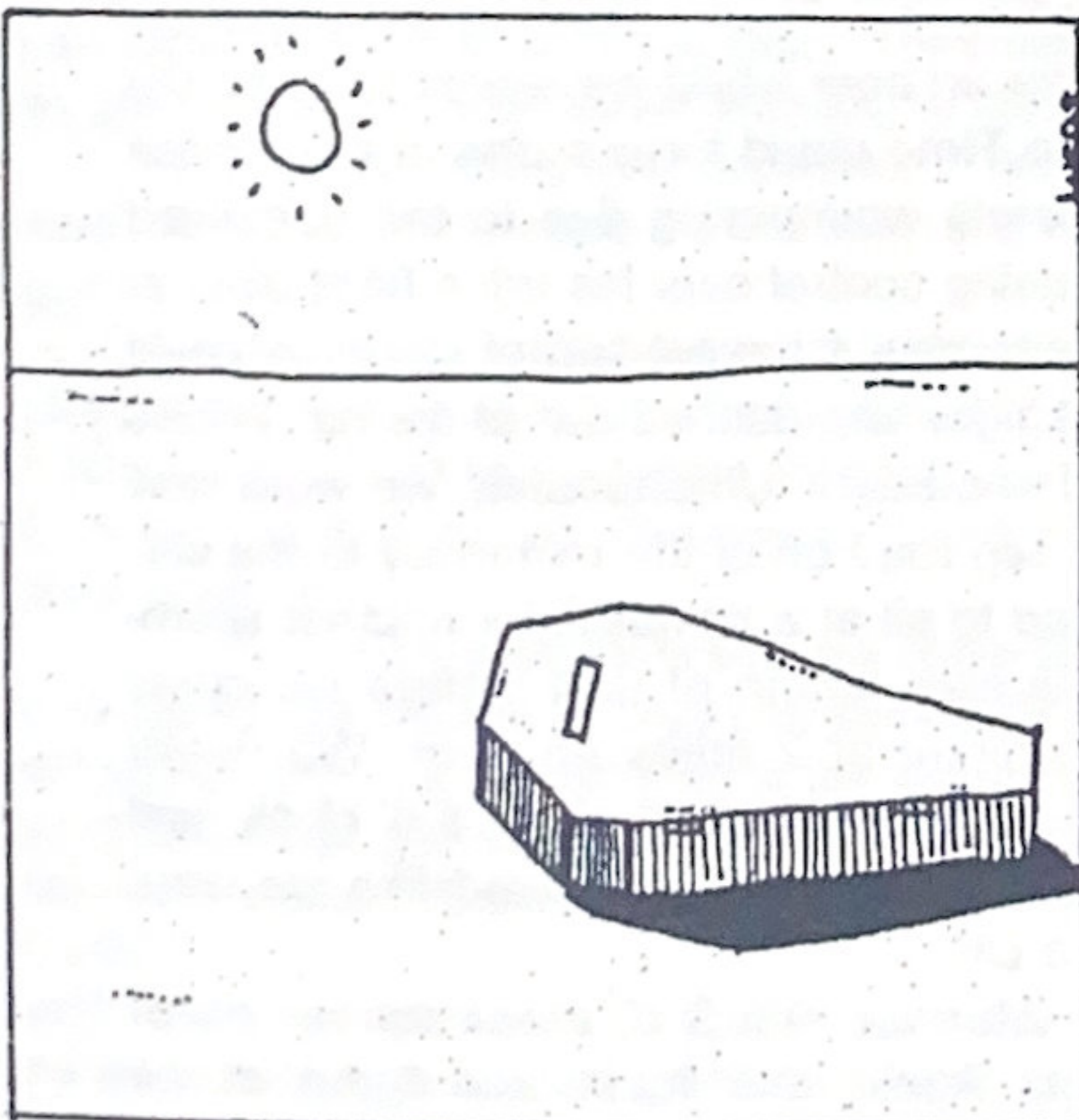
BRIGHTON BREEZY



EARLY SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS.



WHEN THE STONE AGE MET THE IRON AGE...



IT WAS PRETTY SHIT BEING AN ARCTIC VAMPIRE IN THE SUMMER.

A major one for the lads this. The reasons are many, which I'll try to explain, but the main thing is, "We're here for each other". 13 of us in a hired mini bus. A day in Brighton. On a stag do.

Pre E, this may well have been a totally different environment. But it wasn't pre it was post. Yeah, the sexism was there, a bit, but not as much as expected. When you get more than a dozen men together in one spot, what can you expect? Not so here, Rob Phelps stag do in Brighton. "Way hey". "Yeah!" "Let's go for it". "Let's get on one". All seemed to be the slogan of the day. Lad it up.

But it aint like that any more, is it? Even die hard attitudes have to change. We're the post E-lads. And the irony is all. Wa hey.

"There's two for you", says Si as we drive past a large woman walking in the street. The sexism *is* really rather half-hearted. They laugh at the comment *because* it is sexist. It aint really there, despite the efforts to revive it. Most of us aren't even lads anymore anyway. We're all in our late '20's to mid '30's. In relationships. Long term, for fucks sake. Some have children and jobs to go to Monday morning. One of us is getting married so the stag night still has the same cultural significance it always had; it's a bloody great excuse to get pissed right up with your mates.

Okay, getting married is a "Why the fuck?" sort of thing these days to some. Or a "Why bother?" sort of escapade to others. It may even be a "must do" thang to some but hey, the bets taken at the back as to how long it will last are always a hoot. Even obligatory. Evens on two years anyone?

Menatism? Ladism, pissed menism, pissed sexism, new twatism. Even the fucking clever ones can't keep it up all the time. They may laugh at feminist in-roads into the '90's but the bottom line is that the sexism is half-hearted and quickly dries up by early afternoon. The sun beats down and the Brighton peeps parade in all their summer finery. We wrap it around the beer and other things but the bottom line was the depth and breadth of the emotional open-ness we had on the one-to-one conversations (hey, it's the 90's). It was mainly over work troubles, and personal problems with our partners that dominated the conversations but usually the banter was kept light and flowing fast.

We skipped from sea-fronted bar to back street bar. At one point we are all sitting al fresco way-heying it right up when another group of 'way-heys' echo our frisky brotherly chants. Up the street we spy another gang of fellas all jostling and elbowing and pushing each other in front of the traffic. Brothers? Or are they? As they approach a black guy on a mountain bike rides past. A cacophony of racist abuse pours forth torrentially from this other group of men. We sink into silence as they carry on the jeers whilst walking past us. Any semblance of shared laddism is gone. As they get out of earshot cries of 'that was well out of order' and 'we should have said something' rise out of the silence. We decide to have one more drink here.

As the beach filled and a real cosmopolitan air fleshed out the tacky fun fair rides, the man Rob and his side kick Stonehouse indulged in and partook of a game of cowboy and indians horsey style on the very merry go round whilst opposite a lonely DJ and his chum played various pumping nonsense to an empty bar; bar the stag posse who were playing pool. Shimmons' day was made when one of his more commercial offerings seeped out of the feeble speaker and the posse couldn't help but jump around to cries of "Sheee-monnn!!" "Hey man," he says, "I gotta do the odd one like that to pay the bills and subsidise the underground tracks".

The sun beat down and the beer flowed. Strange stag rituals were ruthlessly observed: everyone sticking in a tenner 'for

holding pints of lager which were sporadically thrown into waste paper bins on whim; spontaneous 'wah hays' at about 100 decibels emitted at inopportune moments for small misdemeanours. Much leaning backwards en masse. Strange, obscene miming gestures. Ribaldery.

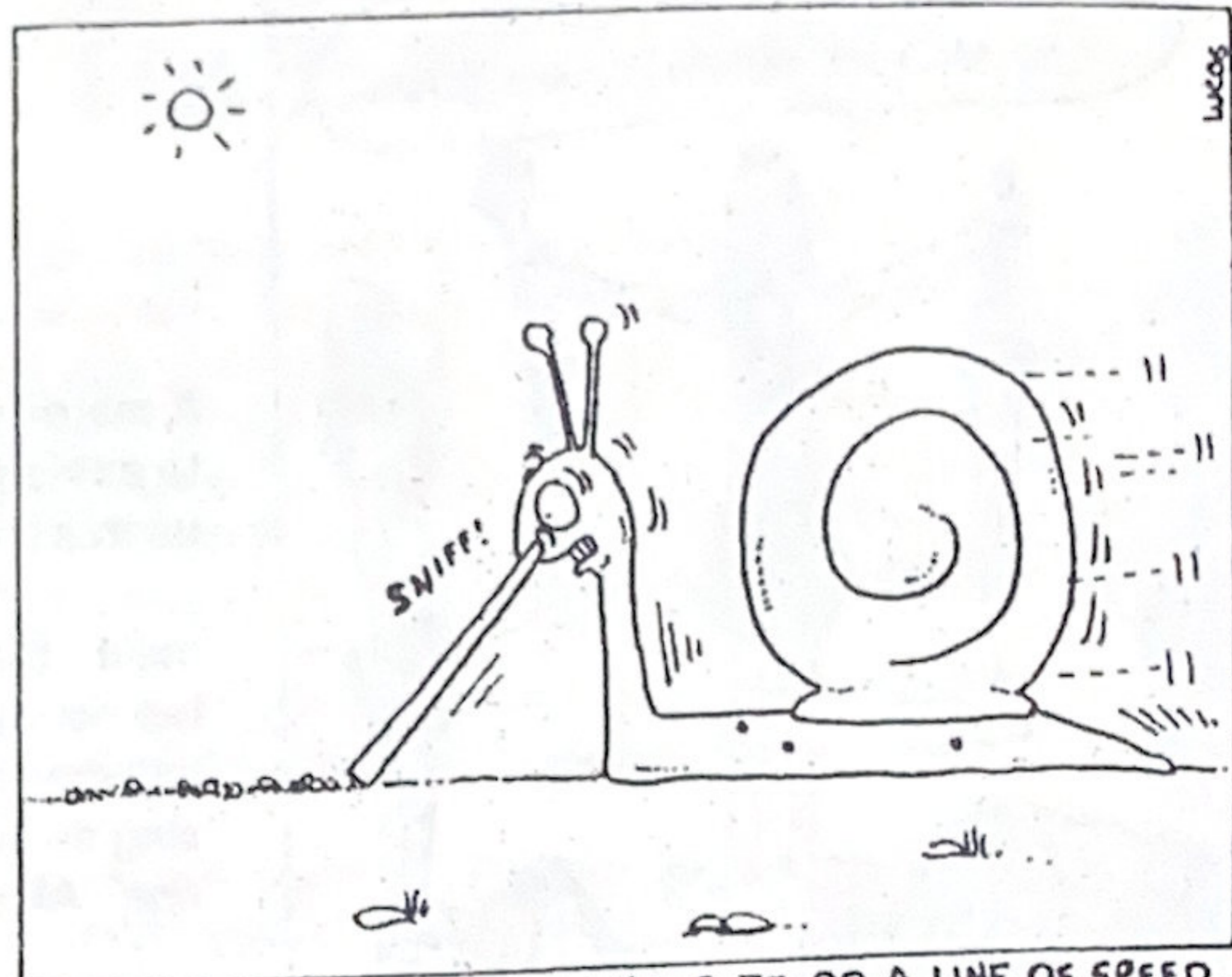
By the time we'd all raced each other in motorised go carts on the pier and had another couple of drinks it was, sadly, time to go back to Kent. On the way back, Si slams Timo's fingers in the van door. Major damage. Timo's the only DJ amongst us who is actually playing at the party we're supposed to be going to end up at. He's playing 4-6, the last slot, and he's had to go into someone's house and 'run his fingers under the tap'. Snort, snuff. Already his fingers are three times the size and he is only just this side of consciousness.

We dumped the hire van off, popped the keys through the door, and headed off to catch the last train to Adisham to deliver a somewhat war torn Timo to the Bubbly party. He may have been playing 4-6 but it was *only* 10pm. We'd missed the last train (London eat your heart out) and Timo's head was now lolling around like a bladder on a stick. His tongue seemed like it had expanded in his mouth and everything he said had a 'thth' at the beginning and the end. For example. 'Teem-'o'?. You ok mate?' 'Thyesthth', loll, loll, loll, 'Thl'mokth.' Head lolls forward, eyes close then open suddenly. Head lolls back.

We administer a pick-me-up - 'a pint of bitter' - and keep him talking till play time. Throb makes sure he's behind the decks and in between bouts of jumping up and down on Mike Mac's posh head phones and 'resting' behind the speakers, punches the air in glee-ed up exstasis. Timo, the DJ juices now flowing, starts to forget the fact that he's spent hundreds of pounds and been awake 2 days and gives the Bubbly massive a large one of enormous pump potential. Shimmon retires to Ian Dunnes car and crashes in the back seat. Oz and Scouse Steve chicken flap all night in the hot and packed main and dark room whilst Lighthouse, Sheep Dip and Dan the Driver (retired) large it up 'You killed my parrot' style in the hotel corridor with a variety of Bubbly bods who dares to venture within earshot. By morning the nightmare begins.

Fractured, throbbing heads wait on a station platform, only to be told by a 'fat twat' that there's no trains till Monday (London eat your heart out). The other party entrails phone cabs along with us and an impromptu chat sesh begins as they all disappear into the country-side one by one when the taxis arrive. Timo's still walking around but he's really been asleep for two hours. A bus arrives. We all get on and wind our slow way back to Canterbury, passing our cabs on the way. We duck down behind our seats and scream with embarrassment. Poor fucking cabs are going to be right pissed off.

Back at Ladlord Si's and Throb starts to warm up. Fry ups all round for the magnificent 7 who're left before a quick stop off at the EK for more liquid refreshment, prior to a skuzzy day on Whitstable beach in the hot sun. Listening to tunes from the appropriately named Mike Sun Up, with a full posse and a small rig we all just melted into the sand, talking nonsense. Rob's in full flow by now, running back and forth, playing with kids and generally acting like he's just got out of bed rather than been up for 2 days. As meltdown approaches this is mirrored in a spectacular sunset and, hey, guess what? There's just time for one more beer before beddy byes. Get 'em in Si! There's still 20 quid left in the kitty, Si! Si?



timo in "no piss" drama

DiY's Floppy Disco
at The Bomb, Nottingham.
Friday March 6th

The buzz around DiY's new club night at The Bomb in Nottingham is well justified. Partly because it's a recent redecoration and refurbishment of a 'filthy dive' (the ex Hippo Club) and is thus the newest kid in town, and partly because of the growing reputation of our ever-so talented hosts and their uncanny ability to put on bloody great parties.

Setting out from Whitstable a tad before the dreaded middle of the rush hour at 5 o' clock, we airily convinced ourselves that as it was Friday most of the traffic would have left early, so we drove off, an assortment of freshly-made sandwiches at our side, with nary a thought for the gut-wrenchingly long journey ahead of us, as we battled through traffic jam after traffic jam. At one point we sat in the car not moving for an hour whilst we waited to leave the motorway, so Timo could have a piss at the service station. Nearly whimpering due to the combined effort of retaining control over his urine filled bladder and trying to remain a decent sort of chap, he could stand it no longer and dashed out of the car to piss on the hard shoulder. Unfortunately we were now stuck in the slip road off of the motorway to the services and had to sit at a standstill for another seemingly interminable length of time before we could even start driving at 2 miles an hour. We finally reached The Watford Gap at about 8 o' clock, and the traffic was still heavy. It looked like we were going to do a DK....

..Hurrah, it's 9 o' clock as we enter Nottingham. Again, and again, and again, as we drive past the same bloody garage we kept driving past every other time we've been to Nottingham. No one knew where the club was, and /cont

nearly every other person we asked was wandering around with club maps in their hands looking for clubs of some description. 10 o'clock and we have just ended up in the same one-way catch 22 we were in an hour ago and still no one seems to know where it is. Then we end up in some tiny back streets, with clubs and a strong clubbing bustle in evidence. **Oz** leaves the motor to ask a looming bouncer for directions. But the bouncer sees him approaching, holds out his flattened hand, saying "Sorry mate. Not in here. Not with those trainers on. Shoes mate."

10.15 and we finally find it after parking the car miles down the road and walking. Well **Timo** and **Oz** try to, but their legs are visibly buckling under the strain of having to carry their own records, for once. **Emily** has taken her trousers off in the car and now stands resplendent in orange striped tights.

The "oh's" and "ah's" emitted upon entering the club, via a steep set of stairs from street level to subterranean, are entirely spontaneous, and as **Rick Digs** gives a guided tour, phrases such as grotto-like, curvy, white, low-ceilinged, labyrinthine, and that old stand-by, cool, as in 'well', trip from the tongue, like so many wanton superlatives. And, oh, down some more stairs, to the toilets.

Tonight has **Oz** and **Timo** from **tVC** guesting with **Simon DK** in the house room, who is warming up and headlining. **Digs** and **Woosh** and guest **Simon White** funk on down in the totally circular back room. A nice high ceilinged, vaulted bar, court-yard sort of thing, up 4 sets of stairs provided a useful sit down on a high stool and a welcoming breath of cool relief from the invigoratingly sweaty and loud goings-on down stairs, but this too was rammed, with party peeps perched decorously on every available surface.

By 10.30, we're all still pissing about supping heartily on **Harry's** seemingly unlimited cans of free beer and talking shite, when this strange man appears in the main room and shouts at the top of his voice, "Can I have some farkin' music on, pleeeze, coz the club is farkin' open." He's like some sort of town crier, or club crier perhaps, and his shouting is totally inappropriate when a simple word with the DJ would have got everything rolling. Club staff, don'cha just love 'em? "**Oz?**", says **Rick**, "Can you stick a tune on, coz er, **Simon's** not here yet." We love the **DiY** attitude (reflecting clubland as a whole, I hasten to add) of professional tardiness. It's invigorating. Besides, he's only 5 minutes late. And flustered. But he soon settles down to providing his usual rolling, bubbling, friendly (user and floor) curvy, white labyrinthian groove, in fact, totally in keeping with the surrounding ambiance and decor.

Harry chats. "Managed to get some tickets for the **Columbia World Cup** round in **Montpellier**. Don't ask me how much they cost." I don't, but almost immediately he says "OK, [then says some incredible amount of money that I *daren't* repeat]." "That's not too bad for five tickets though". "No that ain't for five that's for one. Know someone who knows someone who works for the FA". He taps his nose.

Behind the decks are 3 letters, made from wood, screwed onto the wall with hooks. As well as providing a glorious illustration of who the promoters are to the clubbers, they can also double up as a well cool place to hang your scarf. They're sprayed a glittery creamy colour, and co-ordinate well with the wicked ambiance of the room. Till 3 am that is! After a little hassle with one of the bouncers, who'd been to the same club crier school as the bar manager, and started shouting "Faaarck off home" and "You're not getting paid", he started having a go at **Pete**, who was unscrewing afore-mentioned, wooden, glittery letters from the back wall. "What's that?", he says, pointing at a small hole, some 5mm in diameter, ie unobservable by any normal human unless they are within a distance of a few millimetres. "It's a hole," says **Pete**. "You can't put holes in our wall." "But we're re-using the same holes, every gig, and they're tiny, and you can't notice them." "Yes you can", he says "and you can't do it." Enter **Harry**, to put a bit of context to the silliness of this most inappropriate shenanigan. I missed what happened next coz I was trying to explain to **Nick** that the crate of lager she had under her arm was not actually hers but was the post-gig chill out crate and was actually **Harry's**, who was now somewhat indisposed, deflecting the verbals of this most insidious bouncer type bloke, intent on dominating first this now empty room then, one suspects, the world. Unable to wrestle the crate from her grip, **Harry** appears and says "He slapped me!! The bouncer slapped me! For putting a hole in his wall!" He's stunned and rightly so. We love bouncers we do. Their subtle, gracious good manners.

Oz and **Timo** went with the crowd. I know that the *real politic* of the dancefloor has the dictat of more, more, harder, harder, louder, louder and the **DiY** crowd are no exception to that gross generalization, but one comment sealed it. The new **F & L** on **Guidance** was on the deck playing. Now, **Dembinski** and the rest of **Fresh and Low** may be recording for an American label but they come from this part of the world, for fucks sake. So you know, local lads made good, recording for a quality US label. Everyone will be happy? The record is basically a garage tune but has more than enough kick to keep a rolling, bubbling floor, more than happy. Besides, someone had moaned that the previous 4 tunes were very much drum centred, of a darker, techier complexion and not just a little harder that the **DiY** crowd are probably used to (we are from 'daan Sarf' remember) and it was still deep as fuck. They were being overlapped, layered and cut out of and into each other as well as being tweaked on the EQ as mid and bass lines were swapped and a general air of a fucking top rinse was being pumped out to much appreciation to the majority of the clubbers rammed into this loud, sweaty and rather excellent room. After approximately 20 minutes of "drummage" this **F & L** garage tune was dropped. Because this tune is a lot lighter both in scope and in tone than the previous dubbiness, the floor whoops and lifts a notch higher. A cool, clear female vocal, pierces the vocal-less ether. The crowd kick up. The drummage, in the background now, is slowly wound out, leaving the clear, pristine peaks of what **Gavin**, standing by the decks, declares a "fookin' great tune", alone in all it's glory. Shining and great.

A woman leans over the decks. "We had fucking valentines day, last week". **Oz** and **Timo** laugh, but the comment pierces. How is it, if 200 people are in a room and 199 of them are having a great time and 1 isn't, that 1 grabs all the attention? Funny ol' game!

DK, doing the last hour and a half, locked back into the famous **DiY** groove, the clubbers settled into it, riding the night, giving it that great Midlands flavour. Free and loud in all respects. As the lights came on (don'cha jus' hate that) **DK** was given a good half hour ovation whilst he hid behind the decks too embarrassed to look at the crowd and say "No, sorry, no more. This bouncer has just told me, emphatically, no. Besides, he needs to talk to us about 3, 5mm holes that have been somehow left in the wall, when we took our logos off...."

So a great night ends and one of the **tVC** posse, **Emily**, approaches **Timo**. "I just tried to get a drink at the bar and they say it's closed" she laments. "They'll only serve DJ's".

"Don't worry", says our intrepid hero to the rescue and approaches the bar with rolling shoulders and an intent of purpose in his eye. "Can of **Red Stripe** please".

"Sorry, we're closed". Shakes his head. "Only DJ's can have drinks now".

"I'm a DJ".

"Yeah? You're saying you're a DJ but can you prove it?" asks the bar steward, eyebrows raised, head cocked.

Timo leans over, flattening the palm of his hand, and makes miming scratching movements with his hand, front teeth over bottom lip.

"How about that?" he inquires.

"Perfect" says the bar man, and hands over the ice cold can of frothing lovliness with a big grin on his face. **Emily** is impressed.

Top night, cheers to the lads. Good to see they still are doing it properly. Most defiantly....And, well, fuck the bounc-

... anyway, I was standing at the bar (where were you?), and it was pretty late but I needed a drink real bad; the bar man apologises but the lager ran out hours ago. No bottles left? 'Naw mate'. Then; 'Hang on!' He bends into the seemingly empty fridge and, - miracles brother -, produces an ice cold bottle of Dennis Leary Pils 'that fizzed up'. A rare moment of unrequited love in a sea of crushing, sweat drenched capriciously frivolous rancor. Oh wondrous joy slumped me onto the wall and a careen sally round my head so stumble mode satiated a slowly consuming ravenousness was quelled by cold golden highness. Kerouac dice salad brain mode, methinks.

Crouched inches away with strange friends of mine but, hey, may as well be a bleeding mile high.

Can't haggle with the inevitable relentless remorselessness so deep breath and a Kit like swagger sees ducking and grooving movingly through a tribe bathed in sheer ultra violent insouciance; getting down in a serious manner to a DJ whose twisted, twisted, twisted, twisted counterbalance alters pitches and overlayers symmetry with a talented ease to make the old stomach queeze with a brief but penetrating envy worthy of Shakespearean clatter. Or Davey King natter.

Need to stop a short while to acclimatize the rushy head Pils liquid and other stuff to breath a Zen breath and catch the big wave this DJ pulsates out absorbing the energy level spiraling upward from people who smile in this cold blue light; fearless in an ever changing twentieth century.

'Hey man', someone shouts. I see a person I know and remember I love them. 'We need some phones'. Phones? Yeah, man I got some.

Out of the room the moment gone and a determined task to occupy my Samaritan. Not five later and back to start point. DJ has several already round his neck. He shrugs. The overwhelming desire to help and be loved presented with an opportunity is snapped by us city people not yet totally devoid of brotherly love. We need these exaggerated excesses to prove to ourselves and others that, YES, we are capable; we are human; we do feel; we do love. We think we still think we do anyway.

New, bass, lovely. The extravagant thrill (the *only* kick, bang, boot, wallop, tingle) for the experienced party goer is the tantalizing illicit unexplainable explosion of a new, good, rhythm to ride. Finito. Soothingly seamless and quietly reassuring knowing exactly what is going to happen next but simultaneously not having a fucking intimation and hoping against blighted hope that this *is* the one.

I was standing at the bar

The particular to excite, change every expectation of every beat complicated into it's own minutiae creating something the same but neoteric, relevant to now. The power of the

incessant industrial heartbeat. A big Johnny Vaughn "Marvelous" emits without permission.

Old cohort, just to see basking in your own and your beat perfect people made me feel real good. Moments of true happiness rarely happen and when they do they are usually over so quickly you don't even, ever, know it happened. All you know is that you are not melancholy. At that moment when the needle goes on that fabulous first tune all the head and heart and mind ache dissolve and absorption is complete. Travel now to ...

Nick whisks me off and all Metha style gives me big love verbal style for ages and ages and it's so so great and feelings immerse all warm and right but too soon she's off on her spiritual journey again. All the time though Macka relates his deep feelings on the 'missus' coz he knows its right and I know this can't be wrong. Or outright. As I go he says something that we both know; "your birds got a lovely arse, even in a dress". He rubs her silk with a big smile. This strangely reminds me, though of course is in no way related, of another boy I know down at a lock in one night after the *Alien Nation* at the Works. He'd been plying me with free drinks all night till, all casual like, he leans over the bar, all pissed like, and whispers in my ear, 'I'm going to fuck your girlfriend'. I then told *his* girlfriend what he had just said and he later threatened to 'beat fuck' out of me if I wrote about it and 'embarrassed' his bird and, oh God, how messy is messy? How sad is sad? How low is threatening violence? Almost as low as doing it.

By now heatness flits through pores and hotel rooms all cool beckon considerably. Shared collusions with daft bastards that we love so much reveal the concealed and the world truly knows a little less pain. For now. Anti-drug lectures from good friends reinforce a well held sobriety. Big, fat-headed enigmas unable to be expressed are incarcerated.

Dealing. Dealing with the accouterments of English youth at the end of the 20th Century. A junk generation with a junk mentality and a junk diet; junk food, junk videos, junk childhood. Short lives of sugary treats and high-fat thrills. The generation who could have had it all but have in fact nothing. The taking away generation who were given everything on a plate but it was so full of calories, so laden in dripping fat they found that they were so tightly bound to that metaphoric sofa of youth indignance that when the batteries ran out on it's metaphysical remote control they just sat there and couldn't even be bothered to have a wangle. They did have all and blew it big powdery and pilly billy puff time.

Can people who have arrogant north European western industrialized capitalist intentions actual be capable of getting in touch with inner feelings; serious, deep, feelings of love, hate, death and existentialism? Or is this mythic 'me' generation banality succumbed by a steady diet of ecstasy, cocaine and heroin, - the most powerful drugs on this planet -, supplied by second rate, third world 'revolutionaries' via first world barons of infinite profit?

Me? Rather than stand out lonesome style in the shadows taking leave, making ready to disappear, to bow out with nary a wave (which I dearly want to do) I pop a pill, tick a gee of charlie, head to the bar for a stand and just, like, close my eyes and jump head first into a dystopic, dysfunctional gang bang of relationships where no one is ever truly happy because we have never experienced hell, ever, nor are likely to because the world of privileged, white wealth bacchanalia is forever expanding, forever fueling our psychopathic banality. Forever expanding our petty injustices, our insular lust for power, respect, drugs, sex without commitment, money without work, and love without hate. We want it all and we want it now! And rather than not be a part of it, I can, through moral laxity, sheer bloodminded overindulgence, a sexual *jeux-neu se quoi* and a fucking thick skin be what all of us want to be; a player. A partaker. A participator. If it takes a moral corruption and compromise of deep thrills and the burying of ugly stuff behind a drug screen to achieve even one lovely beautiful gorgeous second of true love then; so be it!

'Don't worry, mate! I'll look after them for you'. I hand my headphones over anyway. He knows. He's Liam. I need love but she ain't there. Machinations from domicile. First tentative steps to a sexual liberation of sorts. Concepts of old are for the first time considering abandonment and the deep pit of quiet desperation sucks my loneliness out through a rolled up twenty pound note and for a few, sweet, brief succulent hours my fears are gone and I don't love anymore. Such sweet release. Transmogrified into and inverted hate directed onto myself I suck up through self indulgence the thin white line of phallocentrism and cry silently inside because I just know the big party is over. Its' time to grow up, hit the dancefloor and pretend we're having the best time of our life.

(where were **you**)

What are we doing to our lives?

EAST KENT- SUNDAYS

We're all in on the angle that exploits things. In on the catch. On Capital Hill. On capital-ism. On selling sex; but at the same time kidding ourselves that we're not. We see the angle.

It's not even selling sex. It's not that complicated. It's selling dreams. A dream that can only be that, a means of fantasy that helps explain the monotony to the mind.

E culture is a product of western industrialised capitalist society. Or rather it's people culture coming through despite WICS.

The phone rings for the first of 18 times that day at 9.00am. It's the first of 11 calls enquiring where the party is that day. There is no party.

No party has been organised. But in order for us to live out the next chapter of our fantasy lives we need an arena in which to do it.

Getting up, washing, dressing, eating breakfast, travelling to work (if), working, travelling home, eating, washing, small amount of leisure time, sleep, getting up... is no fantasy. It sounds mundane reading it never mind actually spending all that time doing it.

At 10am the first call off the generator man. No generator. Something about a petrol tank. Anyway, genny two man, who says "what's the point of knowing a pikey if he can't get you a generator?". Can't get a generator. Hence no party.

Some things going off at six down the **EK** pub so most people spend the day entertaining themselves either down the beach or on the roof of our block.

G-Man and **The Polo-Kid** are the first visitors. A previous 12 hour encounter with the far side has them chilled chummy and tea supping good. It is a day of casual encounters and long phone conversations interspersed with a bad rucking Quake Mission Pack; Scourge of Armagon. The Simpson's omnibus vies with cucumber sandwiches, loads of tea and chocolate and a hot, sunny day..

A thing of beauty is a joy forever. Top bloke **Keats**. Coz joy is a concept worth exploring. Taking it right slap on the chin.

I've been right inside my head, right in there, for the past nine weeks. I had to hear a voice. A voice that wasn't the... a human voice talking to me. A human voice that wasn't laughing or shouting or cursing at me. "Get the fuck out of my life you stinking, arrogant, patronising bastard." I had to feel arms around me. I had to be touched. No matter what it cost me. I need warmth. I was afraid. I felt that I'd never gone this far before. I felt like I was being jet propelled through a slow motion film. Cars, people, buildings, crawling like slime as I whizzed through them. I was moving faster than I could think. I was beyond thought, certainly beyond speech.

Six came and went and loneliness enveloped. A guy called **T** came around to see if I was coming along. The previous week, or so I'd been told, he'd been found with his hands down a certain female in the groups knickers whilst she was still asleep. Now this episode has disturbed all of us in the group, especially the men, who do work fucking hard to be good, positive men to these women. But what do we do collectively? Fuck all. **T** is suddenly cold-shouldered and does he really know why? Joy? We'll give you joy.

So, I'm walking along to the pub with him but how do I bring it up? I'm socially clumsy. I know I'll say the wrong thing and...

Fear and loathing. Fear of intimacy and loathing of intimacy.

So anyway we're cramming our lives into a small social time designated for such purposes. We're so busy suppressing the pressure at work and home that at weekends it's all got to come out. Fast. Coz we ain't got much time. Reject 21st century work ethics and capitalist constraints and let the whole fucking lot just pour out, right out. All over each other in an infinitely complex splurge of emotional narcotic.

Down the pub the Petange players are playing pool and the fucked up house heads are playing Petange with **Max**, who's a top boy, in the garden catching the last rays of this glorious day that's the 13th of April 19 ninety fucking seven.

Max'll say to me "do you know how many free pints you had last week?" and I'll go "10?" and he'll go "no, 15" or "no, 18" and I'll go "fuck off **Max** I know how much we drink". See, I got a 'tab' on Sunday and get free drinks for organising the night. This thing with **Max** goes on for, like, six months 'till tonight.

A drink is put in front of **Nick** and I say don't bother getting **Nick** a drink, I'll get her one coz I get free drinks. "Don't worry" says **The Catalyst**. "I get them free too. Coz I put them on your tab. Arf. Arf."

It all clicks. I flip out. He flips out. We're in the garden sitting on one of those wooden bench things all facing each other. People join in. I'm fucked. Everyone's laying in to me. It all collapses in on me and I don't know what to do...

Nick is gasping to get shit-faced but is on 'her best behaviour'. I rummage it so she gets two halves down without too much guilt and I get to duck out to spend some time with the cats. She's happy. I'm happy.

But she's not and I'm not. And the parties start to take on a strange glow that can only be appreciated through long weekends of sleep abstinence and prolonged drug abuse. When the play becomes the work, when the fantasy becomes reality, when the edges blur and the boundaries envelope, what then?

I really, really contemplate just joining in with them again but I really, really can't do it. I'd actually prefer to be straight (well, I've had a few beers and a couple of spliffs) not E'd up out of my brain, or amphetamine pasted out of the weekend or coked up to the groining eyeballs.

Nick is so depressed and fucked up and so am I that I can sympathise with her excessive drug use but does it really help? Blotting or opening? *What are we doing to our lives?*

Sitting in the garden when it all came down was hard but liberating. To hear those people so close to me telling me in a cruel way, one at a time, what they thought of me, in a much more cruel way than anything they could ever accuse me of was liberating.

Tangentopoli, our fanzine, has virtually ground to a halt. And so will the rest of the stuff. I'm tired now and all I've worked on to express myself through, all for seemingly nothing. For people who collectively burst my bubble. I realise now that I'm not a part of you. What matters to me now is my writing and reading and Djing. The promoting side I've lost and don't want to return. Not in the circumstances I'm living now anyway. She's gone and I've helped her to go and I've lost her. And I'm sad. And the parties don't help me escape reality coz they become magnified extensions of my "big" (as the **Catalyst** would say) "paranoid one". My big jealousy one. My big break-down... and they're kicking me while I'm down.

So **Nick** says, later up at **Polly's** when I say I'm going home, "I don't want to stay either."

"Hey" I say "you don't have to come down. Stay. Enjoy yourself." She really wants to stay. I can see it in her eyes and everything. She's fucked up so I help her by walking away.

"I'll see you in a couple of hours", she says before she goes. She doesn't want to spend any time with me anymore and who could blame her. She really tries but, I can see, she's bored, she needs new stimulation. I love her, she loves me. It's fucking hard after 11 years coz it throws up all these new challenges. It's painful and emotionally upsetting. The parties are on the back burner for now. Till balance is restored. Till me and **Nick** sort something real again.

staring into the crowd

cambridge strawberry fair

so I'm up at the Strawberry Fair in Cambridge standing underneath this thirty foot tower of scaffolding poles and its swaying madly about in the wind. I'm desperately trying to kid myself that its all great fun and I'm not at all nervous and where the fucks Nick when I need her support but hey never mind coz I've got Nicky the Belly and Emily here backstage who're at this very moment climbing the ladder up to the first platform where they join in with the other people dancing wildly to the beat in the sun.

Anyway I'm up there and there's like 5000 or more people just chilling and drinking and dancing and all I can really see is the tops of their heads but directly down below me I see the girls giving it some and a strange calm just starts to overcome me and I stick the first tune on and... nothing changes. The people still dance, well the first 10 rows do anyway, whilst others just sit or walk or drink or talk. No one looks up, there are no jeers. Or cheers. Everything just carries on as normal so why am I shitting myself?

It could be this thing that happened to me just before I mounted the ladder to go up into the clouds and do my bit for tVC. Strangely enough I was just staring into the crowd, you know how it is, and watching the faces and looking at peoples clothes and their kids and what they were drinking and guessing where they were going and what they all done when they got home or lost their temper or got drunk last night, when suddenly I saw two guys wading through the crowd, bawling and shouting at the top of their voice and both wearing Newcastle United football tops. 'Here Nick', she'd arrived by now, 'take a look at these two daft geordies'.

'that's your fucking brother'

'naw'

'it is'. Then 'Colin. Colin', at the top of her voice over the sound of the rig. He turns around and it is him. He looks confused then in an instant he recognises us and immediately pulls up to his eye this camcorder that we hadn't seen there and begins filming as he walks towards us.

I don't really have time to get over the shock of seeing my brother again after eight years. I don't really have time to say hello or how are you or anything. We're both pretty stunned. All Colin can say is 'what brings you down here?' 36

even though I now live in Kent and have theoretically come 'up'. Strange things to think or say but what can you say?

Grant Plant is nudging me. 'Paul, you've got two minutes then you're on'.

'I'm, er, playing here' is all that can come out before I have to ascend the ladder of windy tumultuousness.

Up top, whilst playing it all comes somewhat on top. Here I am back with the woman I love who loves me, playing in front of the biggest crowd I've ever played in front of and, fuck me, I've just bumped into my brother who I haven't seen for eight years. How strange is life? Fucking strange I'll tell you. How come nothing really happens for so long then all of a sudden... this?

The sun beats down and as the scrumpy cider takes its hold I don't know wether to laugh, cry, jump for joy or hide my head in my hands. I think what I do do is gently shake my head in disbelief and sigh really loudly all alone up my 30 foot tower swaying in the wind whilst cuing up the next great deep house tune.

'Take that you bastards'.

Later on I meet Isa my brothers 'lass', am informed his name is 'Anders' not Colin, that he now lives in Cambridge and is a 'pacifist' and has been for eight years, that our step brother Peter is married and that at the wedding our father and his wife ignored Colin, sorry Anders, all day but that Peter didn't. 'He's really sound is Peter' says Anders, the first time I've ever really heard him say anything good about the boy in twenty odd years. He talks of tolerance and forgiveness and respect and love and I can't help feeling sadness and loss and really how stupid we've been falling out and not keeping in touch and later that month when he comes down to Kent he says how I never looked after my dog Smokie when I was young (I did) and other such weird kids stuff that sounds strange coming out of the mouth of a thirty something but has obviously been there all the time and when he says it to me he's a little boy again and so am I and in that one sentence he says so much about how he feels betrayed and hurt and unloved and every thing else that happened to him that I couldn't stop but wanted it too. About how he had this relationship with a woman who was studying to be a doctor and how when she qualified six years later she dumped him and how he's left Newcastle after fucking off all his druggy mates and selling his sound system that had done a party the on the Meadowwell estate the week after all the riots up there. There's a look of hardness or sadness in his eyes and it looks like no one gets near him really but maybe it's time for his bro to bury the hatchet and get on with the important things in life like loving and understanding people and forgiving and being... and to stop being so fucking angry all the time and blaming other people when it's not their fault or any bodies really. He says before hugging me real hard and tight 'you do know that I don't touch any one very much' and I really want to cry with happiness or sadness but I can't so all I do is hug him real tight back and say 'I know, neither do I'. And the thick layers of life's shitiness come peeling off and underneath there's this sore redness and underneath this is my fucking brother who I really love so much but don't know how to say it.

Dodi-Di-Dead

Where were you when **Di** died? I'll tell you where we all were. In a beautiful field, held in the gentle bosom of a magical party valley on a wonderful late summers night in **Kent**. Breathing the liberating and intoxicating scent of various crates of lager, surrounded by friends. And vans full of police. Fuckin' 'avin' it, us and the police both. They took increasing delight in sealing off all the access routes to the field and 'Sending three and four pence' for they were 'going to a dance'. And we thrilled at cadging another few hours party time off them as they huddled round their walkie talkies, obviously in shock. As our mood got more vibrant as the night progressed, they grew more remorse as each new update on **Di** and **Dodi** came in thick and fast and their elaborate blocking techniques at the party entrances failed to stop gangs of marauding party goers from reaching their desired destination. '**Dodi** is deady' could be heard, chanted above the music.

On hearing the news, one was transported back to **Glastonbury 1987**, the comedy tent in the theatre field. **Gerry Sadowitz** is on stage, insulting everyone and everything. 'You know what', he shouts. 'I'm fucking sick about hearing about fucking **Princess Di**. We hear, 'Today, **Princess Di** has put her fucking hair in a fucking bun. Who fucking cares? I'm waiting for the fucking day **Princess Di** fucking dies! Today **Princess Di** has died!' Much laughter and cheering.

Well we're sick of it too (and gonna get sicker). Ultimately a privileged, spoilt young woman has died, who had all the benefits and rewards that being a member of that bloated, insipidly incestuous and archaic institution the British aristocracy offers, thrown at her by the bucketful. She fucked up, so what. Let's just put it all in perspective. Yes we felt shock, but not sorry. And to the person who came up to the decks and demanded, 'A minutes silence as a token of respect'; fuck right off.

So on the night **Di** died, we lived. We laughed and we sang. We shared, we dreamed. We loved we hugged. We believed, we hoped. We knew. We became, we soared, we danced and we conquered.

As morning started to show above the hillocks surrounding the valley, the police began stepping up their vibing us out programme. More and more started to arrive, all grim faced, shocked, not their usual cocky selves. Vans were parked as far up the lane as you could see, and they started milling around. They would set off in twos around the party site, video camera on shoulder. But the party faithful acted oblivious and got down to doing what they were meant to do. They enjoyed. With a few turning downs of the volume to placate and accommodate Her Maj's boys, we managed to stave off the inevitable till 7.30am, when the plug was finally pulled. Then as groups of weary party goers and others who were just warming up walked towards their cars and the exit, the police began gradually to disperse and get back in their vans, and the horizon seemed a little less blue.

We loaded everything up double quick time, into a horse box full of strands of straw and drove off through the misty morning reality, little realising for the next two weeks all that would be on the telly and in the papers was '**Princess Di** has died!'

Good party, shock, horror



It was noted with much shock and many ripples of amazement by the East Kent party cruising fraternity that a blindingly good **tVC** party was held amid the sumptuous splendor of **The Peckers Country Hotel**. Being somewhat of a rare occurrence towards the end of last year, in fact resembling the proverbial Dodi, it was a just cause for celebration by the assembled throngage, as everything slipped, with ne'er a whimper, perfectly and smoothly into place. That hoary old mucker the magnificent **Maurice** was back on the crew as 'technical consultant' whilst the repair of the beloved **Community** subs hung in limbo. Breath became a whole lot easier as his masterful flexibility engineered a tasty union between the various pieces of throbbing equipment, the aural magnificence of which, when coupled with music as groovy as a ten dime movie, caused a few erections of hearts.

Ellie and **Dan** from **Orchid House** made a fine job of disguising the decor of an Engleesh country hotel, so as to evoke the feel of walking through a misty rainforest of orchids by the

light of the moon. They also provided **Pat**, the lovely, smiling, and always ready for a chuckle, proprietor of this beloved establishment with a few 'Ooh's' and 'Aah's' upon her final inspection before showtime. 'Ooh' she said aahringly.

It was indeed this very evening that saw the emergence of the erstwhile if somewhat esoteric **tVC** 'Muffia' (or 'Mafia' as **Rosie** calls them). Using the auspicious theory that 'the best nickname you can have is one you've thought up yourself' they gaily did the honours on the door; making everyone welcome with their girly capabilities. Shoulders back, breasts out; eyelid flutter rate a minimum of three per second; never breathing out; cheeks sucked tight on high cheekbones and no bras being just a few of the elaborate un-semiotic signifiers on display to the eagle-eyed party person. Perhaps marred slightly by the ever 'effervescent' **Nick** who was spotted sloping off to 'get something' from her room and promptly forgot her door watching duties. But by 10.15pm, half the female population of **Dover** were in the main room, supporting **Timo** whilst he whipped out various 12", to whoops from the already, as one particularly observant lesbian said; 'gagging for it lasses'. From then

on in, it all just gelled.

There was something in the air that whispered of big doings, that said 'psst! you wouldn't want to miss tonight'. With this, the first proper party this year for our oft beleaguered tVC 'posse', 'the weary fatigue of last year' was, according to one informed source close to where the action is, 'thrown away'. Whatever that meant. It was indeed one of those great moments when 'the walls between you and other people, suddenly melt away, and you all fuse together', said a delighted woman from the comfort of a salubrious horizontal recline on the floor. 'When I opened my eyes it seemed like all the people on the dance floor were melted down into one solid, mesmerized mass, it was an overstuffed sardine can of an audience, packed in an olive-oil trance. The people were all pasted together, looking at the DJ with hypnotic eyes and swaying. We all got a terrific lift from the richness of the music, the bigness of it. The notes eased out like lava running down a mountain, slow and sure and steaming. It was good, carefree, truth-speaking, right from the heart music'. Funny coz we all noticed that one.

'It's hard to put into words, but our friendship with music is one of the fine things in life. It's probably tough for anybody outside of the dance music scene to latch on to its meaning. When you're a kid and your first millennium falls on you - when you get in a groove that you know is right for you, find a way of expressing something deep down and know it's your way- it makes you bubble inside. But it's hard to tell outsiders about it. It's all locked up inside you, in a kind of mental prison. Then once in a million years, something like the party scene comes along and you know the same millennium is upon everyone else too. It's the same with them as it is with you. That gives you the courage of your convictions - all of a sudden you know you aren't plodding around in circles in a wilderness. You know you've got something good, a straight slant on things, and yet nobody understands it.

'We began to know that we had a gang of things in common: we ate like starved cannibals who finally latch on to a missionary, and we laughed a whole lot and lazed around in an easy going way. All the puffed-up strutting little people we saw around, jogging their self-important way along so chesty and chumpy, plotting and scheming and getting more wrinkled and jumpy all the time, made us howl, they struck us so weird. Not that we got rowdy and rough about it. We were on another plane in another sphere compared to the partiers who were coke heads, always hitting the lines and coming up brawling after they got loaded. We liked things to be easy and relaxed, mellow and mild, not loud or loutish, and the scowling chin-out tension of the coke heads with their false courage didn't appeal to us.

'Besides, they don't even play good music - their tones become hard and evil, not natural, soft and soulful - and anything that messed up the music instead of sending it on its way was out with us. We were for music that was real foxy, all lit up with inspiration and her mammy' said a spokesperson.

The main room was packed all night, and they didn't do too badly in the bar either. DJ's **Timo, Oz, Jes, Derek Patterson, Lucy, Matt Barnes, Alex** and **Gavin, Pen** and **Rebecca** put on a top show; every single mix was flawless all night in both rooms and, to end on a personal note, with skulls crammed full of sunbeams we were as happy as cats under a hot stove. Because when it comes down to it, to hell with the money and the fame, just fly right, hew to the line, stick with it. We got us a fine new music here, and lets keep making it as honest and good as we know how, and, if we don't hit the headlines and cop the gold, the hell with it, we'll know we always did our best and we'll be straight with ourselves. That's the way it goes: somebody blows his guts out creating a new and authentic art form, then the unhip boys with shrewd commercial instincts come along and begin by exploiting it, without bothering to learn first. The result is that the public hears only the bastard version and goes crazy about it, thinking it's the real thing. Well, tonight, it was the real thing. And we dug it. Big time. This is your reporter signing off; on the QT and very hush-hush.

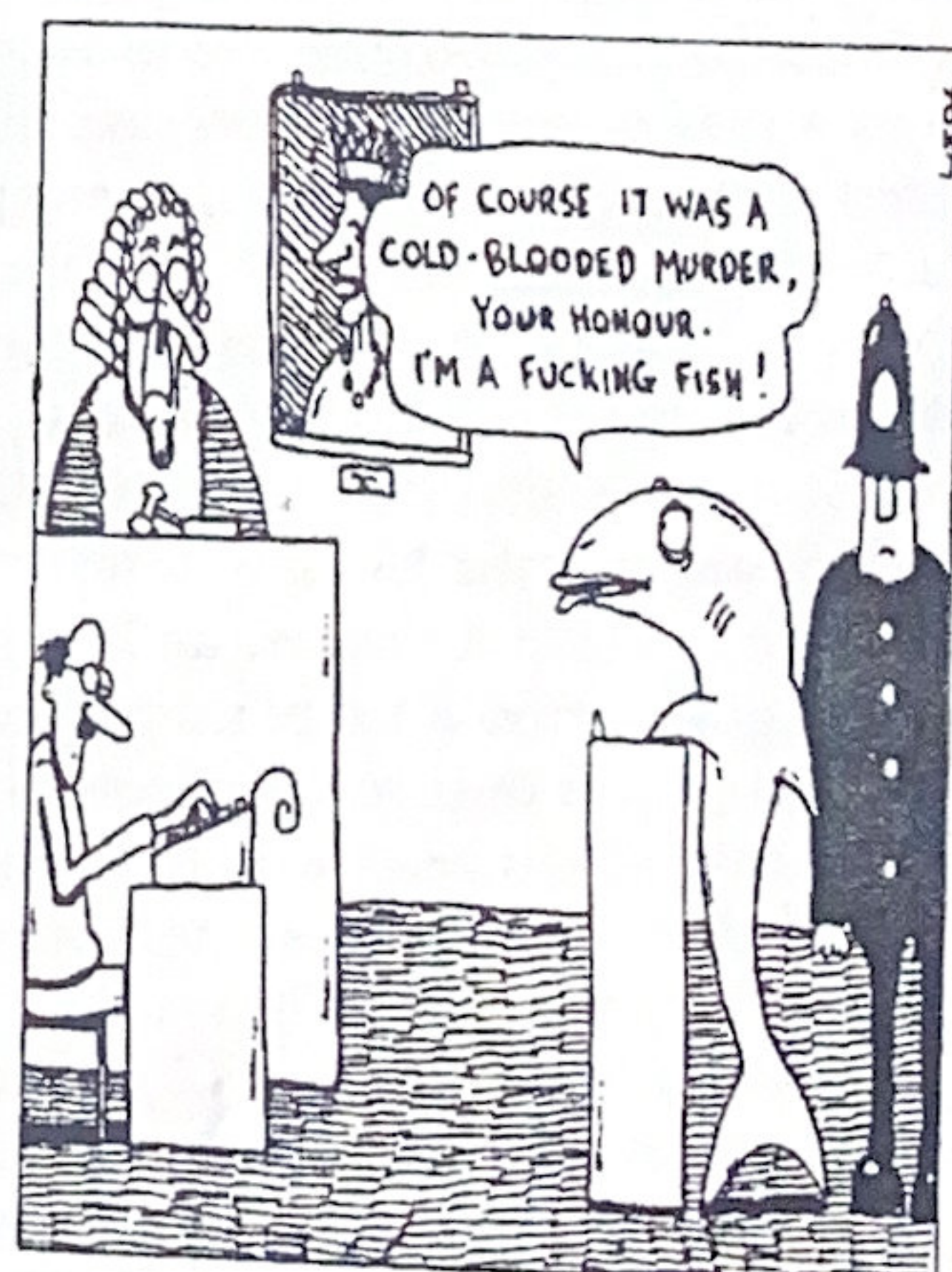
(With thanks to Milton Mezznow and "Really The Blues" for a little inspiration).



THE AMALGAMATION OF TWO CLASSIC CARTOON SITUATIONS WAS A COMPLETE FAILURE.



THE FLY-IN-SOUP GAG - 1990'S STYLE.



"Emily, you mustn't reverse around a round-a-bout the wrong way, in front of a police van."

Fruity Antios

Club Loco, Bristol - 9th May

The day dawned drenched in sun for our sojourn to mellow Bristol to get up to all sorts of housey antics with our fruity chums Iain and Bazil, Tara and Chris. Polly and Dick Flemming did the decent thing and gave up one of their modes of transport for the D.J.'s and their chicks, instead going down on Dicks huge throbbing beast. A three hour drive, at least, in a car, a 'noticing muscles you never realised you had' experience on the back of a motorbike. We waved them goodbye as Polly tried not to look too frightened, knowing she had to be back in Kent to be able to get up for a new job at 7.30am, Monday morning.

We were being driven by The Em, so as is the normal occurrence on such occasions, we went prepared, each of us packing at least a couple of pairs of extra pants, for when we cacked them later on, plus a few vials of valium to be used intravenously when needed. Unfortunately, we had no sounds, due to their spectacular ignition in Cambridge a couple of weeks previously, so by the time we reached Maidstone, we were already bored shitless.

However, with The Em at the helm, obviously mistaking the driving seat for the cockpit of a plane, we arrived in Bristol two and a half hours later. And Timo didn't have one piss stop either.

Telling Iain we'd see him in The Bank (later to be nicknamed The Wank for reasons to be explained) at 8pm, we strolled casually through the door at 7.58pm. With no sign of the boys yet, we ordered a round only to die of shock, mingled with disgust, when told that the only lager on draft, was Fosters. And there is no way on earth that you can get drunk on that namby pamby Aussie stuff; ask Brad. The only time I've ever had a sesh on it, it resulted in a few friends and I being assaulted by a couple of thuggish policeman with their truncheons. We were then arrested by, and then done for ABH on the eve of Thatcher's resignation, on a Wednesday night in Whitstable.

2 pints and a lot of burping later, plus a few visits to the loo and the boys appear, shorted up and with the largest box seen outside a Thai whorehouse. Pleasantries are exchanged, insults traded. The Em and Mdme SN have got bored with the action, or lack of it, and have gone off to pull the first bloke since that morning. They have an itch, and it must be scratched. Polly and Dick have appeared. Polly is walking as if she has been riding a horse for a week. They had to stop every hour apparently, for 'a rest'.

The Em and Mdme SN make a brief, if somewhat dishevelled appearance, adjusting various parts of their clothing, only to disappear once more.

At 10pm we leave the bar on the trail of the club, and some half decent beer. As we're searched at the door, the bouncer looks through one of the 5 pouches of tobacco Polly has been given to look after. "You can't take this razor blade in 'ere", he says. "Nor this either", as he finds some other substance clubs don't like you consuming on their premises. He confiscates the tobacco and 'undesirables', which later turn out to be our driver's and we practically run to the bar and the cans of Red Stripe, shining like a beacon to our alcohol starved bodies. Supping on the cool, strong lager, relaxation starts to set in as we all move from floor to floor and conversation to conversation. Tim is playing upstairs with Chris, Oz is downstairs with Iain and Bazil.

By 1am Oz is on the decks and we gravitate to the dance floor, where we whoop it up for a while, especially when, as if on queue, whilst we were all wondering when it would be played, we heard the strains of 'From Whitstable' (Cevin Fisher's 'The Freaks Come Out') come out over the system. So that was it of course. We strutted around shouting along to each other in a most necessary fashion.

The night was spent once more in a haze of addled, alcoholic conversations interspersed by moments of pure musical brilliance and appreciation of all that is excellent. Iain was as mashed and saucy as a bald man can be, Bazil chilled, Chris chatty, Tara huggy and Em and Mdme SN busy in the old trouser trout department. Indeed Em was nearly ejaculated from the club on a couple of occasions for certain little indiscretions that do not become a young lady, goaded on by the ever cackling of Mdme SN. Oh look there's the wall. CACKLE, CACKLE, CACKLE etc.

After it was back to Chris' house, where I lay in a gassy alcoholic stupor, hogging the sofa, trying to get myself together for the long drive home. So no change there then. Em and SN nicked our red wine and proceeded to drink it, cackling ever so cacklingly on the other sofa. So no change there then. They'd already had a couple of bottles of vodka, and Em was just warming up nicely for her land speed record attempt drive home.

As we wave goodbye and exchange hugs with the Bristol lot, my eyes are already flickering towards sleep. We'll soon be home, I think dreamily....

"Emily, you mustn't reverse around a round-a-bout the wrong way in front of a police van," I hear Oz say as my body snaps back to life. We are entering Chiswick, yes in London. The M25 is but a very distant memory by this stage. We have done the 'coming back from a party' classic. Everyone has fallen asleep, apart from the driver. She also has no radio, or music to listen to, and somehow we have ended up in Chiswick and currently are being pursued by two extremely keen policemen in a large van. Shit.

She gets out and asks the way to Canterbury. Things are stashed. She uses her pretty blondness with them for a while and it looks like she might get away with it. They give her a producer. But they're desperate for a result. One of them comes and sits in the car, and seems intent on proving the steerings fucked. "Got any exotic substances on you?", he asks hopefully. We all ignore him. Em is asking for her jeans, and as she takes off her tiny mini skirt and pulls on her jeans it can only mean one thing. Yes, she's being breathalised. Maybe if she'd have drunk one less bottle of vodka, or maybe not our wine, she would have been alright. But she's not, and the police are looking triumphant. They take her off with great efficiency and much fanfare, finding it necessary to call out another couple of cars to do so. We are stranded.

So we drive into Chiswick to wait her release. There's a burger bar opposite the cop shop that we are forced to sit in to wait because it's the only place open at 8.45 on a Sunday morning. Oz wins some chips and a coke on the free scratchcards, but they won't serve them to him, because they "don't do chips at breakfast". We try and explain that it's the first time we've been in 'one of these places' for 16 years and probably won't ever go in one again, so could we have our chips now, but still they won't relent. Then we see Em running from the entrance. Her second breath test is negative, and she's free.

Deciding that she has learnt from her experience and 'will never drink drive again', she falls asleep in the back whilst Nick tries to navigate her way out of Chiswick, back to the M25 and home to Kent...

Later that morning The Em is spotted getting into her car, after drinking a bottle of wine down the beach, to drive to the Faversham festivities. Unfortunately her car broke down.

OUT THERE 97

There are numerous things which landmark this one as a party/festival.

We have the site, what site? Well I suppose a landfill site was a clearing for which a bunch of half wits could use as a Jig-a-along!!! The French have this way that whatever should suit them, would certainly suit us, disregarding any rubbish in the way.

Anyhow we arrived, sunny and bright (well our crossing was!!) and started to decide where to pitch various tents/marqueses and rig. That done, with a little help, from a very good friend, who supplied endless cups of tea and coffee, or something a wee bit stronger. Cheers Kappa. That done, we set about where to position "camp", as it were. I say camp, but what I actually mean, is two camps rather like the upper and lower deck in the class system, but in a much more jocular fashion (of course). Introducing Fikey Camp (same level as site) and Paradise camp, slightly above the proceedings, and on the other side of a swelling river, which shall be discussed later on. The clever buggers who thought it would be so nice to be slightly away from the initial mayhem, did not bargain for the deadly French Techno Dome, that just happened to be facing, so adoringly, upwards at the camp!! But the "downstairs" residents also had not bargained for it to piss down with rain, three days on the trot, so adding a nice little mud rink. Fuming and gassy in the mornings, it was a great setting.

The tVC posse started to arrive in drips and drabs, and looking somewhat thankful they had got there, and at last it was orf. I can not remember who played when, and what with whom, but all the time it was bloody excellent, super chunk and deep as funk, with fuck routine mingled as standard.

The river. Soooo nice to have a little stream running through the area. NOT. A log to aid crossing. A bit more rain and some bugger putting the mud on the log at night to make it nice and slippery. 'No problem' said I, running backwards and forwards, only to be caught on the very last night, completely one-sided wet and muddy. Well I was simply making up the numbers who had also fallen in. I believe a female Bishop was one these and John/Jane.

The PENDRAGON crew made a mark, providing a very well structured set up, in contrast to our patchworked quilt like tent, they played to the delighted trance/techno members very well.

Other things to briefly mention were TURBO UNIT who put up another excellent show of fire/motorbikes, and god knows what else. That's all I can remember, so imagine what you like if you did not attend.

Saturday 7th November

SHOW US YOUR RING

an engagement party for Richard and Sam

11.30 till really quite late

The Royal Oak
Bedfont
Near heathrow
details 0973 120219

DJ's - Oz, Jes, Kier and Tom, Timo,
Shaun, Wesley

CABBAGED

the east kent

whitstable, kent

7.00 - 10.30

1st nov

SHAUN/JAMES

8th nov

OZ/MICHAEL R

15th nov

MIKE/WESO

22nd nov

ROSIE/REBECCA

nov 25th

SIMON STONEHOUSE

/ROBIN

"Everything' is relative. People in this world don't know what they want, they're never satisfied. You know something: I think the greatest misfortune is to become a millionaire. You don't know who your friends are, you got everything you want, you drink too much, you eat too much, your wife's cheating on you, you are cheating on your wife. Look at Princess Di and her boyfriend- all the money in the world and look what happened to them. I mean, a lot of misfortune happens to people that are wealthy. There's no place else to go when you're already up there but bing! Down."