

# HotShots

London's essential section

DANIEL FRYER

## Five green bottles

Okay, so they're not green, but they are bottles, and there's five of them. They all contain alcohol of some description, and hit pub and clubland sometime over the next six months. Hotshots gives you the all-new booze reviews. All together now: five bottles of varying colours standing on the wall...



### What is it? Coors Light.

According to the blurb, it's brewed with the strength of the Rockies. Ten billion metric tons of granite and stone must be behind the marketing, as it'll be available free at movie premières, student art comps and all manner of other events, with special trips to the Rocky Mountains and – of course – booze as prizes. Blag with impunity. Blag while you can.

**What's it like?** Best served cold, it slips down the throat like a snowball down a mountain.

**Vital statistics** 330ml bottle/4.5% ABV/around £2.50

**Out** It's due to emerge in early 2000



### What is it?

#### Smirnoff Ice.

It's another one of these ready-bottled mixed drinks that are currently popular. But there's a twist: Smirnoff are hoping that Ice – a vodka-citrus concoction – will conquer the blokes market, for geezers still apparently have a credibility problem with these fizzy pop things.

**What's it like?** Scarily drinkable, but not very blokey, we're afraid.

**Vital statistics** 275ml bottle/5.5% ABV/around £2.50

**Out** Look out for it from mid-October



### What is it? Bacardi Rigo.

A sharp, thirst-slaking traditional Cuban-based blend of white Bacardi rum, lime and soda. It's hoped – especially by all those gringo women – that Rigo will bring out 'the free-spirited Nuevo Latino smouldering inside the average British male'. Ay caramba!

**What's it like?** Clearcut, Cuban and cool.

**Vital statistics** 275ml bottle/5.4% ABV/around £2.50

**Out** It should be making its first appearances in bars and clubs round about now



### What is it? Zzz.

Marketed as an alternative to all those stimulant combos, Zzz (ask for 'Three Zee') is a drink that aims to send you off to sleep rather than perk you up. Billed as 'liquid sedation', a couple of bottles should have you off to the Land of Nod in next to no time. Just make sure you get home first.

### What's it like?

Fantasia on acid. It's a curious blend of whiskey, marijuana, malted milk and carbonated blueberry juice. There might have been other ingredients, too, but we fell asleep before finishing the press release.

**Vital statistics** 275ml bottle/5.6% ABV/£2.65

**Out** It launches on New Year's Eve as an aid to the post-millennial comedown



### What is it? VR.

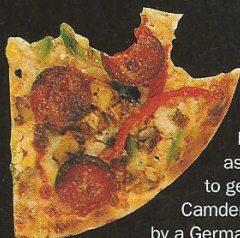
Stands for Vodka Revitaliser, a new spirit-taurine beverage mix not all that dissimilar to a certain mixed drink being glugged in pubs and clubs up and down the country as you read this. It's that stimulant, y'know, the one that makes you fly. And pee on birds. The one that the company behind VR are not especially keen to namecheck.

**What's it like?** Like vodka-Red Bull. There, we said it.

**Vital statistics** 275ml bottle/5.4% ABV/£2.50

**Out** Expect to see it some time around late September

TONY GIBSON



## You're not a true Londoner until...

**You've** been asked how to get to Camden Market by a German tourist, and instructed them to 'Head for Dagenham Heathway tube and turn left: it'll be right in front of you'

**You've** thought, however briefly, about going swimming in the Trafalgar Square fountains in the middle of winter

**You've** had to direct a clueless and probably unlicensed minicab driver all the way home from Soho at 4am after drinking a gutful of absinthe  
**You've** snuck into a West End show for free during the interval when no one's looking

**You've** developed the munchies while out late in town and been forced to ingest a dodgy slice of £1 'pizza' from a Leicester Square café  
**You've** threatened physical violence to someone standing on the wrong side of the escalators on the tube

**You've** gotten the tube home after a somewhat tired and emotional evening, fallen asleep and then woken up in a hurry just as the train pulls into... Cockfosters? NOOOOO!!!

**You've** rolled down Primrose Hill

**You've** successfully heckled someone off the stage at Up The Creek comedy club in Greenwich

**You've** sat at the front of one of the driverless trains on the Docklands Light Railway and made like you're on a rollercoaster

**You've** had a coffee at the Bar Italia  
**You've** thrown something you really shouldn't have thrown into the Thames

**You've** struck up a close friendship with the night operative at the nearest 24-hour garage

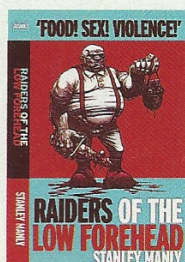
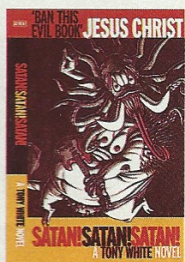
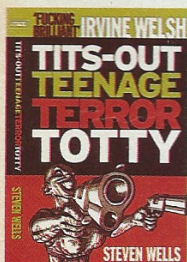
**You've** pub-crawled your way around the entire Monopoly board in one day and lived to tell the tale

**You've** tickled/kicked/stolen the money from one of those irritating statue imitators in Covent Garden  
**You've** minded the gap ●



DANIEL FRYER

## All's well that ends Wells



Lovers of the novel form, members of the Soho House Literati, those of you with a dodgy stomach and/or weak heart... run for cover now. Everything you hold dear is about to be bombed into oblivion, and the perps of this book-bashing barrage have broken out the artillery. The pulp novel is back and it's not in a particularly pleasant mood.

**Attack!**, a company formed by notorious *NME* hack Steven Wells, is headed your way any time soon with a frenetic portfolio of perverse,

subversive and all-pervasive mish-mash-trash avant garde pulp fiction. Imagine something equating to literary punk rock, Wells believes, and you'll be along the right lines. 'If it were a record, it would be *Anarchy In The UK*. If it were a band, it would be The Ramones. If it were a record label, it'd be Digital Hardcore.'

The first three titles off the **Attack!** wagon are Tony White's **Satan! Satan! Satan!**, **Raiders of the Low Forehead** by the implausibly named Stanley Manly – 'in your face, down

your trousers and up your arse like a shit-eating rabbit on speed,' blows its blurb-trumpet – and Wells's own **Tits-Out Teenage Terror Totty**, a book that makes James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* read like Janet and John dumbed down for dyslexics. On crack. Well, that's what it says on the back, anyway.

'It's gonna be the true pulp novel in the true pulp novel form,' pronounces the hyperactive, hyperbolic Wells, 'printed on the cheapest, crappiest paper possible. Trotsky said that the paper of the party must reek of the people's vodka. We want ours to reek of sweat-addled CK1 and cheap lager.' They've even co-opted the original Prime Mover, filthy '80s rock goon Zodiac Mindwarp, into putting pen to paper under his real name, Mark Manning, though God only knows when he'll rouse himself from his stupor long enough to move beyond chapter two.

**Attack!** is Wells' show, though: he edits the books and even chooses the authors. He's open to ideas, too: anyone can write for him but, and this has to be stressed very strongly, there are to be no massive rambling internal dialogues, none of that 'chemical generation' shite and, definitely, no standard format novels. 'They're so far up their own arses that they're all establishment and formula,' he bellows. 'Break it down. Don't give us a symphony: give us drum 'n' bass.'

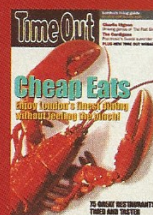
Indeed. Meanwhile, now is the time to take cover if you're not sufficiently intrigued, for nowhere seems safe from **Attack!**'s blitzkrieg. There's even – horror of horrors – a spoken word tour of students' unions in the pipeline. Incoming! ●

**Attack!**'s first batch of titles are published this autumn by Creation Books ([www.creationbooks.com](http://www.creationbooks.com)). For mail order enquiries, call 020 7430 9878.

## Time Out magazine

The *Time Out* Student Guide is brought to you by *Time Out* magazine, London's living guide for over 30 years. Published every Wednesday, *Time Out* offers easily the most comprehensive listings information available anywhere for what's on in the capital. Films, art, food, clubs, gigs, theatre, sport, shopping, comedy, dance... everything is covered in detail, from both an informative and a critical perspective. Add to the equation interviews with all the hottest new stars, lively features and columns, reviews by some of the smartest and most perceptive critics in the business and comprehensive TV and cable listings, and you have a high-on indispensable tool for life in the world's greatest city.

*Time Out* usually costs £1.80, but see the centre pages of this guide for details on how to get eight issues for just £1 each from your newsagent, as well as for a whole host of other offers and competitions.



# Inbetween days

Getting a handle on life as a student isn't easy. Making a film of it should be even tougher. However, as **Daniel Fryer** reports, campus flick **The Inbetweeners** looks set to prove the exception to the rule.

**A**merican students have their sororities and fraternities; the Brits have halls of residence. And just as the former often seem a tad masonic, there's nothing quite like British campus life: it's a bubble, a microcosm, the last safety-net between you and reality. Much comedy has been borne from the American collegiate experience – *Animal House*, *Fandango*, *Porky's* et al – but little has been made of the British one; until now, that is. And, predictably, it's taken an English university graduate to do it.

Darren Fisher is 26, and the founder of the Britpack Film Company. A writer/producer/director who graduated in 1994, Fisher, under the

**'Begging and pleading, and knocking on doors'**

**Darren Fisher on how he funded *The Inbetweeners***

Britpack banner, has just completed his first feature. Forget *Fraternity Vacation*, *Revenge Of The Nerds* and *Midnight Madness*: *The Inbetweeners* is a film that promises to capture the whole British university experience in one 90-minute go. But more of that later.

First this: 26, graduated five years ago, heads up his own company and has managed to make a full-length feature. Who wants to be *there* when they graduate? Come on, hands up. And how can you do it? First, and here's the yukky part, you have to believe in yourself. *Really* believe. 'If you're not paranoid that your idea is so good that somebody's going to steal it,' says Fisher, 'then it's not good enough.' Sounds arrogant. 'Actually, I'm horribly altruistic,' he replies.

The youthful Fisher – dressed, in a shameless piece of self-promotion, in a T-shirt bearing an *Inbetweeners* tag-line – laughs. He named his company Britpack as a reaction against all the actors who claim they don't want to be stars, who don't want to be labelled – 'Yeah, *right*. You don't want to be a hot, new young thing?' – and designed it as a place from which to launch previously undiscovered talent. 'Britpack doesn't really care about major experience,' he explains.

'If you know your stuff and you're intelligent and hard-working, then we're happy to get involved with you.'

The fact that he set the company up also means that Fisher can retain full creative control over his work: no mean achievement in an era when Hollywood films are scripted by committee. 'I've signed scripts to companies before,' he explains, 'and you have no power at all. They can change everything. What's made as a movie bears little or no resemblance to what you have written.'

*The Inbetweeners* – which was written four or so years ago and which started life as a kind of four-and-a-half hour diary of Fisher's student days – was always meant to be Britpack's first project, largely on account of its low budget. Still, any film requires some outlay and only diplomat's daughters graduate flush, so where did the cash come from?

'Begging and pleading and knocking on doors: friends, family and people we met along the way. It was all down to the script, really. We just sent it out to people,

and those who liked it were willing to get involved.' It's surprising who you can pick up: DJ-turned-agent and producer Peter Powell is an enthusiastic supporter, while *The Inbetweeners* also contains cameos from the likes of Johnny Ball, Philippa Forrester and, er, Anthea Turner.

The girls' roles, certainly, are less than glamorous. 'Cleaners. They're a pair of cleaners. We dressed them down to make them as unglamorous as possible. They come from saarf London,' grins Fisher, perhaps hinting that girls from daarn saarf don't do glamour. Philippa and Anthea – who came on board through Powell – are there for light relief and pop up at intervals throughout the movie. 'They work out really nicely. They're more for comic relief, but they do have some influence on the plot.'

Fisher's script has been knocking around for a while now; a few years ago, before she got big, Zoë Ball even read for one of the parts. Through her, they

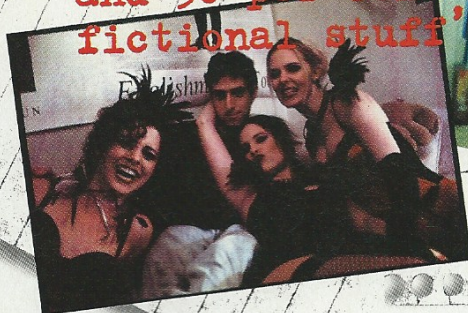
got daddy. Johnny Ball plays one of the lecturers. *The lecturer. There is only one.* Hmm. A film about student life, set entirely on campus and 90 minutes long, with only one lecture scene. 'We thought the ratio was just about accurate,' says Fisher. This kind of offsets the probable poster slogan – 'sex, drugs, nudity and gratuitous study' – but education does, at least, merit a mention somewhere.

*The Inbetweeners* boasts a large ensemble cast of twelve, six boys and six girls. But though there's a core nucleus of four characters, things essentially boil down to a love triangle: David (Finlay Robertson) has fallen for Nicole (Kate Loustau), though Nicole's best mate Mel (Katie Pullinger) fancies David something chronic.

Fisher, though, seems to have had more fun with his peripheral characters, such as Beth, who's played by Jane Peachy (the 'Be mean, don't be mean' girl who didn't get coffee on her nose in the Cellnet ad and a recent *Maxim* cover star). 'Beth's this vacuous blonde who's convinced that



**'You get 50 per cent of my experiences and 50 per cent fictional stuff'**



► everyone fancies her. The thing is, she's right. But she's not horrible or bitchy at all; just totally absorbed by herself. Jane has played her so well that she's made her just so likeable.'

Sadly, most things for and about students, especially when using comedy as a vehicle, just can't avoid that 'we're sooo zany and mad' patronising crap-trap. Fisher, though, thinks he has. The secret, he claims, is in keeping it about people. It's just that these people happen to be students. 'Basically, we've got a mix of people of different ages, all being thrown together. We're just seeing how they react with each other.' *The Inbetweeners* is also being billed as a romantic comedy as opposed to a parody of student life, though, obviously, the ubiquitous sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll do make an appearance.

Fisher's kept the one major sex scene purposefully clinical and unerotic. 'It's about having sex for the first time and it's not all soft-focus silhouette. It's two people, really stressed out about it and just going for it.' The rock 'n' roll, meanwhile, in the spirit of the venture, comes courtesy of a swathe of unsigned bands, gleaned from ads placed on Xfm and in the pages of *NME*, *Melody Maker* and *Kerrang!*. Fisher hopes to be making a few careers here, not least his own, especially through that movie tie-in staple, the soundtrack album. 'Music won't kill a good movie and it won't make a bad one,' believes Fisher, 'but it can make an average movie pretty good.' Music is, also, an integral part of student life. You might not be able to afford a course-recommended text book, but you can always manage another CD...

When it comes to the drugs, Fisher was as straight as they come while at college: didn't smoke cigarettes, so didn't smoke anything else. Not because he was trying to be goody-goody, but because 'throwing up doesn't look cool'. He couldn't handle his booze either, being a bit of a two-pint Shirley, and took to drinking things that came in dark bottles as it meant no one could tell how much or how little he had drunk. So: didn't drink, didn't smoke. What did you do?

'I used my university experiences as a starting point and then moved on. As characters developed, they took on a life of their own, which is where writing gets really interesting for me. You get 50 per cent of my university experiences and 50 per cent fictional stuff.' And which half is his? 'I'll never tell. It'd be way too embarrassing.' Spoilsport. After further pressing, Fisher does admit to all the usual 'pranks', one of which, in a slightly amended form, makes it into the movie...

To begin with, make doubly sure your campus resident-cum-victim has gone away for the weekend. Take a bin full of water and add a packet of

cross seeds: cross is notorious for being able to grow anywhere. Pour the water under the door and wait. After about two days, you have an abundance of cross growing out of the carpet. 'You can't get rid of the stuff,' Fisher chuckles. 'You have to rip the carpet out entirely.' Just don't tell your halls where you got the idea from, OK?

Another formative part of Fisher's college years – which also made it into the film – is the whole *Rocky Horror Picture Show* experience. You know the score: basques, feather boas, fishnets, sweet transsexual shenanigans and rice. A *Rocky Horror* party forms one of the first scenes in the movie, but was in fact the last to be shot. Leading lady Nicole isn't in on the party: too ill to attend, she's outside feeling miserable. But in order to leave, she has to cut across campus and through dozens of tarted-up weirdos who, legs akimbo, are giving themselves over to absolute pleasure.

Being the last scene to be shot on the last day of the shoot, things were running predictably late; by midnight, the scene still hadn't been shot. With everyone's patience running thin, the extras bailed out. The crew, being a sensible bunch, weren't keen to replace them. Then, some bright spark had the smart idea of visiting the student bar. 'Right,'

said the crew, 'who wants to be in a movie?' They emptied the bar, got the students in fishnets and had them starting a sensation in next to no time. 'The thing is, they were all blokes. All the writhing bodies. The only people up for it were the guys, pissed out of their brains.' Which does, indeed, sound like the kind of thing a certain type of

**'We've got a mix of people, all thrown together. We're just seeing how they react'**

British campus student would do. Especially at those universities possessed of a rugby team.

Darren Fisher is an alumnus of the UEA in Norwich. He took a BA in Film, English and Philosophy and graduated with a 2:1. He still can't hold his beer. ●

*The Inbetweeners* receives a West End premiere in November, and is currently awaiting a London-wide release date. The Britpack Film Company can be contacted via email at [thebfcltd@aol.com](mailto:thebfcltd@aol.com).



Top left: *Rocky Horror* ahoy! Top right, bottom right: Darren Fisher on location. Bottom left: Circle of friends: the cast and director.

# CALL IT A NIGHT



Drunks, clubbers, night workers, courting couples: all human life descends on Trafalgar Square after midnight. The reason? The dreaded night bus ride home.

**Daniel Fryer** braves the throng. Photography **Sandra Skibsted**

**Y**ou may not know it yet, but you are a pilgrim on the streets of London. And Trafalgar Square is the mecca to which you will often turn, for it's home to Europe's biggest night bus network. The square has been a bus station of sorts since the 1920s, but it wasn't until the '80s – when London Transport's customer base changed from night worker to nightclubber – that the square became a second home to a weaving, wobbling, pissed-up and partying community of homeward-bound night owls.

Some 12,700,000 night bus journeys are made each year, with double-deckers ferrying punters across London and beyond. But the wait for a night bus can be as much a shindig as the pub or club you've just come from. Burger vendor Mr

Ahmed, who's saving up to study architecture at the University of Westminster, sums it up more succinctly than most. 'What can I say? We're dealing with drunk people. They give you a headache.'

Many of those people plump for killing a few hours, if not the whole night, in the square itself. Admiral Nelson and his four compass-point facing friends – the column was built in 1843, with the lions added 25 years later – bear silent witness to dirty deeds in and around the ornamental fountains. 'Yeah, we've shagged here,' says Bruce, while his ladyfriend Martine blushes. 'But we usually get away with it.' He nods to a young woman on the next bench along, comatose drunk and slumped so far forward that her head's almost between her legs. It's midnight. She will still be here three hours later.

At 12.30am, whooping and singing draws the curious to the fountains, where a bunch of lads have hit the water in a big way. 'Scotland,' apparently, 'is forever.' The waters hardly look deep enough for a swim, but this hasn't stopped them. Meanwhile, a couple who were earlier lying in the embrace of a lion and consuming as much alcohol as possible – 'Well, it's a cheap night out, innit?' – have left more than bottles behind. A traffic cone has been unceremoniously shoved down the statue's gaping maw. 'Ere: 'e's got a spliff,' remarks a passer-by.

An explosive shaving foam fight at 1.45am means that the fountains become an impromptu bath house for four lads. The foam clumps, minuscule ice floes left in their wake, look rather forlorn. From 2am onwards, the club crowd begin to make

## who you gonna call?

Helplines are great, but have you ever thought to consider the person at the other end of the line? **James Kleinmann** has a one-to-one with London's own student samaritans. Illustration **Benjamin de Lotz**

**Y**ou could be stuck in the relationship from hell. Maybe you're unsure about your sexuality. Or perhaps you're nervous about meeting and making new friends. On the other hand, you might just want to know the show times for the latest chick-flick in Leicester Square...

Which is where London Nightline comes in. It's like the Samaritans in that it's a phone line for the troubled, but it also provides information on life in the capital. Oh, and it's a service solely for students.

Open every term night from 6pm to 8am, London Nightline was set up 28 years ago in response to a string of student suicides at Imperial College. The organisation covers 31 institutions

and 150,000 students across London. Last year, the line received around 2,200 calls, with the counsellors – all of whom are volunteers – spending some 300 hours on the phone.

Kate Bowgett, London Nightline's co-ordinator for 1998-99, feels that the service is just as valuable to students today as when it was set up in the '70s. 'Student life has changed dramatically,' she admits. 'However, the number of students who are depressed or lonely, or who have major problems to deal with, has increased rather than decreased.'

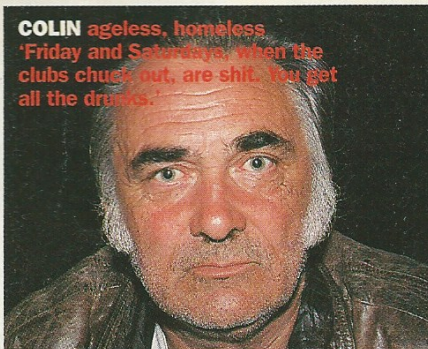
Though around 40 per cent of last year's calls were information queries, they were often related to personal difficulties, such as health or housing.

Approximately 11 per cent of calls related to academic matters, but before you start getting ideas, Nightline volunteers won't help with your homework. 'That's something you'll have to reserve for your tutor or your mates,' Bowgett advises.

But the highest number of calls that Nightline receives relate to relationships and sexuality. For some, calling Nightline may be the first and only time they can openly discuss their feelings, while for others, it might be the beginning of a long and emotional process. This makes for some sensitive issues, a fact reflected in the training that volunteers receive, such as workshops on coming out and talks from a psychiatric nurse.

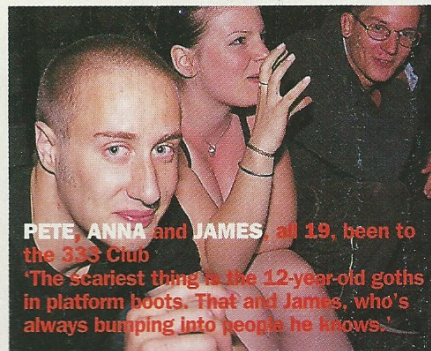


**COLIN** ageless, homeless  
'Friday and Saturdays, when the clubs chuck out, are shit. You get all the drunks.'



**LINDSAY 21**, been to the Hogshead  
'I've gotten on the wrong bus before, ended up right out of London and had to hitch back.'

**FRANCESCO 21**, and **SANDRA 22**, on holiday  
'We'll be taking the N2 to Belgravia. We don't have night buses in Milan so it's cool, but you have to wait too long.'



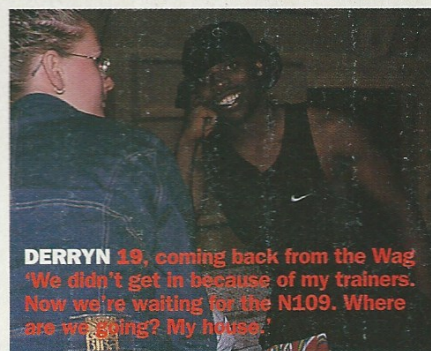
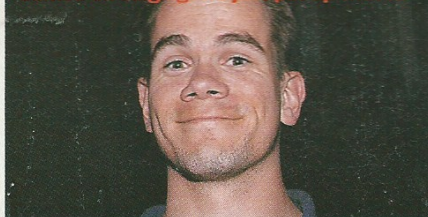
**PETE, ANNA** and **JAMES**, all 19, been to the 333 Club  
'The scariest thing is the 12-year-old goths in platform boots. That and James, who's always bumping into people he knows.'

its tottering way to the bus stops; half an hour later, a man vomits over the balustrade surrounding the South African High Commission. It's safe to assume he's not making a political statement.

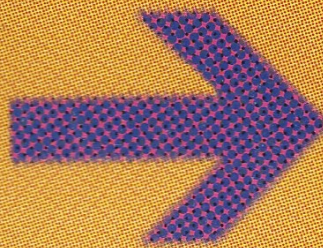
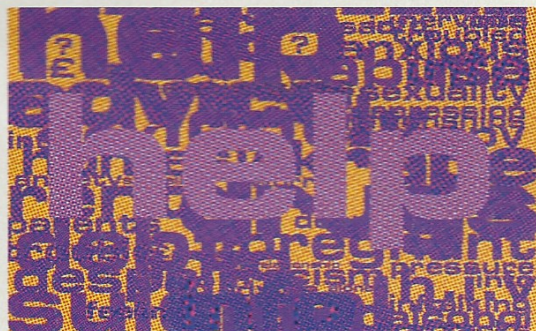
The body count for tonight is quite high: four cases of spontaneous vomiting, almost a dozen cases of urinating in public (two of them women), five passed-out bodies on the grass outside the National Gallery; and, by 3.30am, at least one arrest ('drunk and disorderly', of course).

However, by the square's standards – as you'll doubtless find out for yourself over the next three years – this is all pretty standard stuff. As is the Chinese girl, boarding the N98 and bawling into her mobile phone. The guy behind her sighs, muttering to no one in particular. 'I can't wait to get home.' ●

**STEVE 24**, heading home from BarCode  
'Some hippies got on my night bus once, with tambourines and guitars. One woman plonked herself on a bloke's lap and carried on singing. He just put up with it.'



**DERRYN 19**, coming back from the Wag  
'We didn't get in because of my trainers. Now we're waiting for the N109. Where are we going? My house.'



A major benefit for someone calling Nightline is that they'll get a student at the other end, one that has, in all probability, experienced similar problems. It's a factor that can establish some immediate common ground. The volunteers, recruited from all 31 institutions, have huge resources available but, if they're unable to help a caller directly, they'll suggest an organisation that can.

Inevitably, some do abuse the service. It's a problem that Bowgett is keen to deal with. During one of our training sessions, I ran a workshop on handling sexually manipulative callers. Together with a workshop run with the Samaritans, it seems to have been very useful for our volunteers.'

London Nightline – a registered charity, incidentally – is also the only student helpline to have been accepted as a member of the Telephone Helplines Association (THA), whose membership includes the Samaritans and Childline. 'It shows we've reached a high standard, though the THA will continue to monitor our service to ensure that level is maintained,' adds Bowgett, by way of reassurance.

It also gives volunteers the opportunity to put something with some clout on to their CVs. But if it's Brownie points you're after, then Nightline is not the easiest place to get them, as former volunteer Sarah warns. 'It's quite tough. Whenever

the phone rings, there could be someone who has a really serious problem on the other end of the line. They might even be suicidal.'

Outweighing this, though, is the great sense of satisfaction that all volunteers say they get out of helping their peers through what is, for some, the most difficult period of their lives. As John, another volunteer, adds: 'I'll never forget some of the conversations that I've had, especially the first one. It was quite scary to begin with, but extremely fulfilling' ●

London Nightline is open nightly from 6pm to 8am on 020 7631 0101. Training for potential counsellors will be advertised at freshers' fairs.

## Pride of Spitalfields

3 Heneage Street, E1 (020 7247 8933). Aldgate, Aldgate East or Whitechapel tube. The Pride starts buzzing from around 6pm most evenings. The crowd's a cosmopolitan mix of locals, young arty types and builders looking to be mistaken for gangsters. The wall is crammed with photographs of the East End from times past, and the tables are so close together you're almost guaranteed to make new friends.

## Shoreditch Electricity Showrooms

39A Hoxton Square, N1 (020 7739 6934). Old Street tube/rail. Open 6-11pm Mon; 11am-11pm Tue, Wed; 11am-midnight Thur; 11am-1am Fri, Sat; 11am-10.30pm Sun. The Showrooms is as self-consciously clean-lined as a design acolyte's portfolio. Come to pose, pick up flyers for parties you know you'll never go to, visit the basement art space, read the papers, or soak up the funk and intelligent drum 'n' bass.

## South

### Babushka

65 Camberwell Church Street, SE5 (020 7277 2601). Bus 12, 36, 171. Open 5pm-midnight Mon-Thur; 5pm-2am Fri; 11am-2am Sat; 11am-10.30pm Sun.

One of many branches of this wannabe boho chain bar in London, the Camberwell version of Babushka has quickly found favour with the notoriously hard-to-please locals, which can only be a good thing. Expect décor that's a mix of squat and palace, nice shooters (drinks, not gunmen) and occasional live music.

### Bread & Roses

68 Clapham Manor Street, SW4 (020 7498 1779). Clapham Common or Clapham North tube. Winner of the Time Out Best Bar Award for '98, Bread & Roses is the first permanent home of the Workers' Beer Company. Inside the fine Victorian façade, there are regular music, poetry and stand-up comedy evenings, while there's also a rather smart garden out back. Lovely.

### Bug Bar

The Crypt, St Matthew's Peace Garden, Brixton Hill, SW2 (020 7738 3184). Brixton tube/rail. Open 5pm-2am Tue-Sat. Sited in the crypt of St Matthew's Church, the Bug Bar's décor reflects the ecclesiastical surroundings, as oak pews and angelic frescoes mingle with the sofas and a clientèle intent on reaching Nirvana as quickly as possible. Busy in the evenings, with a ready supply of those ubiquitous DJs, it's also yet another bar ready to offer absinthe to the unwary. Be afraid. Be very afraid. But have some anyway.

### Crystal Palace Tavern

105 Tanners Hill, SE8 (020 8692 0682). New Cross or New Cross Gate tube/rail. Open 4-11pm Mon-Wed; 4pm-midnight Thur; 1pm-2am Fri, Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. A no-nonsense back-street boozier that attracts a lively, mixed crowd and is especially popular with Goldsmiths students (mainly because there's precious little else of merit in the locale; sorry, folks). Extra brownie points are garnered through a late licence, fine food, a good selection of beers and a lovely garden.

### Dogstar

389 Coldharbour Lane, SW9 (020 7733 7515). Brixton tube/rail. Open noon-2.30am Mon-Thur; noon-4am Fri, Sat; noon-late Sun. While the frankly bonkers Dogstar is by no means single-handedly responsible for the rehabilitation of Brixton's nightlife, it's certainly given the area's after-dark culture a kick up the arse over the last couple of years. The bar attracts all sorts with a cocktail of decent booze, hip sounds, trippy lights and video projections, and the atmosphere is always terrifically lively.

### Tearoom des Artistes

697 Wandsworth Road, SW8 (020 7652 6526). Wandsworth Town rail. Open 5.30pm-1am Tue-Sun.

A funky place bedecked with car seats and other recycled detritus from the junkyards of popular culture. Lively and pulsating at the weekends, proceedings here are best described as swinging. The food was once solely veggie, but they've now bowed down before the demands of Those Who Eat Meat.

### Trafalgar Tavern

Park Row, SE10 (020 8858 2437). Greenwich or Maze Hill rail. One of the better pubs in Greenwich, and one that benefits from its location on the edge of the Thames. As is the norm for the area, the Trafalgar trades off its history but, what with the period features and deep, rich colours, this seems only fair. Look out for the occasional jazz gig.

## West

### The Cow

89 Westbourne Park Road, W11 (020 7221 0021). Westbourne Park tube. Open noon-11pm Mon-Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. A Tom 'Son of Terence' Conran jobby, an Irish pub with a difference. The Cow's frequented by brooding wannabe pop stars and Notting Hill hipsters, though the best thing about it is the cool 'n' creamy Guinness.



## Crawl into 2000

Much is being made of the stretch of river from Westminster Bridge Tower Bridge. Local businesses and councils are keen for you to soak up some history or take a peek at a capital gearing itself up for Y2K, for this riverside trail has been designated the Millennium Mile by Tony and his cronies. Fair enough: there are all manner of cultural

attractions along the way, after all. However, forget every one of 'em: with a good old-fashioned pint-pulling pub crawl down the route, you've got yourself a nice little misspent day out.

Starting at Westminster Bridge, your first stop is Namco Station, a garish neon temple to all things electronic in the old County Hall building, with a bar, mini-bowling, dodgems, McDonald's, and games,

games, games galore. Large-scale faves include the gore-mungous House of the Dead and the widescreen Galaxian III. The millennium-minded, however, can view the construction of the British Airways London Eye from tables just outside the building.

Tear yourself away from all the noise by moving onto the Archduke, a light, airy, modern, multi-level bar-restaurant built under two arches just by the grubby but soon-to-be-revamped Hungerford Bridge. It's a rather nice place, though it can get a bit pricey (vending packs of fags cost £4).

Onwards to Belvedere Road, and the Mulberry Bush, an open-fronted shack of a Young's pub tacked onto

the end of what looks like a row of council houses. That it serves beer is probably the best thing you can say about it. Well, that and the fact it's near Studio Six, a garish Med-style café-bar that makes you feel as though you're on holiday, right down to the model-gorgeous bar staff.

Onwards and, quite literally, upwards – via the lift – to Bistrot 2. Housed in the Oxo Tower, it's a light and modern blend of pine floors and blue, red and lime green walls. It also provides your first

awesome view of the Thames, with your second coming courtesy of the Founders Arms, a squat-ugly but functional boozier that's saved by a cornered balcony-cum-seating area, jutting out over the river. From here,



- 1 Big Ben & Houses of Parliament
- 2 British Airways London Eye
- 3 Royal Festival Hall
- 4 Queen Elizabeth Hall & Purcell Room
- 5 Hayward Gallery
- 6 BFI London IMAX Cinema
- 7 Royal National Theatre
- 8 London Studios
- 9 Gabriel's Wharf
- 10 Oxo Tower Wharf
- 11 Bankside Gallery
- 12 Tate Gallery of Modern Art
- 13 Shakespeare's Globe
- 14 Clink Exhibition
- 15 Golden Hinde
- 16 Southwark Cathedral
- 17 Tower of London



### The Dove

19 Upper Mall, W6 (020 8748 5405). Hammersmith tube. The 300-year-old Dove positively drips with an authenticity – wooden beams, aged wood panelling, built-in wall settles, dingy lighting and a warm atmosphere – that sometimes extends to the mediocre menu. A small terrace at the rear looks out over the Thames.

### Drayton Court

2 The Avenue, W13 (020 8997 1019). Ealing Broadway tube/rail/West Ealing rail. Gables and turrets adorn the exterior of this late-Victorian edifice all the way out in swingin' Ealing, but inside, it's more mellow. Congenial spaces seat a young and coolly relaxed crowd, while Pre-Raphaelite prints adorn the pleasant Coffee Room. Most civilised.

### The Elbow Room

103 Westbourne Grove, W2 (020 7221 5211). Bayswater or Notting Hill Gate tube. Open noon-11pm Mon-Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. Pool for the cool in a post-industrial Notting Hill style. There are seven full-size, purple-baize American tables – a positively extortionate £6-£9 per hour, though you can stay on longer when there is slack – plus fast food in the form of nachos and burgers.

### Liquid Lounge

209 Westbourne Park Road, W11 (020 7243 0914). Ladbroke Grove or Westbourne Park tube. Open 5pm-midnight Mon-Fri; 10am-midnight Sat; 10am-1.30pm Sun. Since kicking out the legless locals, the Liquid Lounge has cornered its chic young market. The too-cool-to-be-blue interior, with matching furniture, turquoise trimmings and pop-art paintings, attracts a fun-loving minimalist kind of crowd.

### Pharmacy Bar & Restaurant

150 Notting Hill Gate, W11 (020 7221 2442). Notting Hill Gate tube. Open 12.30-3pm, 6pm-1am Mon-Thur; 12.30-3pm, 6pm-2am Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. A notorious Damien Hirst-designed haunt where you can sup surrounded by cabinets packed with all things medical, sit astride pill-shaped stools and pee in urinals that display swabs and syringes.

### Phene Arms

9 Phene Street, SW3 (020 7352 3294). South Kensington or Sloane Square tube. Recently touched up and probably still the best pub in Chelsea, thanks to its uniquely convivial atmosphere. The square bar sits in the middle of what is, more or less, a glorified, carpeted living room. The handsomely appointed, paved garden even has heaters. Damn near perfection.

### Portobello Star

171 Notting Hill Gate, W11 (020 7229 8016). Notting Hill Gate tube. Made over it may have been, but the changes at the Star are merely cosmetic. It's still the least swanky, poncey and pricey bar in W11, Thomas of the Jones and Ol' Blue Eyes still dominate the jukebox, and weather-beaten market traders still make up most of the clientele. Ace.

## Restaurants

Eating out is the new staying in. Or something like that. To whit, no one really dines at home anymore. It's not that it's passé – food is a necessity, after all – more that people can't be bothered to cook from scratch or wash up after, or it doesn't taste as good coming out of a jar, or, in your case, 'balanced' and 'nutritious' really aren't terms applicable to uni halls' tucker (and that's putting it mildly). If budgetary constraints are your main concern, then worry not: London

contains many establishments whose prices are beautifully easy on the wallet (some listed below, others listed in the annual foodie bible known as the *Time Out Eating & Drinking Guide*). And if you fancy something a bit more plush, pricey and all-round fancy schmancy... well, it's not too long until Mum and Dad's next visit. Is it?

### Parents' treat

Expensive, to be sure, but next time your folks pay a visit, get them to take you to one of these posh but excellent hangouts. And don't forget to eat as much as you possibly can. Pasta, needless to say, is not on the menu.

### Café Spice Namaste

16 Prescott Street, E1 (020 7488 9242). Tower Hill tube/Tower Gateway DLR. Open noon-3pm, 6.15-10.30pm Mon-Fri; 6.30-10pm Sat. A bright and airy eatery, with an exquisite and diverse modern Indian menu.



you can watch the construction of the Millennium Bridge, London's first new bridge for over a century.

Then it's along to the **Anchor Bankside**, a well nooked and crannied inn, for some history. Samuel Johnson reputedly wrote part of his dictionary here, though it's unlikely he did so from the riverside terrace. Inside the pub, low wood-beam ceilings and FT journalists abound.

The **Market Porter** has nothing to do with the millennium, but does, at least, open at seven in the morning

in order to service the Borough Market traders. This area – around Park Street and the market – offers a real dip into the past: many period dramas are shot here on account of the authentic age-old surroundings. A hop, skip and a jump away from the Porter lies the **Wheatsheaf**, replete with '60s social club decor and matching atmos. Still, it's got a good Cluedo machine: try playing that when you're on pint number nine. For what it's worth, we think it was Rev Green. With the spanner. In the lounge.

There's a bit of a dip next, sadly, with the **Horniman at Hays**. Set within the Hays Galleria shopping centre, it's full of loud, lairy, eminently loathsome suits. On the plus side, HMS Belfast looms large outside. Up above and just off Tower Bridge lies the so-so **River Bar**, all yellow and terracotta trendiness and belied by a slight lack of soul. Still,

the Skyline Balloon is opposite and there's live music just about every Friday night.

Don't despair, though, as one of the best pubs on the whole route is also the last. The **Anchor Tap**, a cheap and cheerful Samuel Smith pub tucked behind Tower Bridge, brings us to the end, not of the century, but of the pub crawl. Time, gentlemen, please. *Daniel Fryer*

**Namco Station** County Hall Building, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 (020 7967 1066).

**Archduke** Concert Hall Approach, SE1 (020 7928 9370).

**Mulberry Bush** 89 Upper Ground, SE1 (020 7928 7940).

**Studio Six** Gabriel's Wharf, 56 Upper Ground, SE1 (020 7928 6243).

**Bistrot 2** Oxo Tower, Barge House Street, SE1 (020 7401 8200).

**Founders Arms** 52 Hopton Street, SE1 (020 7928 1899).

**Anchor Bankside** 34 Park Street, SE1 (020 7407 1577).

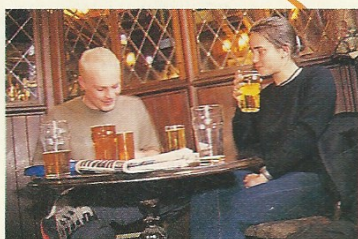
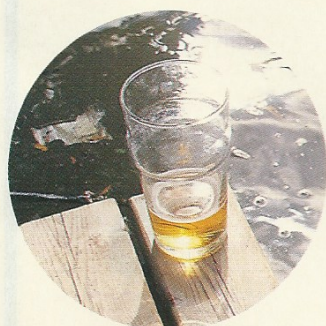
**Market Porter** 9 Stoney Street, SE1 (020 7407 2495).

**Wheatsheaf** 6 Stoney Street, SE1 (020 7407 1514).

**Horniman at Hays** Hays Galleria, Battle Bridge Lane, SE1 (020 7407 3611).

**River Bar** 206-208 Tower Bridge Road, SE1 (020 7407 0968).

**Anchor Tap** 20A Horsleydown Lane, SE1 (020 7403 4637).



# Travel

The *Time Out* Student Guide's team of intrepid travelling reporters go where the action is.

**W**e know; it seems a little odd to us, as well. After all, you've only just got to London and here we are, already telling you how to get out...

However, given that even the hardest Londoner would go mad if they spent 365 days a year in the city, while every student actually does go mad if they have to spend too much of the holiday season with their folks, it's only fair that we should point you in the direction of the 'Exit' signs.

Finding the money to get out of town may, of course, prove problematic: when you can't even afford to get the laundry done more than once a month, the idea of splashing out on a holiday is silly, to say the least. Which is why we've focused on five holidays that offer far more bang for your buck than any others: low-budget wasted weekend breaks in Amsterdam and Dublin; a hard-graft holiday in the sun on an Israeli moshav; a year's study and work in France; a long-haul trek to Olympic city Sydney; and BUNAC-sponsored working vacations in the US. Please fasten your seatbelts, ladies and gentlemen, and prepare for take-off...

## The waster Dublin & Amsterdam

**T**hey're both beautiful cities, to be sure. Both, too, offer all manner of cultural bounty: art galleries, museums, theatres and the like. But if we're really being completely honest, most people go to Dublin and Amsterdam for the, ahem, extra-curricular activities.

The tourist boards won't thank us for pointing it out, mind. Dublin, for example, is presently waging an entirely justifiable and largely successful war against the abhorrent English stag parties that pile into the city on Friday evenings,

while the authorities in Amsterdam always seem keen to play down what can gently be referred to as the more liberal aspects of life in the city.

But since when did we take notice of what the tourist boards had to say? The simple fact is that both Dublin and Amsterdam are terrific cities for weekend breaks, for any number of reasons. Both are close to London: Dublin's only 289 miles away, with Amsterdam a mere 216 miles over yonder. Both are pretty darn cheap and easy to get to, by plane, train, boat or bus; return fares to either city can be picked up for under £60. They've each got more than their fair share of cheap accommodation, both hostels and budget hotels. Neither city is especially hard on the wallet. And, of course, their respective nightlife is surprising, exciting and, for a variety of reasons, completely unique. Which is pretty much the point, given that there are few better places on earth than either Dublin or Amsterdam in which to get thoroughly, utterly wasted.

Every European city has places where you can get a drink; whether you call them pubs, bars or inns, it matters not. More bizarrely, though, just about every European city now has its own Irish pub. Usually called Molly Malone's Stout Emporium or Finnigan O'Chinnigan's or The Craic House or something just as horrid, the classic foreign Irish pub – and that includes the crass, corporate paddy-whacked versions found in London – is usually about as Irish as Jack Charlton, and slightly less attractive. Still, the global popularity of the Irish theme bar bears witness to the country's apparently unrivalled ability as hosts.

Drink in a decent Dublin pub, though, and you'll never want to set foot in one of the anaesthetised theme versions ever again. This is pub life as God himself



Drink to absent friends – all the fools who didn't come with you – in Dublin.

intended, with nary a Guinness poster, Corrs tape, *Rivendence* video or plastic shillelagh in sight. In fact, it's entirely possible to spend a weekend in Dublin and do nothing but go to wonderful pubs.

Fiddly-diddly music is prevalent, of course, but it's not piped in like supermarket muzak; rather, it's played by ace local musos sitting about six feet from you. The Guinness is tremendous – something to do with the Liffey water, apparently – and the conversation is dry, witty and easy-going. All of this, of course, contributes to that elusive 'ambiance' so conspicuous by its absence in the theme pubs; all of this, too, makes Dublin the perfect city in which to lose track of a weekend.

They have pubs in Amsterdam too, of course. (They even have a few Irish theme pubs, though let's not dwell on that, shall we?) However, the city is far more famous for another drug which, while not totally legal, has been decriminalised to an extreme degree. Amsterdam is paradise for dopers, tokers and potheads. And, of course, for those of us who just like the occasional puff (medicinal, of course).

'Coffeeshop' is the preferred local euphemism for the temples of toké scattered around Amsterdam, though coffee is usually the last thing anyone wants

when they head in there (in a quite spectacular oversight, chocolate is not normally found on the menu). Nope: people come to coffeeshops to buy and smoke dope. And it's this sort of lifestyle, understandably, that attracts people in their droves.

It's not all pleasant, though. For one thing, Amsterdam's legitimate drug culture has led to the centre of the town being overrun by extremely dodgy drug peddlars, who are to be avoided at all costs (always buy from a coffeeshop). And even the coffeeshops aren't all great: generally speaking, any coffeeshop with a neon sign, a picture of either Bob Marley or Jimi Hendrix in the window, or a green, yellow and red stripey frontage is to be avoided at all costs. But once those establishments have been struck off your list, there are plenty to pick from, many of the best of them small local hangouts well away from the main drag (Damrak). Spend too long in any of them, and before you know it, it'll be time to head home again.

Of course, both Amsterdam and Dublin both have plenty more to offer the visitor than just (dodgy) cigarettes and alcohol. The former, for example, boasts a number of excellent museums, a handful of great street markets, decent club culture, and some beautiful streets and canals down which to idly wander; while the latter merits mention for its splendid restaurants, its plentiful live music, a ton of history and its delicious surrounding countryside.

But, really. Come on. Who are you kidding? You'll get there on Friday and leave on Sunday, and you probably won't remember too much in between. Why ever the hell not? ●

*Will Fulford-Jones is the editor of the Time Out guides to Amsterdam and Dublin, which means he gets to go to Amsterdam and Dublin a lot for free. Tough job, huh?*

### Amsterdam coffeeshops

Worth a visit are **The Grey Area** (Oude Leliestraat 2; 00 31 20 420 4301); **Kadinsky** (Rozenmarktsteeg 9; 00 31 20 624 7023); **Paradox** (Le Bloemdwarsstraat 2; 00 31 20 623 5639); **De Rokerij** (Lange Leidsdwarstraat 41; 00 31 20 622 9442); and **Tweede Kamer** (Heisteeg 6; 00 31 20 627 5709).

### Dublin pubs

Be sure to head to **Kehoe's** (9 South Anne Street; 00 353 1 677 8312); **The Long Hall** (51 South Great George's Street; 00 353 1 475 1590); **Mulligan's** (8 Poolbeg Street; 00 353 1 677 5582); **The Palace** (21 Fleet Street; 00 353 1 677 8588); the **Porterhouse Brewing Company** (Parliament Street; 00 353 1 679 8847); **Ryan's** (28 Parkgate Street; 00 353 1 677 6097); and the **Stag's Head** (1 Dame Court; 00 353 1 679 3701).



By far the easiest way to get around Amsterdam is by bike. Especially when you're wasted.

## The grafter Israel

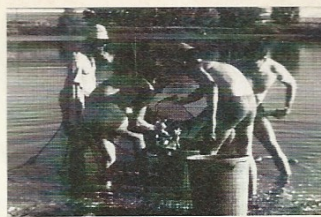
**C**ontempt, hatred, despair, loathing, love, pleasure, satisfaction and self-discovery. Nothing confuses as much as a working holiday in the Holy Land. Israel is replete with Kibbutzim and Moshavim (aka working farms) that are sold not on their strengths as holiday destinations, but as all-encompassing 'experiences'.

Most people are clued up on what constitutes the Kibbutz experience – eight hours toil a day, with plenty of opportunity to bum around as you earn sod all – but few are wise to the ways of a Moshav. It is, indeed, an experience: you'll laugh (hysteria), you'll cry (bitter tears of frustration) and, at the end of it all, you'll walk away, rose-tinted wrap-arounds set in place, and vow to do it again. Why? God knows.

For most, the usual route into such a trip is through groups such as Project 67 or the Kibbutz Representatives, both of which will ask for things such as deposits, flight money and insurance (the last two are optional if you can come up with valid alternatives). However, you can normally save yourself around 60 quid if you fly out to Tel Aviv yourself and go through the Israeli Moshav Office. Either option ties you to a farm – officially, at least – for a minimum of eight weeks. However, there's nothing to stop you from going AWOL if it all gets too much, though you will lose your deposit.

Most Moshavs are large farming communities comprised of small, privately-owned farms, where the families work together as part of a co-operative. You will be assigned to a specific family, dealing in a specific product at a specific season. Depending on which time of year you arrive and which part of Israel you choose – or are placed in – you could be picking and packing any one of a number of fruits, vegetables and flowers; or, for the truly adventurous, getting seriously involved in campsite waste disposal down by the Sea of Galilee.

The hours are invariably long and arduous (12-hour shifts are usual; overtime, when needed, is compulsory), and



Look on the bright side: at least you'll have a tan when you've finished your stint on a Moshav.

the work is repetitive enough to induce Zen trances rivalling those of a Buddhist adept. Opportunities for goofing off are pretty slim, except when working the Galilee, where sloping away for a swim isn't so much a nicety as it is – when the umpteenth refuse sack of stale beer and sun-baked goo has exploded all over your chest and legs – an absolute necessity. Go on: dive in...

Accommodation will be basic, and either in a single-sex dorm-style space, or a roomshare in a three- to four-bed farmhouse. Here you'll get to mix with people of various nationalities and dispositions including, if you're lucky, mad 35-year-old opera-singing French women (happened to this writer, it could happen to you).

So why do a Moshav at all? In short, money. Cash is especially advantageous if you plan on seeing the rest of the country afterwards; and since you're over there, it'd be foolish not to travel about a little. On a Kibbutz, you earn almost nothing. On a Moshav, at least, you have the opportunity of earning around £200 per month plus overtime. This may not sound like a great deal, but when you're in the middle of nowhere, working 12 hours a day, six days a week and coming home too knackered to do nowt but shower and collapse into bed, what on earth are you going to spend it on?

Okay, so there's usually a bar on site and party opportunities a-plenty. But buying your own booze beforehand is advisable, as alcohol is dead cheap. Top tip is the Israeli vodka: at about a pound a bottle, it divebombs the cerebral cortex, shuts down the central nervous system and, eventually, induces psychosis. South Africans swear by it.

If you're canny, you won't be spending much on food, either, provided you don't mind going veggie for a couple of months and are good at bartering. Things go like this: one box of cherry tomatoes, picked by your own fair hand over at farm number seven, is worth three aubergines picked from number five, or a large melon from number 22. If you're really adventurous, you can plan and conduct midnight raids on the onion fields over at number 54. All you need to buy is the rice 'n' spice... Whaddaya mean, you can't make risotto?

Sadly, the English have a bit of a bad rep with the Moshav community: mindless acts of drunken vandalism, tractor theft, Friday night fisticuffs, accidental damage done to water towers when losing control of those newly-stolen tractors and turning up to work late and vomitous are all pretty much a given from this sceptred isle's indigenous population. Acceptance is hard to come by, and a

close eye will be kept on you as you live and die by your ability to work like a mountain mule.

All this hard work and scrutiny, however, is offset by some absolutely beautiful surroundings (especially if you work in the Negev, with the Jordanian mountains to one side and endless desert on the other), the opportunity to forge some close ties with your fellow workers, build up a nice tan, and – proving that what comes around goes around – ploughing some hard-earned cash back into the Israeli economy as you play tourist at the end of your tour of duty. ●

*JJ Jackson spent three months on a Moshav in the Negev Desert, Israel, in 1998. He still can't look at a box of cherry tomatoes without getting all nostalgic. And sick.*

### Kibbutz Representatives

1A Accommodation Road, NW11 (020 8458 9235). Golders Green tube.

Does exactly what it says on the tin: represents the Kibbutzim in offices worldwide.

### Moshav Office

19 Leonardo da Vinci Street, Tel Aviv, Israel (00972 3695 8473).

A well-organised office that places off-the-street would-be volunteers.

### Project 67

10 Hutton Gardens, EC1 (020 7831 7626).

Chancery Lane tube.

A long-established tour operator specialising in Kibbutzim and Moshavim.



A great view of Paris. Not that he can appreciate it, mind.

## The academic France

**T**here comes a time in many students' lives when all the mould-infested fridges and 'best before June 1996' value cheddar become a bit too much, and they decide that what must be missing in their lives is something a little more... how do you say... chic?

Admittedly, most students who spend a year in France return no more chic than a packet of Bachelors' Supernoodles, but at least it gives them a glimmer of hope. And given the vast amount and variety of schemes open to British students wanting to work in France, there's no excuse for not giving it a go.

Mention France and most students, given the chance, would immediately choose Paris. And why not? One of the most visited and culturally rich cities in Europe, Paris is an excellent base for discovering Europe. Top all that off with a pinch of Parisian style (and arrogance), the excellent TGV rail service and a few over-priced souvenirs, and you'll have the perfect recipe for a year of everything your cheese-ridden halls didn't offer.

Just like any other city, life in Paris can be quite frustrating if you're there by yourself knowing that there is *sooo* much to do. If you're going alone and aren't prepared to swallow that rather large amount of pride necessary to leave your two-metre-squared flat in order to befriend other lonely tenth-storey inhabitants, a better idea may be to consider somewhere other than Paris. Advantages can range from getting in with the local *boulangier* (free baguettes) to getting in with the kind old cinema owner (free tickets to the amusing experience of seeing all your cinematic heroes spouting in painfully dubbed French).

Expensive rents and deposits mean that unless your Dad happens to be best mates with Chirac, you'll have to find a job. A popular way of working in France is as a language assistant, spending seven months teaching unruly and none too chic French youngsters English. It's very interesting, at least if being paid about £500 a month for working just 12 hours a week is your *tasse de thé*. Apart from guaranteeing financial security, it leaves ample free time for exploring other parts of France, its red wine and various other essential cultural activities. Even if