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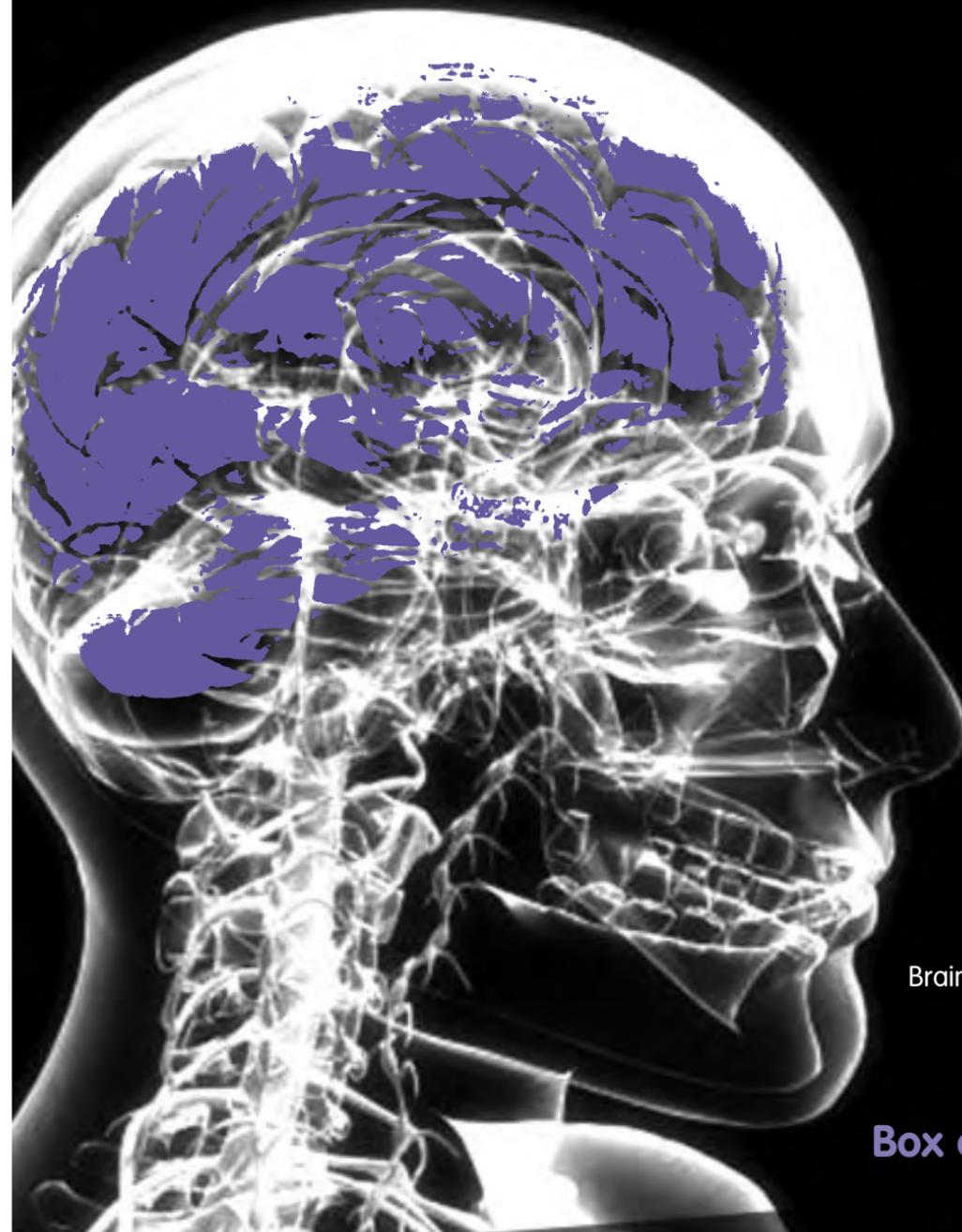


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Issue 17

ip1zine.com



- ZEEB? _____
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- ALTERNATIVE XMAS _____
- WHY BE IN A BAND? _____
- GLOBESITY _____

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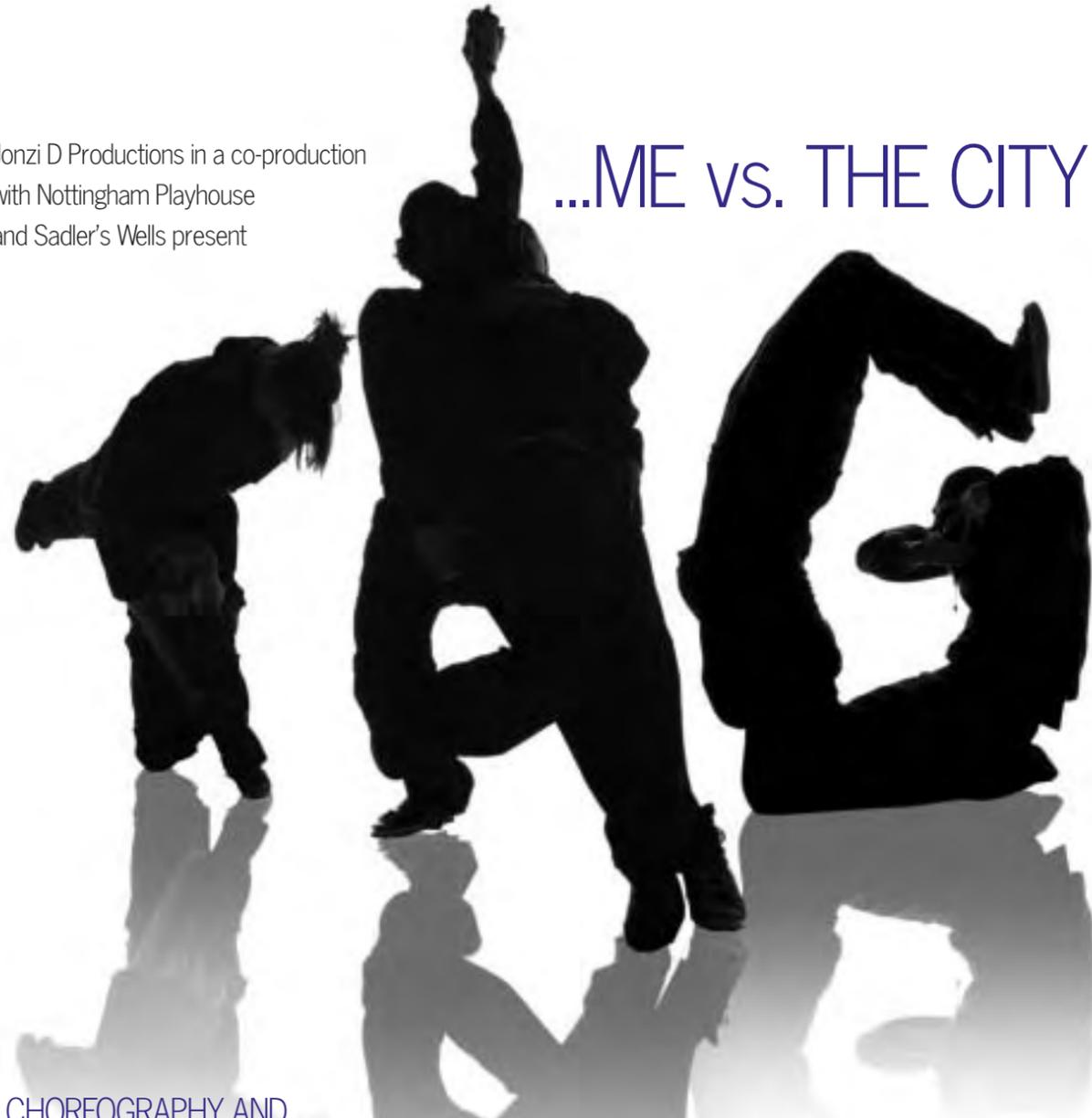
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WARNING! THIS MAGAZINE MAY CONTAIN
CONTENT THAT SOME COULD FIND OFFENSIVE.



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The main event

And so this is Christmas, and what have we done? Well, quite a lot as it happens! IP1 has been working very hard and is now in the fantastic position of fast becoming the main portal of call for every sort of creative in the county to get what they're doing seen and heard. Whether that be through this magazine or our website (ip1zine.com), IP1 is nurturing the green shoots of Ipswich's cultural future coz we're the responsible ones! On 16th January 2006 the IP1 tree will be branching out by hosting an event called Braincandy that's gonna blow the roof off our fine town. Local musicians, visual artists, filmmakers, performance poets, and comedy will all be gracing the IP1 stage to provide you with a night we know you're gonna remember.

These gifts are what we bear, coz at Christmas time it's all about you receiving!

Get the Bailey's out!

Howard Freeman *the Ed*

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Some of James' work can be viewed on our website, log on to www.ip1zine.com and follow the 'art exhibit' link.



JAMES NOBLE :: ARTIST PROFILE

With exhibition opportunities for emerging artists few and far between, the Ip-Art award presents an exciting outlet for the public to see the work of young, local, contemporary artists – as well as providing the artists with valuable experience and guidance. I caught up with this year's winner, James Noble, over a couple of beers while he shared his thoughts with me about winning.

IP1: James, congratulations on the award! So, how will winning this award actually benefit you?

JN: Thanks. Well, it'll be beneficial in a couple of ways. Firstly I'll be putting on a solo show in conjunction with Wolsey Art Gallery (WAG) in Feb 2006, and to help fund the cost of actually making the work, I've been given a budget of £500.

IP1: Was there a winner's ceremony then?

JN: There was, although thankfully I didn't have to make a speech or anything! It was down at the St. Mary-at-the-Quay church, where WAG has been running a number of exhibitions this summer. I was a bit disappointed I didn't get one of those massive cheques though!

IP1: So, I gather you're from Ipswich?

JN: Yeah I am, although I went to Norwich School of Art for my degree. I graduated in 2002 and since then I've been back working in Ipswich. I've done some jobs to help me fund my painting, like working for the Saatchi Gallery and WAG – which has let me keep a studio out at the Stowmarket Artist Studio with several other artists. If anyone out there is looking for studio space, come out and take a look.

IP1: You mentioned that you're a painter. What's going on in the paintings that you have been working on?

JN: I've been setting out to make paintings which, in a way, defy interpretation – paintings that are nostalgic for nothing. I see the paintings as a playground for visual

layering, where different images compete for visibility. Images and icons from high and low culture collide in a haphazard mix or styles and traditions.

IP1: So you borrow and use from a wide variety of sources for your paintings?

JN: Yeah, for example, I treat art history books like great riches to be plundered. I'm like a magpie stealing from all these different images and styles from different eras. I use fabrics that I find in my paintings too. The fabrics and paintings become patterned ground and give me something to react against or respond to.

IP1: Material wise you also seem to be quite varied. I can see you use oil paint, household gloss, spray paint and acrylic to name a few.

JN: I do use a lot of different paints. The paintings become a game between the artist and the object and all the elements come together through experimentation. I'm interested in the artist's ego. I want to make these monumental paintings; real macho works. I don't necessarily see macho as a male thing either; it's more of a stance to take. I'm sure you can be female and make macho paintings! It goes well with my curiosity of 'superstar' artists and their signature pieces. Like Julian Schnabel and his paintings using broken crockery. The idea of the artist being a showman is a fascinating one; but you have to have the substance to back up the style.

IP1: I noticed that several of your paintings also incorporate smaller

paintings within them. What's that all about?

JN: I'm interested in the life of an artwork after it has left the artist's studio or a gallery. I find the smaller paintings at car boot sales or jumble sales. They're all the works of 'Sunday leisure painters' or discarded art school paintings.

IP1: There are a lot of those paintings around in Suffolk aren't there? Dodgy landscapes and such like...

JN: Yeah there are, and in a way I think that it's understandable in a largely rural area without any large cities, and it's this that I'm reacting against by using these found paintings. My paintings are the 'anti' of whatever those other paintings are! I see myself as resurrecting them; giving them a new life. There's a process of recycling or reconfiguring. The 'found' paintings are ready made blocks of tradition with which I try to raise questions about originality or authorship.

IP1: What do you think the original artists would make of it?

JN: The question is asked whether this 'collaboration' is produced out of love and respect or as a defiant act of vandalism. I suppose it depends on what their answer is.

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Design: **Chris Boyle** / chris@ip1zine.com

WHY BE IN A BAND?

After successfully auditioning for the position of bass player in an established London group, my next task was to let the management at the major corporate record outlet where I worked know that I would be away touring for a while. This was to result in one of the most ironic responses I have ever heard, bearing in mind their business income is derived in part from selling Rock CDs: "Rock bands aren't forever" I was told. Clearly failing to see the irony in this comment they asked me to choose between the band and them – I chose the band.

Although I saw the humour in being asked to leave, I realised it was another sign that my intended career path was going to be laced with more than its fair share of difficulties.

I was already aware from being involved with other bands that sacrifices are necessary if you want to create music and perform it to an audience.

My first band 'Desert Monkey' - a predominantly Colchester based outfit - has been the main vehicle for me discovering my hunger for creating music, but it has also shown me the pitfalls that can be encountered. 'Desert Monkey' is heading towards its seventh year of existence and although having built up a name in Colchester the tricky part was getting bookings for gigs elsewhere. By sending copies of the band's demos all across the country it turned out that it was easier to get gigs as far away as Sheffield than in Ipswich! This in turn threw into light the problem of transport. It became obvious that a large van was needed. On buying the stereotypical band van; a Ford Transit bought with hard earned/begged/borrowed money, we thought we were on our way - until repair costs quickly crept up to match nearly what we had paid for the van in the first place. After just a few gigs we were forced to sell the van and lose a small fortune. If being in a band is so expensive, many would question 'why bother?'

Giving up on the idea of being in a band, might have been the next logical step, yet it seemed a more tempting idea for me to up the work load and form a new band, this time Ipswich based - whilst still keeping the old one going. This seemed an attractive proposition not only in order to explore a different style of music, but also to work with different musicians and play a new instrument, this time bass rather than guitar. I was also drawn by the idea of gaining access to that ever-elusive gig in Ipswich that I had failed to achieve with my other band.

The band took on the name 'Soma' and had in many ways a more accessible sound than Desert Monkey. The aims of this project evolved naturally: to have a high turnover of songs and record often and in a DIY fashion. This again was very different from the high cost, highly produced tactics employed by my other band. It also became clear that gigging in Ipswich would be much easier for Soma. It amused me that it took forming a band in Ipswich to provide the foot in the door for Desert Monkey to play its first gigs there too. As I discovered the hard way: whether you like it or not, getting gigs and exposure is all about who you know.

There was generally a positive response to Soma, but it too was not without its difficulties in terms of travel to practice or gigs, and the classic case of noisy rehearsals troubling neighbours. The factors I enjoy about being in both

bands are probably very similar to the reasons why other people set up bands. The rush of performing to a crowd (always more intense if the crowd likes you and isn't entirely made up of your relatives!), the creative outlet for thoughts and ideas, or simply the idea that you are making music that you feel is good.

A defining point in my interest in music was demonstrated when an Italian customer approached me in the music store where I worked. It was clear that she spoke very little English and this meant that she could not describe in words what she was looking for. After some time she plucked up the courage to sing the melody and some of the words to James Blunt's hit 'You're Beautiful'. I instantly knew what she was looking for. Although I am aware that this song has about as much credibility in the world of rock as a break dancing nun at a hip hop collective's tea party, it was great to see that music is such an incredibly direct form of communication with a universal quality that makes it a potentially very powerful force.

Regardless of the obvious advantages of being in a band, if the struggle and financial drain has made you the reader still question 'why be in a band?' there's still one key factor that drives me on at the age of twenty to happily quit my job for this very pursuit. The number of people who tell me that they were in a band, but didn't 'make it' so they got a nine to five instead.



Cal Smith is Guitarist in 'Desert Monkey', bassist in Ipswich based band 'Soma' and bassist in 'Djevara'.

Words: **Cal Smith**
Illustration: **Cab Weal** / cab@ip1zine.com
Design: **Will Duehring** / will@ip1zine.com

The Earth Collection

Environmentally friendly clothing

Being ethical is currently in vogue for many multi-national companies. McDonalds' food isn't about Super Sizing you, it's nutritious and part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle! And BP isn't just another corrupt, resource-pillaging oil company, but is so far 'Beyond Petroleum' that it's protecting the environment! So what of other multi-nationals like The Earth Collection that sells eco-friendly clothing in 420 stores in some 20 countries worldwide, and put ethics at the very heart of their branding – are they spinning us too?

The Earth Collection started off as a small idea in 1993 selling Eco-friendly t-shirts. Now 12 years down the line it's a major brand producing and selling a wide range of clothes. Their designs are classic with accessories that are also eco-friendly and attractive to wear. The majority of their jewellery is made in the Philippines in small village productions – often operating out of workers' homes. Across the range their products are durable and well made, and offer great value for money – what's more, when you buy from The Earth Collection you get that little feeling inside saying 'I've helped the environment and given something back to mother nature.' But what if this feeling is blissfully ignorant?

IPI: Your name suggests the products are good for the environment, but what about the ethics of their production?

TEC: The conditions for the workers in

the factories are absolutely acceptable, but there is always room for improvement. This is what we are striving towards in our daily work with the factories. Most of the factories we are working with are paying more than the average salary. This combined with a good working environment means that many of the workers have been with us for many years, which we are very proud of.

IPI: Tell me more about the ecology of your production

TEC: For each phase of production, there are specific instructions on what is allowed to be used. An ecological concept would be practically impossible for us to control. We are not involved in the growing of the raw materials, as ecologically grown cotton etc. is very expensive, this would not fit into our pricing policy. Instead our philosophy is to produce environmentally friendly products,

42 Tacket Street, Ipswich. 01473 215309.

where specific instructions have to be followed in the phases where we are involved, and where we can control.

IPI: So where are all these products made?

TEC: The clothes and accessories are made in China and the Philippines. The Earth Collection has a very strong ethical policy in terms of the production of its garments and accessories. No child or prison labour is used. The owners of The Earth Collection – a Danish couple, who live in China where the production is based – visit all the factories on a regular basis. The owners place great emphasis on working conditions and continually strive to improve these. If the treatment of the workers did not meet the high standards expected by the owners of the brand then production would be removed from these factories. However, the same factories have been used for ten

years, and during this time great improvements have been made in the working environment. Heating has been installed which is unusual for many parts of China. The workers have accommodation and canteen provisions, which again are not common practice in many other factories.

IPI: Why open a shop in Ipswich, what was the attraction?

TEC: All of the Earth Collection shops in the UK and Ireland are individually owned as franchises, so we open shops in locations chosen by the franchisees. Our Ipswich shop is owned by Ken and Sherrie Parker who also have a shop in Colchester. They approached us, as they felt that Ipswich was a suitable location, and we agreed.

IPI: What are you doing to make your products appeal to the wider market?

TEC: In order to give our customers and other people of interest a better understanding of who we are and what we do, we are currently working on photographic images from our factories, as well as continually updating the information on our web site.

If you want to find out more about The Earth Collection and what they do, log on to our website at www.ip1zine.com and follow the link for issue 17.

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SEEKING ASYLUM

Words: **Lois Hickey**
Design: **Ian Dance / ian@ip1zine.com**



I have grown tired of hearing negative information about asylum seekers in the media and within the local community, so I decided to find out for myself the experience of the asylum seeker in Ipswich. I checked out some of the places where people who are seeking asylum go. I went to a day centre where people meet for a meal and support from other people in a similar situation.

I met a young, African woman who was happy to tell me her story. She is a journalist from Malawi who ran away from prospective imprisonment and death for protesting against President Bakili Muluzi. She and other campaigners were trying to stop him getting elected for a third term. People were killed during the protest and imprisoned and others who were not caught were harassed, and their lives were under daily threat. Some of her friends were killed.

Her journey to England began when a U.N official took her to Croydon where she was met by a Home Office official and informed that she would spend ten days in Oakington – a detention centre for asylum seekers – two to three weeks in emergency accommodation, and then be housed for a period of three months, when it would be decided whether she would receive asylum.

Three years later she is still here living in the same emergency accommodation, a hotel. She has received no money in three years and lives on the food provided by the hotel, which consists mainly of junk food. She has described the standards of hygiene as poor, and informed me that she has to ask the manager for sanitary towels which she describes as 'low economy and useless.' She describes her life as a 'living death', and speaks of her time in Britain as an asylum seeker as 'time stealing' as she will never get these years back she cannot work to earn money or make choices regarding her life direction. She feels isolated in Ipswich. She says, "People pass by and I can see they have a life but I feel I have none. They sit in bars, read newspapers get on buses, buy ice creams. I can't imagine what it is like to buy an ice cream, to have real money in my pocket – it has been so long."

She has become a member of a church in Ipswich – they have helped by giving her some clothes and a mobile phone for incoming calls. She said that without this she would have 'gone mad'. She says that she can't form a relationship with anyone as she's carrying 'a heavy burden'. She is anxious that she'll be returned to Malawi and killed, or remain an asylum seeker without papers for a longer period. She feels totally trapped, unstable and isolated, unable to make decisions about her own life – things which the rest of us take for granted.

She spoke about the British newspapers and how hurtful she found the journalism, as it did not reflect her

experience but labelled asylum seekers as 'Aids or HIV carriers, terrorists, unwanted scroungers or bogus'. The Refugee Centre recognises that this young woman's story is not unique – as there are so few resources being made available for asylum seekers. Many of the stories one hears about 'wealthy' asylum seekers are myths. The Centre stated that they had only known two people who had been allocated permanent accommodation in Ipswich. They stated that Ipswich Borough Council refused the chance to be a housing provider for asylum seekers four years ago. The remaining asylum seekers live in a large private run block, which sleeps many to a room.

Staff spoke about adults being malnourished, and babies and children not growing at the same rate as the national average. There are problems with accessing the mental health system despite the fact that many people suffer depression or Post Traumatic Syndrome. An African man from Cameroon - imprisoned in his country for preventing the authorities prematurely removing empty voting boxes - was physically abused and his life continually threatened. He later escaped from prison and fled to Britain, and now attends the Refugee Centre. He strongly believes if immigrants were allowed to work they would not be seen as parasites by the local community.

The Refugee Centre is very keen to inform the public of the merits of having refugees and asylum seekers in our country. Many asylum seekers are well qualified in occupations such as medicine and teaching. Currently 43% of British nursing staff consists of immigrants, many

of whom are coming up to retirement age. It is a fact that colleges and universities struggle to find nursing students, and it would seem from the figures that the majority of the British population does not view working in the Health Service an attractive career option.

In 2001 migrants, including refugees made a net fiscal contribution to the UK economy of £2.5 billion. A large percentage of these people will return home –when the political climate in their homelands has settled down – and not benefit from all the tax they have paid towards the welfare state.

Asylum seeker money does not come out of the welfare state or our housing provision but is provided by The National Asylum Support Service (NASS). To an observer all this support, albeit basic, can seem unfair to other vulnerable groups who are not getting what they need. The question is often raised 'why should they get it, if I can't'? Is this where the tension and anger lies which results in racial hatred? Is it true that there are not enough resources to go round? Do people feel that they are fighting for their piece of the pie, and see the asylum seeking community as a threat to their share? Are people looking for a scapegoat to focus their anger and disappointment towards when their government is at fault?

Is it possible then that the government is happy for the media to stir up animosity towards this group of people to take the heat off them?



Jessica Oyelowo Jessica Oyelowo Jessica Oyelowo

Jessica Oyelowo

Actress Jessie Oyelowo was born in Ipswich and raised in Woodbridge.

She starred in *Sleepy Hollow* (2000) and recently appeared in the blockbuster film

Churchill: The Hollywood Years (2005). She is currently working with

comic impressionist Alastair McGowan on the new BBC detective series *Mayo*.

So Jessie, when did you decide you wanted to be in the acting business?

It kind of decided it wanted me really!

Was there any point where it became clear that this was the career for you?

I joined the National Youth Music Theatre (NYMT) when I was 17 and my first role was Polly Peachum in the *Threepenny Opera*. It became pretty clear that this was what I wanted to do from then on.

Did you get any dance or drama lessons as a child?

Well apart from the NYMT I didn't have any other drama lessons, although I did dance a lot. I did Modern, Tap and Ballet. I played music too. Saxophone, piano, flute, and had singing lessons!

Was it difficult following an acting career when you were living at home?

It wasn't easy at all! I think I was lucky in that I had very generous parents. They helped financially with train fares to auditions etc. But I had to work in the local pub for extra cash, and had no one who could advise me or who I could connect too. I kind of learned as I went along.

Nowadays the easiest way to get a theatrical agent is to go to Drama School, but you managed to get one without that. How?

It was through NYMT. I got approached by two agencies after they came to see a show. I didn't realise then but they were two

massive leading agencies. One of them was Peters Frasier Dunlop who represents Kate Winslet and the other was ICM which is the only international agency in the UK.

You were recently in the film *Churchill The Hollywood Years*. What was it like working in that sort of environment?

Very amazing! Inspiring! I got the chance to hang out and watch the other actors on set. They were all nice human beings although I used to watch them work and choose carefully who I would let rub off on me. I'd observe their acting skills and most of all their integrity.

What was it like watching yourself on the big screen?

I loved it! I had a little private premiere with some friends and we all started screaming when I came on. It's funny because some actors hate seeing themselves. I suppose it can give you a complex – mainly about parts of your acting that you might not have noticed before which need improving. You can see it as informative and observe things you might want to do differently in the future.

So, are you doing anything exciting right now?

Yes actually, I'm in Warwickshire at the moment filming a BBC drama series. It's a mixture of comedy, drama and detective murder mystery. I'm pretty excited about being the leading lady working alongside Alastair McGowan.

Wow! What's he like?

He's really brilliant, and very down to earth.

OK, an actor's life can be precarious and unstable at times, what keeps you grounded?

My faith is very important to me. It reminds me that it's the people I work with not the job I'm doing that's most important. It's a judgemental environment, but it's nice to know Jesus doesn't judge my life. My children also! Especially when they shout out mummy I need a poo in some glamorous place!

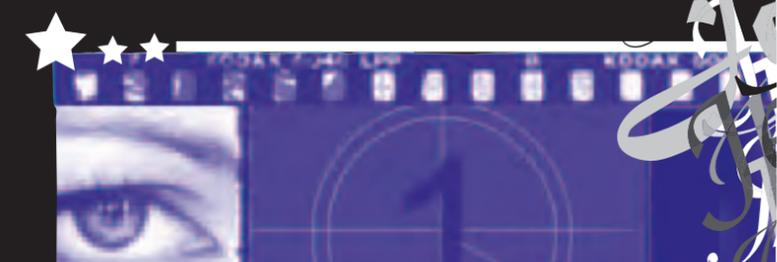
Is there anything you would refuse to do as an actor?

Yes, I won't take my clothes off. It's usually unnecessary, more for titillation than for the story.

And finally, what advice would you give any aspiring actor out there?

Know yourself. If for the right reason it's what you want to do then do it. Do not do it for fame or money because you will be sorely disappointed.

You'll be able to see Jessica Oyelowo as DS Alex Jones in the new drama *Mayo* alongside Alastair McGowan who plays the wise-cracking, detective Gil Mayo in a new series for BBC ONE next March.





Leaving university was one of the most shocking experiences I have ever had. I had looked forward to the prospects that my education would bring. I sincerely believed that many doors would fly open upon graduating. My career would flourish and my purse would be so crammed full of notes that I'd have to stick an elastic band around it! I had heard about all the possible doors that would open after successfully completing my BA Honours degree in English – those career guidance sessions were bound to pay off, I was sure of that.

As I spent the last two weeks purposefully studying with the end in sight, I fantasized about all the possibilities. I imagined employers offering me managerial roles, companies providing graduate training schemes. I felt that the world would be my oyster.

After finishing my dissertation I spent about a week constantly sleeping. I was relaxed and relieved that it was all over but in a way sad that I was leaving student life behind. I knew I would miss my friends in London and being able to scoot around Camden after lectures and having a beer with my pals in the local.

The first job I got upon completing my degree was as a health care assistant; a job I had been doing while at university. It was strenuous but very rewarding. I thought that this would be a job I would do for a few months until I got that graduate position. How wrong I was! It began to sink in that in Ipswich, as in many English



POST GRAD BLUES

towns, there are few prospects for graduates. That may sound absurd, but it's painfully true. You may be lucky enough to get a trainee managerial position but generally experience or vocational training is the key.

I approached many of the agencies in the local area and was disappointed to find that they could only offer me administration and junior secretarial positions. I spent a few months filing and waiting tables. I wondered why I had ever bothered going to university if this was the only work I was being offered.

After debating how to further my career I decided to pursue a Master's degree. I moved to Norwich and began studying for my Master's in Modernist Literature. I wanted to stay in East Anglia and had heard that the UEA was a good university with a highly regarded English department. I was very concerned about the debt I was getting myself into as I was going to have to rely on a career development loan that would have to be repaid. The course fees alone were £3,000 and I would also need to borrow money for all my living expenses whilst studying full-time. This would total around £10,000. I left the course after four weeks of procrastinating about the financial implications and what

the qualification would lead to in the end – before going back to administration work once again.

I would suggest that anyone thinking about going to university should consider very carefully what career they wish to pursue before they do so. They should make careful plans and get appropriate work experience whilst studying. They should also aim to do a degree specifically related to the career they want to get into as a degree that is general or in one of the Humanities is unlikely to lead directly to a job. A vocational degree is a good way of getting the job you want, as it will lead you directly into a given field. One thing I have done since completing my degree that has paid off has been writing for this magazine and for the Evening Star.

It's not easy when you finish university, don't kid yourself. Work experience is what really counts and it's what gets you a job. A degree may impress employers but it is far from all they are looking for. It's getting your foot in the door and showing that you are capable that earns you the job you want.

Words: Tamsin Ward / tamsin@ip1zine.com

Design: Lewis Webb



One of the main reasons people don't go to the theatre is because they're worried that they won't know how to behave, or that they won't be comfortable there. It's the same reason why I don't go to the gym; I know I ought to but I don't, partly because when I look in I think, 'I'm going to look like a complete arse in there!'

Conforming to 'The Rules' of the theatre is difficult, and going to the theatre always brings out the child in me.

While observing the precise walk of a booted woman in her mid 30s pacing the foyer – dry white wine and clutch bag in hand – I become an attentive voyeur. She and her partner are the epitome of the Ipswich theatregoer. They both know and understand the rules. Talking in hushed tones, never loud or brash, they are defined by their cashmere, corduroy and leather ensemble. They are the 'market'; regional theatre was designed for them.

So, what do you do when you observe the rules but don't want to conform? When faced with not only expensive ticket prices but middle class theatre etiquette as well, most people would probably run a mile. When I enter the theatre, my immediate impulse is to laugh. I can't abide the formality. Theatre trades on the cathartic reaction it induces, but how can this prosper if people are afraid to let out a cry of emotion? I often find my laughter bubbling up in those tense quiet scenes – perhaps at the delivery of bad news – at an entirely inappropriate time. Or I may have mad visions of standing up and shouting, running onto the stage – anything to break the tension. My childish side did once escape in the form of uncontrollable laughter at an inopportune moment in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. I caught the solemn stares from Mr and Mrs. Theatre in the seats around me, which achieved nothing but to fuel my giggle fit even further.

But what would happen if we took theatre places where 'The Rules' didn't exist? How would this change audience reaction? What would happen if theatre were say, in a barn?

Eastern Angles, a regional touring theatre company, has done just this. Ivan Cutting, the company's Artistic Director, describes what it is like when you change the environment in which theatre is conventionally performed:

Ivan: We play both extremes. We play a village hall, where the audience comes along and that's their space. It's like performing in their living room. We are the visitors, not them. They know how to behave and it's us who have to learn. But we also play theatres where the audience come along and they feel that they have to behave in a certain way, and I think that can put people off.

IPI: Using village halls for theatre is the flipside to performing in a conventional theatre, where everything is designed for the performance. In a village hall nothing is there to aid the actors. In fact the paraphernalia of jumble sales and Girl Guide notices have to be covered with a backdrop in order for the audience and actors to suspend their disbelief for the duration of the performance. It seems that all venues have their problems, so what about the performances you put on in barns?

Ivan: Barns are the middle ground: the audience and the actors are both new to the space and it becomes like a frame. The natural qualities of the stone and wood that barns are made of are a good backdrop to any play. Everything is neutral; I think art really works well in converted buildings. They already have a function. As soon as you design a building that says 'this is going to house art' – whatever you choose to make it look like – it automatically has a resonance to it that is someone else's choice. You can't help but wonder 'Well, do I like it or don't I?' Yet you don't have the same opinion about tide mills, barns or warehouses. They've had another life; they've justified their existence.

THEATRE ABSURD

IPI: Perhaps this is the missing link to theatre in Ipswich – having a 'rough space' where lots of different things happen but one which is not specifically designed for one thing.

Ivan: Exactly. You need an old shed, where it doesn't matter if people say, spit on the floor. What I say is: Can you bang a nail in the floor? That's the test of whether it will make a good theatre.

Although Eastern Angles are breaking some of the typical boundaries that exist for theatre in Ipswich, they are in essence a touring company and a lot of their work is not shown in the town. To capture the interest of a new audience, I believe theatre needs to be uprooted. By means of an old shed if necessary, but we definitely need something to bridge the gap. One approach to theatre could be to borrow from our approach to music: We all accept watching a band at our local pub, why not a short sketch? Yes, some of the dynamics would change, but the principle of enjoying the performance remains.

Call me an emotional fool, but I want to be able to laugh or cry at a piece of theatre when it suits me, and not be met with icy glares for my sins. Maybe in time I'll lose my inhibitions and be able to run up on stage during a performance! After all you've got to include a bit of audience participation. Or maybe we should just leave all that to panto.

Eastern Angles Christmas show, *The Day the Earth Wobbled a Bit*, dubbed 'the perfect alternative to panto' begins December 7th at the Sir John Mills Theatre. Log on to www.ip1zine.com for box office details.

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FIDDLER CRAB

MUSIC :: RECORDS

Words: Howard Freeman / howard@ip1zine.com

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Local musician-run record label and promoter Fiddler Crab Music released its first record proper into the wild at The Steamboat Tavern, Ipswich on the 15th of October 2005. This record was called **MockCockSpockShockRock** the band behind it Zeeb?, and the night by all accounts such a blinder that even paralytics woke up and remembered it. It was a good start for a label that is slowly and unsurely scuttling sideways into the future. Being the dirty stop-out kind of mag that IPI is, it was only in our nature to want to go catch the Crab and to give it some probing.

IPI: When and why did Fiddler Crab come into existence?

Sam: The idea was just to put on our mates' bands from Colchester, in Ipswich and to keep prices low (50p for 5 bands) so that people came. A lot did – people really enjoyed those gigs I think.

Jacob: Which is when we began to discuss the idea of a local label.

Sam: The label itself arose in its real sense – as opposed to the whim it was before – when I contacted Zeeb? about using some of their sophisticated extra-terrestrial technology to host our website. Gamma mentioned that they were midway through an album and sent me some tracks. I said we'd release it – but I was joking – they'd had interest from other labels so I never thought they'd care – but they got back to me: "We've considered your offer and..." That's when I got these guys really involved – so they could sort out the mess I'd created.

IPI: Who's behind Fiddler?

Mat: For the time being the core members are us four. Many others who have been part of the Crab are now at uni and many more have helped in their own special little way...

Jacob: Like Zeeb? and other local band members.

Sam: Mark Coldham, Nap, and a guy called Andy who everyone calls Jesus really deserves a mention.

IPI: Why the name Fiddler Crab? Were you at the beach one day and saw a crab playing a fiddle? Or did one of you catch crabs from having a fiddle with something you shouldn't have, and gained your inspiration that way?

George: I suggested 'Fiddler Crab Man' initially as a band name. Naturally I was shouted down and we went instead with Peter Cat. But I forced a compromise; that if we were ever to release a record, it would be on our own label called Fiddler Crab Music. I think the only reason the others agreed to this is that they thought that it would never happen. Fools!

Jacob: Fiddler Crabs are small, semi-terrestrial crabs of the genus *Uca* that are characterized by extreme chelae asymmetry in males. They are most closely related to the *Ocypode* (ghost crab). There are currently 97 recognized species/subspecies. The common English name "Fiddler Crab" comes from the feeding of the males, where the movement of the small claw from the ground to its mouth resembles the motion of someone moving a bow across a fiddle (the large claw).

Mat: Where's Mike?

IPI: Other than the mighty Zeeb?, who else is on Fiddler's promo/hit list?

Mat: Nap has an EP out (crab002), although the band is on a break they will return at Xmas for a special gig or two – keep your ears peeled for "Psilent Night". Another band, Novella, is on our list, as is a possible homemade CDR from Jacob and myself.

Sam: We've also spoken to Sleepmachines who are one of our favourite bands and some of the best music I have ever heard, like Godspeed jamming Roxy and Talking Heads for a flamenco class. Mark Coldham – he's really beginning to get some notice in Ipswich. There are a lot of bands from the Steamboat scene that we'd like to document. We want to do a lot of records by a lot of people – we just can't afford to do them all yet. Now it's just a case of who records first and if any of those bands trust us.

IPI: Who is the best band in Ipswich right now?

George: Zeeb?

Jacob: Zeeb?

Mat: I would say Zeeb?, but of course they are travelling many light years around the galaxy and so cannot really be pinpointed to one set geographical area of space.

Sam: Zeeb?, Charlie Brown are also great. Khe Sanh, The Exorshits, All or None, Soma, The Waxing Captors (RIP) are all lovely. We're very lucky at the moment.

IPI: Should musicians/bands submit their stuff to you, or will you find them?

George: It's hard to tell... Our first release is all we have to go by and it definitely wasn't a professional affair.

Jacob: Definitely submit your stuff, but we will be hunting too.

Mat: Anyone interested should e-mail us (info@fiddlercrabmusic.co.uk), get to know us at gigs and invite us round for tea on Sundays. We would love to help people release songs and play gigs but bear in mind this is still a very low key thing at the moment and so obviously we are not going to be releasing a record every other month...

IPI: What can you offer a talented local band that they can't offer themselves?

Mat: We can make the little ideas that have been floating around their head into real matter, and hopefully provide a feeling of community and support – like we are all in this together. The more people that can be involved the better. Ask Zeeb?

Sam: I would understand if you didn't want to talk to Zeeb?

Jacob: ...Just the small amount of money we have. We can use it to press their CDs, organise gigs/tours and then use some of the proceeds from that to repay it, ready to use on another band. It's a sort of

collectively owned, small scale 'antipreneurism' and we're very proud that it's worked thus far...

IPI: If you could be successful musicians or successful bosses of a cool indie label, which would it be?

Jacob: "Success", as it is understood, is a paradox. To be a local hero is the ultimate goal.

IPI: What plans do you have for Fiddler Crab – are you going to give up your careers in Molecular Physics to concentrate on the label?

Mat: I gave that career up years ago, now I want to be an astronaut when I grow up.

George: We're going to try and make it into more of a community thing. We have other plans. Big, big plans...

Sam: A large section of our wider friendship group are musicians – really good musicians who are always forming really great bands that never get the chance to fulfil their potential due to financial or geographical factors – so we want to expose these friends to a national audience because that's what they deserve. Hopefully we'll make new friends along the way. It's essentially an exercise in relationship building for lonely crabs. As George says, we have ideas about how this might happen – blind dates, Sunday lunches... invitations will be with you shortly.

IPI: What's been the best moment in Fiddler career thus far?

Mat: For me, it would probably be either seeing people I have never seen before who have never heard Nap buy a copy of their CD or having Zeeb? explain to us that they considered a number of offers but decided that Fiddler Crab would be the best bet for releasing their album.

Jacob: When the Zeeb? gig came together and we realised that our (mostly Sam's) extremely hard work had actually paid off!

George: Maybe hearing Mark Coldham thanking the crowd for being tolerable at the Zeeb? launch.

Sam: Being interviewed is pretty cool.

IPI: Is Ipswich cool or shit?

Jacob: It's cool but slightly threatening if you're not familiar with it.

Mat: Cooler than Colchester – even though musicians in Colchester won't admit it – but it's still shit because it's not in Scandinavia.

George: It's getting colder all the time.

"The Fiddler Crab Music Office Christmas Party" will be held at the Steamboat Tavern on 27th December. Entry is one wrapped present.

If you want to find out more about the label and its releases then log on to the IPI website and follow the link.


**FIDDLER
CRAB**
zeeb?


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Forget Roswell or Rendlesham, in 1884 three aliens going by the names Gamma, Delta, and Omega landed on earth, after a navigational error involving beer sent them crashing into Shropshire. It seemed Earth had never made it into the Top 100 Planets You Must Visit, and so when they reported back to Zeeb Prime they were instructed to "Go Forth and Assimilate Earth".

So what better way to do this than spend 121 years of their lives donning ceremonial garments, repairing their spacecraft, having their Zeeblin (*n. spacecraft of the inhabitants of the planet 'Zeeb'*) plagiarised by the Germans in the form of the Zeppelin and consequently living out the years 1914 to 1918 avoiding Europe, getting tattooed and generally letting their planet down? This was until their lack of progress was noticed back on Zeeb Prime and the aliens realised they needed a new assimilation plan.

This plan B was conceived in 1999 when one of the trio noted that guys in bands get girls, so the trio of aliens formed one. However, they spent the next five years getting distracted by the millennium and such, until last year mysterious badges and stickers began to infiltrate everyday life. You cannot escape it, Zeeb? Are Coming!

So, with Omega taking up guitar and expelling vocals, Gamma choosing bass as his weapon of mass assimilation, and Delta enjoying drums due to their tribal qualities and similarities with his

onboard role as Communications Officer, Zeeb? have now unleashed their debut album, 'MockCockSpockShockRock'.

With over a century's worth of experience of Earth, Zeeb? have created a highly addictive record with songs that make you want to dance and sing along. 'I Have The Power' stands out with its slightly darker edge to the rest of the record and its clever comment on Earth society. Zeeb? have obviously been paying attention. 'Trust No One' is an anthemic sing-along with raging vocals and a rousing guitar hook sure to grab your attention. And it's on songs like '*porp*', 'Gravity Sack', 'Abduction Amnesia' and 'Assimilate You' that Zeeb? fuse blinding vocals, sexy bass, stimulating guitar and assertive drums into perfect portions of pop punk. They've even picked up on the cultural diversity of Earth's music with the street 'Zeeb? Amoeba' and the token acoustic ballad 'Interstellar Layby'.

With the album launch party on October 15th it was no wonder that with songs like this The Steamboat was filled to bursting point. Visually there is no band that will blow you away like these three. Zeeb? are a glittering, colourful threesome who you can't help but be engaged by; Gamma's bass becomes an extension of his body, Omega's persona is as cool as ice and Delta looks like Elvis. It's not just a case of Zeeb? playing their songs, it's a case of them bringing out the amateur dramatics to put in a well rounded performance. Always a highlight 'Zeeb? Amoeba' sees them

strip it down to the bare beatboxing bones; not to mention Gamma's ingenious use of the harmonica in assisting his bass lines on 'Mothership Earth'. But underneath the creative silliness it's undeniable that these extraterrestrials have composed songs that will invade your eardrums before you know it. With an audience that finds it hard to keep their feet still and songs like 'Assimilate You' and 'Trust No One' that you remember instantly and can't wait to chant along to, you know it won't be long before their assimilation is complete.

To show support for Zeeb?'s assimilation log on to our website at www.ip1zine.com and follow the link for Fiddler Crab, where you can purchase their debut album 'MockCockSpockShockRock' or check for details of upcoming shows.



Real dance music fans have had a hard time of it lately. Going to illegal raves is often more hassle than it's worth and the town centre venues tend to only offer mainstream dance like current pop chart fodder or hits from the 70s, 80s or 90s.

But Andrea, the landlady at the Silver Star pub, which is just over Stoke Bridge, has decided to help redress the balance by installing a 10K superb quality sound system, and has been offering the use of it to any alternative dance music promoters eager to run a night in Ipswich. Furthermore, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, these events will also carry on until 1am.

Andrea aims to support up-and-coming new talent, having been impressed by the general standard of local DJs, and encourages her promoters to offer DJ sets to new artists. She is also on the lookout for a promoter to step in on Wednesday nights.

Promoters at The Star

Tuesday - Freestylers. These guys want to hear from anyone with some DJing talent whatever their style. It's a great opportunity to gain some experience in playing to the public and they're extremely enthusiastic about creating opportunities for new talent.

Thursday - Grimey. Drum n Bass run by DJ DiDi and friends. Again, he welcomes new talent, including MCs.

Fridays - Omnipotent. Drum n Bass. They have some exciting nights planned for December, including special guests every week and collaborative nights with a new record label, 'Cattleprod'.

Saturdays rotate between five different nights:

Elevation - Known for their energetic psychedelic trance and twisted breakbeat, as well as the effort they put into the 'vibe' and the decoration – they transform the pub with ultra-violet wall hangings and unique 3D art. They also turn the small pub courtyard into a 'chillout' area where people can relax away from the dance floor.

Cheeky Cheeky - Organised by Mark Hughes, their nights are always high energy, bouncy fun. His musical standards are very high and he uses extremely talented, experienced and well-known DJs from around the area to ensure a fantastic night.

Underground Junkies - Relative newcomers, but their nights already pack the place out. Ziatek, one of the organisers, plays funky techno, her partner Dar Munket plays breakbeat and another organiser, Ross W, 'scratches' hardhouse and trance!

Summer Thunder - Hard dance in the 'rave' style, including hardhouse, hard trance, techno and psytrance along with brilliant lighting effects and experiments with computer graphics.

Pure - Once every two months DJs from the different promoters will collaborate to create a night playing their favourite genre – this started with breakbeat in November and will continue with Hardhouse in January.

Sundays - A wide variety of DJs from the Chelmsford area with an event called Contrast. These guys are keen to break down county barriers and again, want to encourage new talent from the area to play for them.

Log on to www.ip1zine.com for details on how to get involved.

Or contact Deb on 07766 423638

Photo: Jordan Kehoe

NEE-HI

At 14 years of age 'Nee-Hi' aka Pascal Robinson-Foster, may seem an unlikely role model. A black kid from a housing estate in Ipswich; you'd be forgiven for thinking there had been some mistake when he was asked to address a conference organised by the Greater Manchester Black Police Association. However this young poet's inspiring words of social responsibility, cultural awareness and self empowerment have been seen as a way of engaging with black youth.

Nee-Hi lives on Ipswich's Chantry estate with his Mum and Step-dad; his Dad now lives in east London. To many this would be the stereotypical situation where the black kid from a broken home – living in a deprived area – gets in with the wrong crowd and ends up leading a life of crime. However Nee-Hi doesn't believe in stereotypes, and the response he has had to his fledgling career as a poet have shown him that if you want your situation to change then you have to be responsible for changing it.

Nee-Hi first got interested in the power of words through reading and listening to some very powerful black icons. The speeches of Malcolm X gave him the feelings of empowerment and entitlement, while the music of rapper Tupac Shakur showed him social responsibility and cultural self-worth. Nee-Hi had been going through a difficult time – both at home and at school – and was steadily losing his way. However things began to change when he was introduced to a local black youth worker. All the other youth workers he'd met were "fat middle-aged white men", suddenly Nee-Hi had someone he was able to relate to and respect.

Introduced to poetry by a friend at school, Nee-Hi began to explore its potential by observing people as he rode the bus. He would invent situations based on the people he saw; if they were smiling, what they were wearing, how they walked or what were they holding. All of these things would give Nee-Hi a clue to their situation, and would inspire him to write based on how he felt about that.

Never one to share his writing, Nee-Hi was surprised when he was asked by his school to perform some of his work at a referral unit for excluded kids. Designed to show the positive aspects of his creativity to the other young people, Nee-Hi was himself inspired to be seen a possible role model – this is something he may well wish to pursue in the future by becoming a youth worker himself when he's older; Nee-Hi

has an enormous respect for his elders and the knowledge they possess.

Nee-Hi's writing tackles many subjects, from society and racism to politics and crime. He writes as a young black man seeing what affects him and expressing how he feels. He also wants to give people a responsible message of how we should respect one another and be more accepting. Nee-Hi has a particular dislike for rappers like 50 cent who preach or promote violence and discrimination, believing they do nothing to help society become more inclusive. Nee-Hi recently gave a performance at Ipswich's Wolsey Theatre – at the opening of African History Month 2005 – in front of 340 people, where he received a rapturous reception. This was made all the sweeter when he became aware that those people cheering him were the very elders that he respected so much. It's hard to believe that this guy is only 14 years old, but he has such an honest view of his world, and tries to see the good in everyone. It's the way he sees himself, "I'm a good person; I do good things; however I am not a perfect person." Intelligent words for someone still so young.



Nee-Hi will be performing at
braincandy
on the 16th January @ Ipswich Corn Exchange

Knowledge

They say u can move mountains with the faith of a mustard seed
Well I've got the faith of a mountain so I'm movin countries
I've got grown men women amazed at the way I think
I tell the truth like no 1 has ever told it b4
So u go red in the face when these words come out my jaw
I walk the streets with a gun in my hand
BLOW BLOW I shoot out knowledge
And it hits ur chest and ears it kills your fears and fills you with courage
My words move u but try not to show it
But when you leave dis room the poem accompanies
u can't let go of it
I speak up and tell it how it is
I'm a young black boy with my hat backwards so I get
dirty looks off other kids
And policemen dat think I'm causing trouble
But don't know I'm a genius with words but I'll just shoot
dem with my gun
Bang! Bang!
Another 2 bullets gone 2 good use
Standing in shock of the words I've arranged and the poem
I've produced
Before u dismiss a book read the first page
Cos u might fall in love with the words and then you'll
read the next page
They invite me to read at schools cos they know my words
are healing
And I believe I've got the power to stop these children
stealing and drug dealin
If they listen to me they can catch a bullet
But this I won't hurt dem it'll save dem from the ones that will
So everybody with knowledge guns
Shoot a few kids so mums and sons can be
reunited
Get dem off the street and back on their feet
Back to school so dey to can carry a gun like
me and you
I walk the streets with a gun in my hand
BLW BLOW I shoot out knowledge
And it hits ur chest and ears and kills your
fears and fills you with courage

Stand Tall

Sit back as I kick it like a football,
Offer it on a plate, here you can have
it all. It's free
This is no trick take it if you want it
But if you're too ignorant den get up
and get out
Do you want it or not?
Want what? You ask
The best gift passed down from past
And it's still here.
Malcolm, had it Martin had it
Lots want it but don't want
to work for it
I've got it because people
gave it
If you want it den listen
and you will have a bit it
It makes you feel, look
and speak powerful
Knowledge is the key,
when you get it stand tall

Civil Liberties?

In the UK we have gone mad on public monitoring. We have more than 2.5 million CCTV cameras in operation around the UK – and they are becoming more advanced. We are all used to seeing cameras in our local high streets, but what lots will not realise is that many are now being installed with face recognition technology which can scan thousands of faces across a screen each minute to confirm or deny a match.

We are also advancing in speed camera technology and number plate recognition systems; these allow special cameras to be setup by the roadside to scan each passing number plate. The system then scans a database of number plates for any outstanding issues that may exist. They can also accurately work out your average speed by timing you between two points, calculating whether you broke the speed limit.

ID cards are currently a hot issue in the press. There have been arguments in the House of Commons as to whether they will invade our privacy to an unacceptable level. The ID card system being proposed will use biometric technology to identify that we are who we say we are, as if we couldn't already do that ourselves. There have also been talks recently regarding plans to scrap car tax and to install satellite-driven monitoring devices in the cars we drive. These would be used to monitor the distance we travel to calculate how much tax we should be paying.

Most of the monitoring that goes on in the UK is there to keep track of our movements but some monitoring is there to maximize profits and to help keep businesses efficient. Shopping habit information is big business in today's consumer market and I was only made aware of this when I signed up to do a weekly shop online. I have a supermarket loyalty card that I use religiously every week at my local store. When signing up for my online account I was asked to enter the number of my loyalty card into the computer. After doing this the online store used the information assigned to the loyalty card to generate for me a very accurate weekly shopping list.

Today in the UK, if you need to be found you can be very quickly, or if you need to hide you will probably find it very difficult. The volume of electronic items we use and the way we live our daily lives link us to 'the system' – whether you're using a mobile phone to call your mum or getting some cash out for a Friday night on the town, you are leaving a detailed trail of information behind.

With these advances in technology, crime is getting harder to pull off. Gone are the days of a good old-fashioned robbery, thieves are now getting smarter and so are the public.

The majority of homes today have a computer. Many people are not visiting banks or superstores the way they used to – Why bother when everything is at your fingertips in front of a computer screen? Thieves are now using the internet to

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commit fraud and as such the technology to protect people on the internet has increased. We now see large police departments dedicated solely to solving computer-related crime.

Monitoring does not stop at the high street. When a user connects to the internet they are supplied an IP address by their internet service provider. From this a user's account can be tracked to their IP address on a certain date and time. If a user logs on to the internet and hacks into an online bank account, his or her IP address can be traced back to its origin in order to locate them. Often however the hacker will be smarter and use an IP address that cannot be traced to the real user by bouncing their connection off different public servers.

A recent study found that 8 out of 10 adults in the UK carry a mobile phone on a daily basis. This mobile has a unique number called an IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identifier), which can be used by the authorities to identify the location of a user to within a reasonably close proximity of their actual location. The way the mobile networks work enables the authorities to measure the general direction a user was travelling e.g. north along a motorway.

We are not alone, we cannot easily escape big brother in the UK. Whether we're on our mobile phone or in our car, using our credit card or browsing the internet, we are leaving a long trail of information that can be tracked live or

be picked up at a later date. So with all this information being kept about us, will it lower the crime on our streets, or will it transform the way crime is committed? I feel safer walking through the streets in the evening knowing I'm being watched by cameras. If anything were to happen to anyone while being in the range of a camera it is likely they would be seen and action taken. But when does it become too much?

In the early stages of big brother monitoring the government made the statement that if we had nothing to hide then we shouldn't be worried. But even if people have nothing to hide they still appreciate their privacy.



GLOBESITY

Today's world is in paradox, we are increasingly obsessed with how we look, however the number of cases of obesity is rising swiftly. So, are people glorifying the modern view of the perfect figure while at the same time giving up on it? Certainly it seems that way as I watch the heaving bodies walking through our streets – their bloated frames more times than not telling a story of no exercise and over consumption.

Obesity is defined as being a condition in which body fat stores are enlarged to an extent that it impairs an individual's health. A person's Body Mass Index is calculated by dividing an individual's weight in kilos by the square of his or her height in cm; the classification of someone who is obese is a person whose body mass index is above 30. The prevalence of this problem increases with age and is greatest among those of low socio-economic status, particularly women, and those from certain ethnic minorities, such as Asians and Afro Caribbeans.

So do people bring this condition on themselves? Who is to blame? Are the real ones to blame those who perpetrate a lifestyle driven by inactivity and packaged meals? These global organisations are thriving off a reckless lack of social responsibility, which is resulting in the seemingly inevitable destruction of our ability to live healthily. The sad fact is that fattening food is made to be cheaper, more readily available and more convenient than its healthy alternatives.

Advertising also has its part to play in moulding peoples perceptions of tasty, indulgent and exciting foods. 'Brainwashed' hungry people tend to give in to the images of 'beautiful' people devouring satisfyingly glorified meals; with the consumer being enticed towards the ready meals section, where the choice of sugar and fat laden, easy-to-cook meals and treats seems endless.

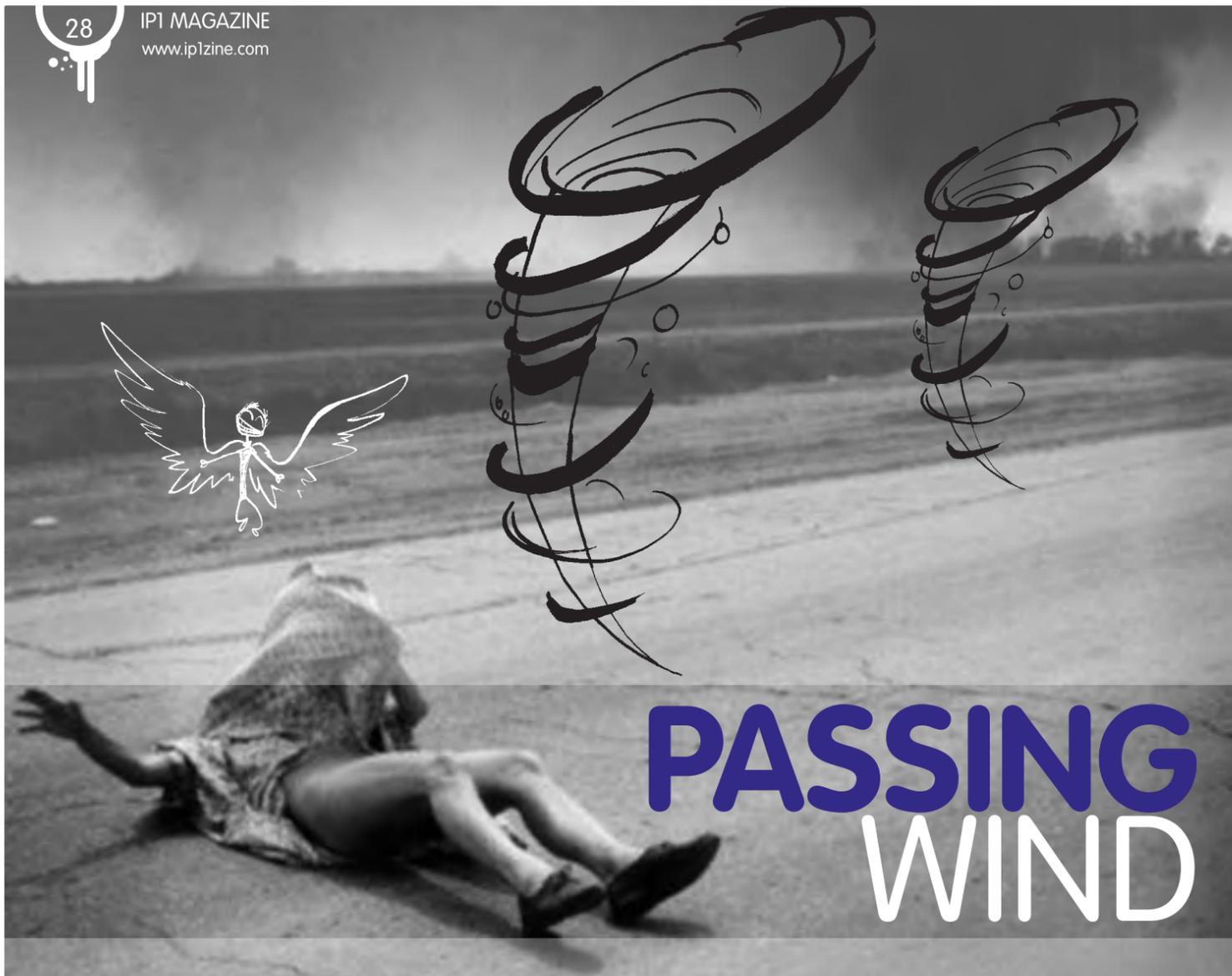


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These days speed and ease are favoured – who wants to slave over a hotplate when you can cook a ready made microwavable meal in a tenth of the time? Is it just laziness? If so it has become so common that people choose not to see it that way. It's well known that the number of cases of obesity have increased due to our more sedentary lifestyles – television viewing and the way that physical activities have been squeezed out of daily lives due to the relentless march of automation and computerisation.

The most worrying point to consider is that if immediate action is not taken to rectify this crisis – that the World Health Organisation terms "globesity" – then millions of people will begin suffering from an array of serious health disorders. The proportion of the population that is obese has grown by almost 400% in the last twenty five years. The prevalence of obesity among children of all ages is also increasing. The National Study for Health and Growth stated a dramatic rise in the proportion of overweight primary school children from 1984 to 1994. It is concerning that around two thirds of the population are now overweight or obese, putting enormous strain on our health service and its status as a publicly-funded body.

One option is to help fund the NHS by taxing the unhealthy processed foods similar to the way we tax tobacco, this would be a fair way of making those people who refuse to take responsibility for their health pay for the care they will end up needing. As one ponders over a possible future race of fatter and more obese people, with diabetes and heart conditions prevailing over the human race; one has to consider how we are going to overcome this crisis. The government says that it is trying to take steps to tackle the problem but is enough being done? As people's awareness increases over the impact this is having on society then perhaps we will see some positive change in the future, however at the moment that seems unlikely. What will it take to make people change?



PASSING WIND

Twister! A word that conjures visions of snake like funnels weaving their way through Kansas, picking up pig-tailed girls and their yappy little dogs on their merry way to the Land of Oz! It's also a word that seems somewhat detached from us as we sit in contented bliss here in the UK.

However, we are not in fact funnel-free living as we do in sunny Suffolk. East Anglia is geographically known as the UK's tornado alley. According to the leading tornado storm research association, TORRO, we get up to approximately thirty-three twisters yearly. The summer months tend to be twister season but surprisingly winter can bring its occasional freak outbreaks. TORRO can locate around fifteen in one day, although there was one unexpected

day in November 1981 when there were a reported 105 tornados in a five and a half hour spell, crossing from Anglesey in Wales to here in East Anglia!

So, with all these 'fingers of God' rotating around all over our quaint countryside I thought it best to ease your minds and present to you what I like to call my Step by Step Guide to Coping in Tornado Alley UK!

Don't panic! Yeah yeah, a typical piece of advice when facing possible winds of 300 miles per hour – T10 force for us British storm chasers – but do you really think leaping about like some headless chicken is going to help your situation? No, sit tight and wait for the appropriate moment to kiss your butt goodbye!

Tie down all pot plants and bring in the dog. It is advisable to do this before taking up a

comfortable posterior kissing position as you might find this exercise time consuming and difficult. Anyway no one wants to witness Mutley being knocked unconscious by an oncoming flower pot in mid-flight.

Run, nobody wants to be a quitter but sometimes it does help if one of you is the bigger man and walks/runs away. It's not cowardly, just a hell of a lot better than finding yourself in the next county several hours later wearing your sister's underwear and having to do the 'walk of shame' back home. Imagine explaining that to your mum!

OK, this might sound outrageous but desperate times call for desperate measures and all I'm saying is that you never know when a pair of ruby slippers will come in handy, especially if

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there are wicked witches and flying monkeys involved...hey it worked for old Dotty and her doggy companion!

I feel that this next point is very close to my heart. Please, Oh God, please bring in your wind chimes! Maybe put those blighters in the bin while your at it. This might just be a personal thing but am I honestly the only one who finds those bloody wind chimes the bane of human existence? They make me want to create mass havoc when I hear them during a slight breeze, so what will it be like when Mr Triumphant Tornado comes trampling across them? Try and imagine someone hitting you round the head with a frying pan.

Why not try fashioning some makeshift wings out of toilet tissue, a Fairy liquid bottle and PVA glue, and see if you can't just ride the thing out!

You could always dig a big hole underground and create a new kind of community where tornados don't exist and everyone loves each other and no-one fights and we all believe in peace and harmony and we paint flowers all day.

Apparently the safest place to go during a twister is in the bath tub, and then put a mattress over the top of you. That's what the Americans do so it must be right! Then again, do American households have a bath tub for each family member? I don't know about you but I can only just manage me and the rubber duck, never mind the entire household! Well, whatever bathroom arrangements our cross-Atlantic cousins have I suggest that you decide which member of the family is the most important/intelligent/beautiful etc. Then the rest



of you can just cling onto the nearest tree, run, buy some ruby slippers, or kiss your butt goodbye!

Over the past years we've seen sticklebacks and minnows falling from the Glamorgan skies, jellyfish descending on Bath and it has rained Dover sole in London, all as a result of tornados. Stonehenge is thought to be a celebration of a tornado and an act of God. A T8 tornado hit London in 1954 and had winds of around 200 mph. It is thought that tornados passing over water, otherwise known as waterspouts, were the source of sea monster legends. Finally the highest wind speeds on Earth occur in tornados, far higher than hurricanes. Remember the chances of being hit by a tornado are very rare, so don't have nightmares!

Alternative Christmas

Want to do something other than run up a huge credit card bill this Christmas? Fed up with receiving socks, slippers, bath 'smellies' and other grockle that will only clutter your shelves and cupboards? And what do you buy the person who has everything? Look no further. Many of the suggestions below will allow you to give twice – once to a friend or loved one and secondly directly to those who need it most. So avoid the queues, take the weight off your sling-backs and get online ...

1) THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Every year in the UK, we buy seven million Christmas trees and most of these end up in landfill sites. So this year, why not think about using a live tree that you can plant in your garden afterwards. Conifers to look out for include the traditional Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), and our native Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) but only plant it if you have plenty of room. After you've finished with it, you can even decorate it for the wildlife in your back garden. At the very least, consider getting your tree shredded for mulch, your local council will usually do this. If you do buy a real tree, check it has the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) logo, which guarantees it has been sustainably farmed.

2) DONATE A TREE

Tate galleries are helping to combat global warming by selling Tree Tubes. For each one bought a native tree will be planted in the Tate forest by environmental company Future Forests. One will set you back £15 and for this you get a certificate and map of the reforestation scheme which has full public access and will give you somewhere to visit on your post Xmas/pre-New Year days off, but in order to avoid putting back the CO2 into the atmosphere you've saved with your tree, consider taking public transport!

3) GOATS AND CHICKENS UNWRAPPED

Forget about CDs, books and computer games – chickens and goats have become the best-selling Christmas presents following the launch of the Oxfam Unwrapped 'alternative gift voucher' range. Apparently shoppers have already purchased more than 5,800 goats and 10,000 broods of chickens on behalf of friends or loved ones through this initiative. It offers 34 unusual but practical gifts that are available in-store or via their catalogue and dedicated website. Your friend, relative or colleague will receive a card and voucher describing the item while the gift of their choice will help to give poverty the push at the same time. Oxfam will use the funds to purchase the specified item or service and tackle poverty in communities around the world.

4) ONE STOP SHOP

UshopUgive is a portal for lots of high street stores such as Argos and WHSmith. It doesn't cost you anything extra, and if you shop via this site, the stores pay them 9% sales commission from your net spend, and 50% of this goes to your chosen charity. So, the more often you shop here the more money you put into the hands of your favourite charities.

5) CHRISTMAS CARDS AND WRAP

According to Friends of the Earth we will send around a billion Christmas cards this year. This represents a huge amount of paper, print resources and delivery costs – which just end up in the bin after Twelfth Night. So instead, why not save paper and everything else and send a Christmas e-card.

If you do receive cards, there has to be a better way of getting rid of them than just putting them in the bin. No doubt Tesco's and WH Smith will again be collecting cards for recycling on behalf of The Woodland Trust, in collaboration with Cleanaway. Keep an eye out for other outlets recycling cards, and your local council might do this too. You can recycle cards yourself by using the fronts to make gift tags or cards and the backs as shopping lists, notes etc. You can even recycle the envelopes using recycling labels, or shred them up and compost them.

6) CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

Because Christmas can be one of the loneliest times of the year for many, why not give a gift to someone in need here in the UK? Goodgifts has many ideas including equipping a bedsit for a homeless person, buying a Braille book for someone who cannot see or paying for an elderly woman to go to the hairdresser.

7) GUILT-FREE CHOCOLATE

Give someone a gourmet chocolate gift that will make you feel good too. When you buy a treat from Chocaid they will donate 30% of the profit to a world hunger project of your choice.

8) FAIRTRADE JEWELLERY

Silver Fairtrade earrings and necklaces in geometric and delicate shapes are imported from cooperatives in Mexico where workers are paid 50% in advance of all orders and 95% of all profits are returned to the workers' local communities to support local projects.

9) NO SWEAT TRAINERS

Many sports shoes are notorious for being produced in sweat shops. The situation is improving thanks to a new initiative called No Sweat, where products are 100% union labour made and come with a full breakdown of the wages and benefits workers receive. Oh and they are 100% vegan.

10) BOTTOMS UP

The RSPB are selling organic wine with a real (as opposed to plastic) cork. The significance of this being that not only is plastic cork causing yet more disposable headaches, it is also putting the existence of – not to mention the livelihoods of the cork farmers themselves – the Portuguese cork forests in jeopardy. The RSPB's interest in particular is the plight of our beloved Robin, so synonymous with Christmas cards, which often winters in these forests.

11) SAVE AN ACRE OF RAINFOREST FOREVER

Trying to find unique gifts for loved ones who care about the planet? If you are, Halesworth's very own World Land Trust can help. They offer you the opportunity to give the ultimate environmental gift this Christmas; an acre of Rainforest Saved Forever which contains more than 200 mature trees and species found nowhere else and is protected indefinitely by local conservation organisations.

12) ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GRUB

Are you sick of the thought of Turkey already? What about a nice goose? Everyone's doing it apparently. Ask your local butcher. Also pheasant is back in season and it's near enough the same price as chicken. I don't know about you but personally I despise Christmas pudding and am considering trying this as an alternative, a good deli will have the more specialised ingredients:

GAJAR HALWA (warm carrot pudding)

INGREDIENTS

600 g grated carrots
60g sugar
125 g khoya (reduced milk)
40g pistachio
30 g ghee or clarified butter
a few drops of rose water (optional)
pinch cardamom powder
vanilla ice cream

METHOD

Use a thick bottom pan; sweat the carrots cooking slowly until all the moisture evaporates.

Add the ghee and let the carrots cook on a slow fire, add the sugar and keep stirring the carrots until the sugar caramelises and the carrots are cooked and turn golden red in colour.

Remove the carrots from the fire and add immediately the grated khoya, pistachio nuts and cardamom powder.

Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.



Rose Robbins

This story follows the visually impeded life of an average small town blind alien, we join him in the bedroom.

Rex (aka Rose .R) speaks:-

When I was very small I made my own army out of lemons, which I drew faces on with biro (an amazing combination, I suggest you try it), this didn't last long. Besides that I had quite a dull childhood, and spent a lot of my time creating characters and stories in my head, which I scribbled all over cheques and important receipts that my parents foolishly left lying around.

Nowadays, I enjoy lunch, starting arguments, looking up obscure record companies, trying to decipher the spin off genres of music that NME make up so they don't have to bother describing

a certain song, I love meeting new people...I have never been comfortable sticking to one permanent set of friends, I have a few very close friends who I love GROINSTRAININGLY, but I spread myself out a lot over many people who I've met one way or another.

My cartoons very much explain me, they are my escape, and it's impossible to get bored of them (for me that is), I enjoy comics that involve graphic ultra-violence, darkness, humour on the occasion, which fuels my muse. I'm gonna stop there, all this typing is making me feel arrogant.





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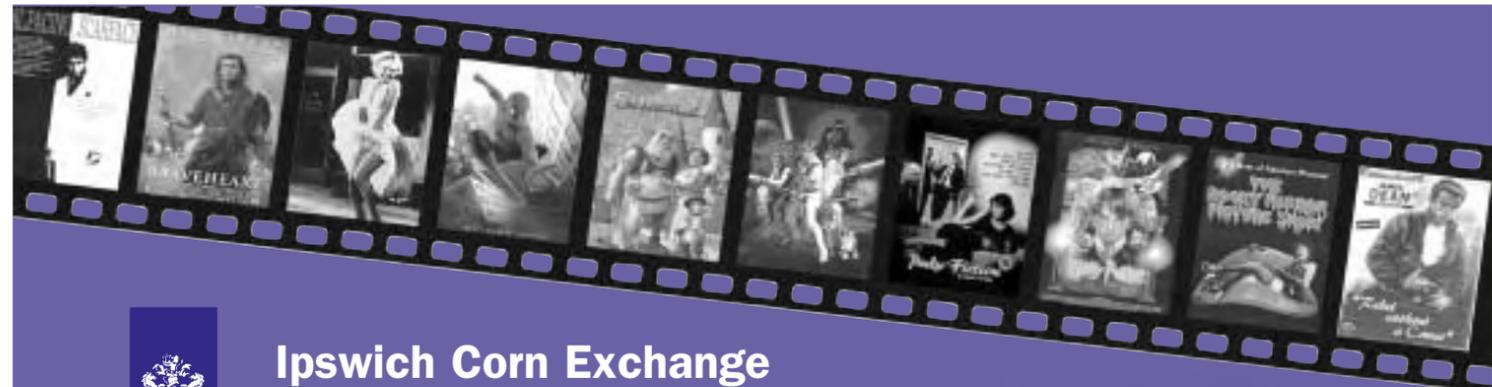
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- c) Marmosets

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