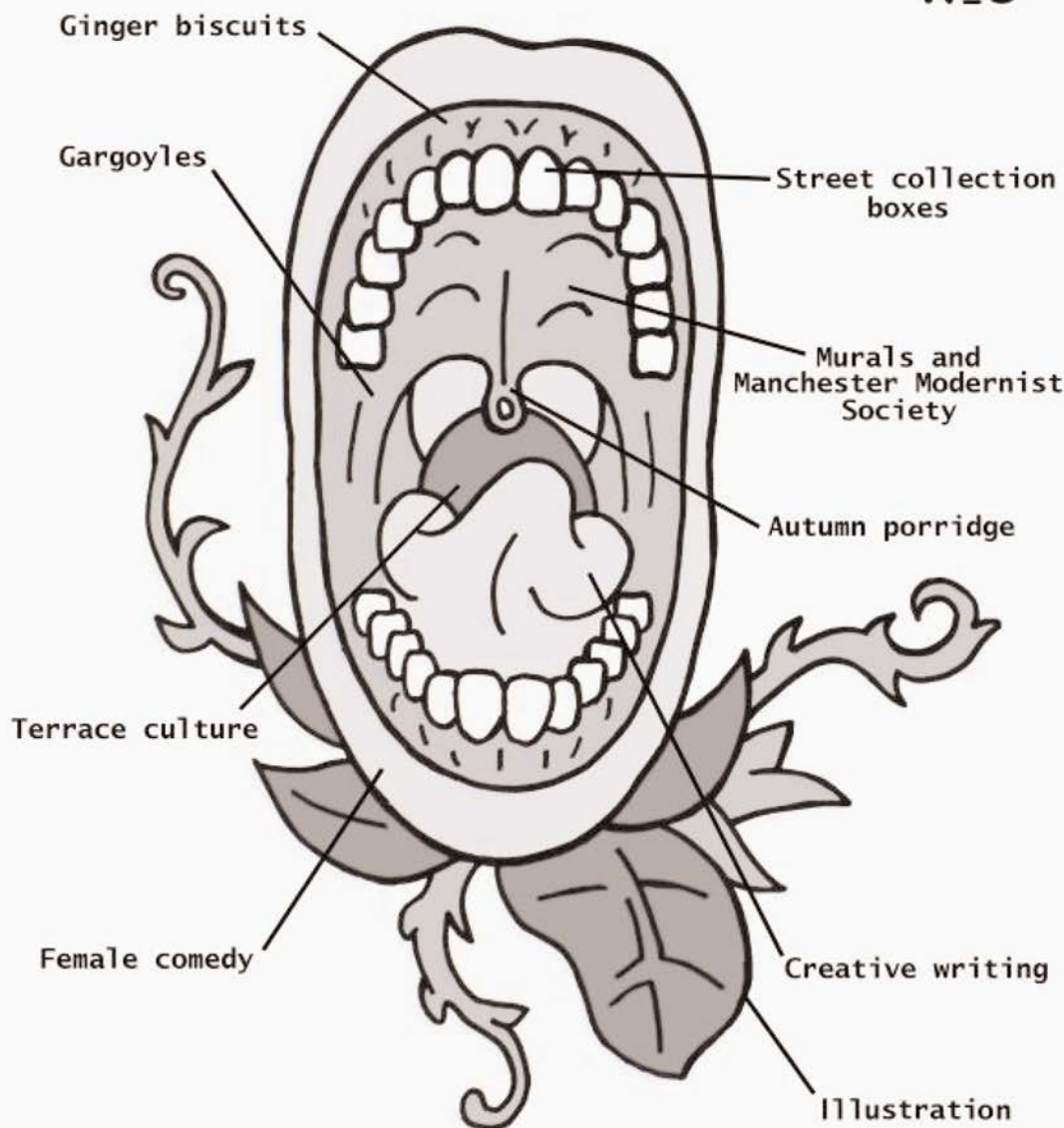


THE SHRIEKING VIOLET

N03





1



WELCOME to October's issue of **The Shrieking Violet**. I couldn't let this time of year pass without mentioning the major event that takes place in Manchester and Salford every year - the arrival of tens of thousands of students at the city's universities.

I'd like to think that students would enjoy *The Shrieking Violet* as much as any of the free magazines that are handed out at Freshers fairs/ in halls of residence to welcome them to the city and give advice about where to go out and what to do (often, unimaginatively, of the drinking/ shopping nature).

I'd also like to talk about the negative stereotypes of students. Once upon a time, the most parodied image of a student was a sallow, left-leaning youth spending their time engaged in intellectual debate, writing poetry or listening to the Smiths.

Unfortunately, students are now often thought of as a semi-feral underclass vomiting all over the streets, barely attending lectures and subsisting on baked beans. Of course, there are some students who are happy to do this, and that's fine, but this is an unfair generalisation. The vast majority are a welcome addition to the city; new people bring new ideas, new friends and new life (plus, the general public can often take advantage of events, talks, exhibitions and facilities at the universities).

The experience of leaving home to live in a new place is just as important as the educational side of a degree, and I would encourage students to do as much outside the university campus as possible, because those three or four years of study go by so quickly.

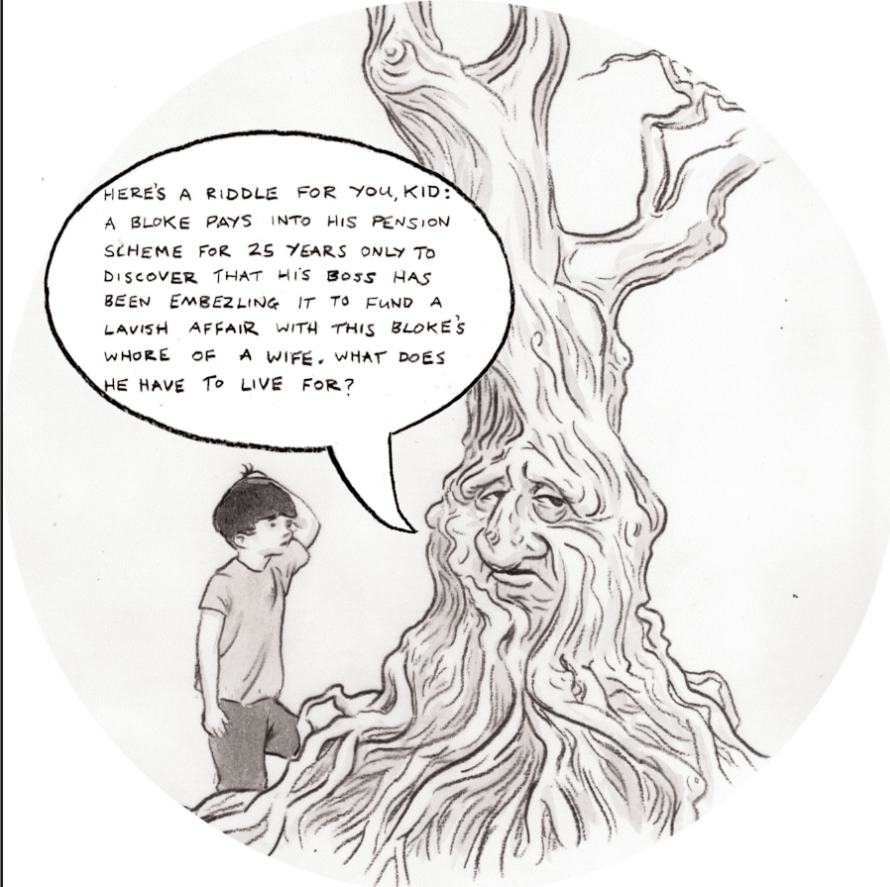
Some students keep to the student areas, but there's so much else to do. Join a band or a musical group. Take part in a course, from dress-making to evening Spanish lessons. Join your local knitting or gardening group. Volunteer for charity, help out at a gallery like CUBE or get involved in a venue like Islington Mill.

What a lovely time to move to Manchester, and fall in love with the city, with the passing of summer into Autumn. No wonder so many students end up staying here after they graduate.

Editor Natalie Bradbury

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HERE'S A RIDDLE FOR YOU, KID:
A BLOKE PAYS INTO HIS PENSION
SCHEME FOR 25 YEARS ONLY TO
DISCOVER THAT HIS BOSS HAS
BEEN EMBEZZLING IT TO FUND A
LAVISH AFFAIR WITH THIS BLOKE'S
WHORE OF A WIFE. WHAT DOES
HE HAVE TO LIVE FOR?

DISENCHANTED FOREST



3

Where have all the gargoyles gone?

MANCHESTER is a city of a million eyes. Everywhere, eyes watch you, stare at you, scrutinise you, look you up and down, look past you and through you, but rarely focus or make eye contact. There are some eyes that will never look away, though, once you meet their gaze, and will never close. These eyes of the city are cast in stone, relegated from the level of human life. They watch from a vantage point high above the city, detached from the world of the eyes attached to the heads that rush about below.

For Manchester has a parallel population, unknown to many of its present residents; gargoyles. Exaggeratedly real, these faces, often human-animal hybrids, are the guardians of the city, growing out of the brickwork. The city is their playground, where they contort and perform acrobatic feats. They nestle on the outside of the town hall, clamber up and down drain pipes upside down at John Rylands library on Deansgate and leer down at the River Medlock from the back of the Palace Hotel (the former Refuge Assurance Company), forced to forever look down into the depths below, hidden from most people but passengers on trains going across the railway tracks behind (buses are also good places for gargoyle spotting!).



Strictly speaking, a gargoyle spouts water out of its mouth, as the word 'gargoyle' comes from the Latin for throat (think gurgle!). Medieval gargoyles were designed to collect rainwater, and non-watery gargoyles are known as chimeras. Most of Manchester's are merely for decoration and only a few expel water, such as those on the fountain outside the town hall, where winged fish cling to the edge, their mouths forced wide open to spew water for the pleasure of the passing public.

Most are inconspicuous, but dramas are played out by these larger-than-life personalities. Though a few faces are stylised, most are astonishingly human, every last line of recognisable human experience carved into their faces. The erosion and smoothing away of stone, or layers of peeling paint from past attempts to cover up gargoyles, serves only to reinforce the effect, adding to their solemnity and seriousness.

Though gargoyles are often grotesque, their faces twisted into grimaces and mouths extended in agony, some are comic figures, at whom it's impossible not to laugh. Rows of taunting gargoyles on the side of Manchester Cathedral hold their mouths open with their fingers, pull faces and stick their tongues out at you.



Perhaps it's for the best that most people rarely look up, though. Some gargoyles are benign, cherubs providing a consoling view, but many people would be disconcerted if they got off the bus at Piccadilly Gardens, looked up at Somerfield and realised they were being eyed up by rows of staring lions, wide eyed and hungry. Somerfield's pack of lions is just a small part of Manchester's leonine population. Jowly lions watch over grand buildings, ready to pounce into action from the doors of the Old Fire Station on London Road, or loyally and proudly guard banks, reassuring customers their money is safe inside.



The city is also overrun by guard dogs. Caricatures with giant, pricked ears, they're watching, waiting and listening. On the buildings of the Northern Quarter, dogs look defiantly out of columns and pillars as if daring you to try any funny business. At John Rylands library, gargoyles nest in corners in the stairwells that lead up to the historic reading room, as if reminding readers, before the days of CCTV, they were watching the precious books within.

Manchester is also a city of thousands of mouths. Eating, talking, gossiping, advising, shouting, singing, the city is never silent. There are some mouths that will never speak again, though. If they could, the roar of the city would be replaced with a different tune; the singing of anguished souls, the warning cries of gargoyles forced to live out their penance in public in an act of revenge. What stories they could tell if they could speak. Maybe the man who's holding his head





in his hands on a building above Piccadilly could tell us what he did that made him freeze in permanent regret (or whether he's just suffering from a colossal hangover!).

Manchester Cathedral is teeming with the creatures, a reminder of those less fortunate, the victims of terrible fates, condemned for eternity. One poor tortured soul, clad in human clothes as if a warning to the ordinary man, who sees something of him within himself, has been painted a ghostly green over time by moss, and cobwebs grow from his mouth like strings of saliva over his bared teeth. Forcefully propelled from the building, his mouth is permanently flung open as if in a silent warning. We're shown the retribution and punishment, but what crimes did these poor souls commit that they were forced to constantly relive their humiliation in public?

A cathedral is exactly the type of place you would expect to find gargoyles - think of Notre Dame in Paris - and the Gothic buildings of Deansgate are home to clusters of chimeras, but they're also dotted about the city. The most unlikely place is the gun shop that occupies a corner on Withy Grove. A winged gargoyle, painted black to contrast with the white walls of the building, is crouched on the corner of the building, about to take off in flight, probably over the Printworks. The man inside the gun shop speculated that the gargoyle was a remainder from those added to the Cathedral in Victorian times, when the building was re-clad, and told me there are many more leftover gargoyles on buildings across Manchester.

Whether they're comical or grotesque, gargoyles, like all good public art, add a human side to the city. They're also a history of place, a record of the city and its values captured in time.

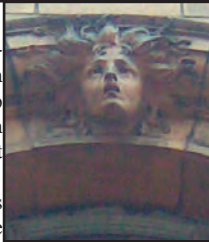
Imagine if we had gargoyles nowadays; gargoyles seem to have disappeared from modern buildings, but they served a useful purpose. The old Smithfield Market building on Swan Street, from the mid nineteenth century, belies its function with the carved heads of sheep and goats. The Old Fire Station is covered

in the likenesses of damsels in need of rescue, almost mermaid like, rendered in terracotta with their hair plastered dramatically across the brickwork of the windowsills. It's even adorned with busty, topless women perching above doorways, surely as much of an inspiration to firemen as their male counterparts, bare chested young men with rippling muscles. Though they're some of the most recent gargoyles in Manchester, from the early twentieth century, perhaps they wouldn't look so good in glass and steel, the ubiquitous material of the modern city (although the 1930s Chrysler building in New York is adorned with gleaming, metallic, ornamental gargoyles, replicas of hood monuments).

The best example of modern gargoyles and adaptation of the form is in Chicago, where the Catalan artist Jaume Plensa has imaginatively reinvented the concept with his Crown Fountain, which was opened in 2004. A stunningly beautiful city that's full of public art, in the downtown Loop area Miro and Picasso offer their opposing, yet similarly abstract, visions of women's faces in huge, sculptural form, adding something personal in amongst the towering minimalist built environment.

In the waterside Millennium Park, on the shore of Lake Michigan, Plensa's Crown Fountain sets two giant faces opposite each other, human gargoyles in the best sense. Onto two huge towers are projected close-up videos of the faces of citizens of Chicago - truly gargoyles in which the public can see their reflections. In slow motion, they gradually purse their lips until spurting water, then finally smiling. In summer, children are taken down by their parents in their swimming costumes to frolic in the water, screaming and laughing. It's public art at its best.

Consider if, instead of consisting of blank stone and smooth facades, the walls of our city were still exciting and had personal touches. A man frozen in blissful repose to guide the weary traveller through the last through steps towards shelter. A series of 'before, during and after' gargoyles detailing the various stages of alcohol consumption, from sober to merry to worse for wear, to warn drinkers entering a pub to know when to stop, could be far more effective - and entertaining - than heavy handed government poster campaigns. The caring yet expert face of a doctor reassuring a patient on the way into hospital. An enraptured face lost in the adventures held within the pages of books to inspire the reluctant scholar into a library. A friend above your front door, offering you company on your way home by yourself late at night, or just a few more friendly and welcoming faces around the city. By Natalie Bradbury





5

Art for All - Murals, Mosaics and Street signs



The Elements mural, Hans Tisdall, Chemistry Building, Brunswick Street

YOU might have read about the Manchester Modernist Society in the MEN recently or heard about our efforts to celebrate a rather neglected period in the urban landscape, the era between the Victorian and the post bomb reconstruction – yes, that’s right, the twentieth century itself - the city that we walk through on a daily basis, the everyday city that holds much of our communal memories, that forms the backbone and character of the Manchester we know and love. We knew that we weren’t the only people who felt the same but they exist in societies that often appear quite official and specialised so we foolishly decided to start an informal club and see what would come of it!

We want to explore the extraordinary story of the 20th century in the broadest possible sense, especially its everyday vernacular landscape, start conversations, bring people together, raise awareness and perhaps even make the occasional difference – but most of all to get out there and enjoy ourselves in it with regular walks, talks and get togethers. We are not experts in any sense, not architects or planners or conservationists, just

citizens and enthusiasts of the city, Urbanists for want of a better description, who love Manchester warts and all, who glory in its battered, scarred nooks and crannies every bit as much as its shiny new image.

Our website includes a ‘Features of The Month’ section, which highlights three structures each month, one demolished, one at risk and to lighten the mood, celebrates a classic modernist Icon, an undisputed favourite like the CIS or the Midland Bank. We hope in time to build a record of the modernist city, draw attention to the work of other organisations involved in 20th century campaigns and remind those planning it that our architectural heritage is not limited to the great and the grand but to the ordinary and the everyday.

This month we are dedicating our coveted Icon status to the re-discovery of a Manchester modernist hero, **Hubert ‘Nibs’ Dalwood**, one of an unsung army of artists and sculptors committed to brightening up the post war public realm and its skyline with panels, friezes and mosaics. Turns out Manchester, indeed the whole region, is awash with such treasures if we simply choose to glance upwards!

On our very doorstep we are lucky enough to have the work of such acclaimed and accomplished artists as Victor Pasmore, Anthony Hollaway and Lynn Chadwick available to view and admire 24/7: there’s even a Barbara Hepworth to drool over in the courtyard of the Kantarovitch.

With a little imagination the city becomes a vast open air Tate



Hubert Dalwood Panel, Moberley Tower, Oxford Road



Modern minus the exhibition fee and restrictive opening hours! And unlike the 'do not touch' mantra of the art gallery with its cathedral-like deference, this period is typified by an approachability and inclusivity that was pioneering, refreshing and endearing. Their work was an exuberant expression of colour in a hitherto monochrome landscape, initiated by the 1951 Festival of Britain which featured murals heavily on its festival sites around the country. It was an era that aspired to bringing art to the people, and the post war building boom created more opportunities for this new breed of muralists, as modern architecture with its tower blocks and expanses of blank surfaces was literally a blank canvas for experimentation. And experiment they did – with new materials, styles, techniques, and increasingly with abstraction. Whilst the 50s and early 60s is often typified by pictorial and naturalist depictions, the influence of pop art plus the demands of working in such huge scale and grappling with new materials like concrete, ushered in a later era dominated by organic, abstract and textural patterns.



The Alchemist's Elements, detail

A concern with the reception of their work, placed so directly in the landscape off the plinth, preoccupied them too; these artists intended their work to be tough enough to weather the elements and handled by the public at large – Henry Collins (the painter and muralist whose work includes the Post Office Tower and several BHS stores) said his murals were intended to be touched, describing this as 'spectator involvement', whilst Mitzi Cunliffe wanted her work to be 'used, rained on, leaned against, taken for granted'. And this New York, sometime Manchester based artist went further declaring that her 'life-long dream is a world where sculpture is produced by the yard in factories and used in buildings as casually as bricks'... groovy!

But despite brightening up our cityscape and bringing art to us all, these vibrant, democratic and irreplaceable gems are barely acknowledged by the museum world, largely dismissed by art historians and generally neglected by civic authorities. Disappearing fast, they are now becoming so rare as to be on the 20th century society's special campaign list - <http://www.c20society.org.uk/docs/campaigns/murals.html>, who have declared them an endangered species.

Even Mitzi wouldn't want us to take them this much for granted...

Check our website for three well known and in our opinion iconic public artworks gracing the city, each demonstrating the wealth of styles and materials that artists of the period worked with, and all of which face particular risks apart, sadly, from our RIP item which has already been disgracefully erased. And let's not forget the recent and ongoing campaign to save Salford's unique Tree of Knowledge. But they are all just a starting point for rediscovering your own personal favourites.

So here at the MSS we suggest that next time you are looking for a free and stimulating way to spend an afternoon, why not give the gallery a miss and bask in the glory of a public modernist artwork or two! It's high time we reclaimed our post-war murals and treasured them in the unconventional but generous spirit of those times.

by E. P. Niblock

www.manchestermodernistsociety.org



The Alchemist's Elements mosaic, Hans Tisdall, Faraday Building, UMIST



A very in-terracing article

TERRACES should have vanished from football grounds by now. After the Hillsborough Disaster the government commissioned Lord Taylor to write a report on the state of stadiums. Apart from casting a paternalistic Tory eye on attitudes ("It was considered acceptable for many to urinate in public, even near children and women" he wrote, clearly disgusted) he recommended that football should become an all-seater game to avoid crowd disturbances, singlehandedly destroying large chunks of football culture. Eventually a compromise was reached and while Premiership fans learnt to clap politely in their pre-assigned positions the lower leagues were spared this seated ignominy and retain the character of terracing. Terraces instantly double the fun of going to a game and allow humans to interact on their own terms.

There's a sociologist called Frank Furedi who wrote about the dangers of formalising relationships. He's right. It is convenient for clubs if everyone shuffles in down the steps, finds their seats and squeezes in between the same people for every game. But it destroys the point of your local club being a place for the community. The self-regulating societies that develop on football terraces are brilliant and are some of the few public spaces safe from intervention by authorities. Well, until they're knocked down to provide new seating to attract corporate customers.

Top things about football terraces:

1. Travelling to Southport for a make or break game, watching York score and immediately being tackled by a bloke in a shark costume. Little explanation of why or who.
2. Watching the following animals traipse across the terrace mid-game: urban fox (Grays Athletic), 3ft tall dog (Frickley Athletic), rats (everywhere). The combination of greenery, rotting fast food and decaying concrete make some football terraces astonishingly diverse ecosystems.
3. Alternative entertainment: when the game gets boring our fans have a habit of livening things up. "Turn around if you love Cit-eh" and two score of adolescent faces are staring at the back of the stand. "Dance if you love Cit-eh" and these young men grab each other and try their best Strictly Come Dancing moves. Best of all is the cry of "Let's pretend we scored a score" which terrifies bemused stewards as cheering fans come charging down the terrace towards the pitch at a particularly uneventful moment.
4. Homoeroticism. Rugby might have the men grappling each other but football places so much emphasise on THE MAJESTY OF THE GOAL that during post-scoring celebration



anything goes. People pile down the steps, jump around and hug strangers. Which leads to great and much overlooked opportunities for a quick fondle or peck on the cheek with a large beery bloke who would punch you if you tried the same in the pub around the corner.

5. The surge. You used to get 20,000 people hemmed into the Liverpool Kop, a stand so crammed that it took the form of a swaying single beast with individuals only visible if you looked very closely. But at any ground with a terrace behind the goal you can still get some sensation of being an individual that's given up control to those around them. When the ball hits the net then the movement starts. People push towards the centre and the front. Tumble over, crawl under the crash barriers. Everyone's jumping everywhere, swinging around into other people. No one falls over; if you weren't so fleet of foot everyone would immediately stop and pull you up. But while the celebrations continue it's a purer form of delirium than standing up in your seat and punching the air a few times.

6. Communication. You get to move around, have a natter, head over to see your friends, head away from the guys that you want nothing to do with. Bloody hell, socialising! The most pleasing conversations are with the guys who you talk to at every game but never actually each other's names. "Rubbish again, huh?" "Aye, same as usual."

7. Creative outlets. Football fans aren't all two bit numpty thugs. But they're not renowned for being artistic. So it's great to see the terrace community taking on the challenge. Groups getting together to work on large banners, slogans painted across bedsheets and enormous flags carried across the heads of the crowd are the sort of communal efforts that you don't tend to get in stadiums where everyone has to have their bum parked on a seat. Recent highlights at York include historical quotes from George VI and bastardised Shed Seven album covers.

8. Taking the attitude on the road. York got to the new all-seater Wembley stadium for a cup final. Unfortunately the fans weren't housetrained in the ways of the all-seater stadium so 200 of us stood for the whole game, waving flags while some let off flares. The stewards didn't know what to do when the people, en-masse, insisted on their right to fully extend their legs and stand behind the goal.

9. Top terraces include: The Shay at Halifax, The Dripping Pan at Lewes and for a new construction, The Pirelli Stadium at Burton.

10. No notable works of fiction have been written solely about football ground terraces.

NB: Remember that if you're watching from a terrace then the quality of football on the pitch is probably dire, so you'll need the extra entertainment. Oh, and mockney films that go on about how edgy them football hooligans were on the terraces in the 1980s can fuck right off.

By Jim Waterson



The Man, The Siamese

THERE is a man. Standing on the corner. Sipping a cup of coffee. Not a take-away cup, but one from his kitchen. His lip rasping on the chipped rim each time he raises it to suck on the smooth, dark liquid. Next to him is a cat. A Siamese. Its blue collar matches the man's blue cotton trousers. They are both disinterested in each other and in their surroundings. The man is calm, seeming as if it's completely normal for him to be standing there away from an entrance to any house, but not seeming to be waiting for anything, anyone. The Siamese sits. Raises her paw in time with the man lifting his coffee cup. They both lick. Him, his coffee; her, her paw. They are still looking for nothing. A car rolls by. The man, the Siamese, follow it with their eyes. Their heads slowly moving from left to right as the man's shirt flutters lightly across his turgid belly. Once the car has passed they resume their positions of staring blankly ahead of themselves.

A woman comes out of the house nearest to where the man, the Siamese are standing. She leans her twisted frame against the rusty bricks of her porch. She is now watching the man and the Siamese, who are still watching nothing. She squints as the sunlight burns harshly onto her retina, tries to scratch it away with her gnarled hands. They used to be smooth and dark like fine leather, but have now aged and resemble an old satchel, battered from years of use. Her lined face is a map although she herself has never left the city. The old woman wonders where the pair on the corner may end up going, instead of questioning why it is that she has never left.

The children kicking a yellow ball back and forth, back and forth down the street have not yet thought of where they will end up. Nor have they noticed the odd trio of observers a short distance away from them. They are too busy pretending to boot the sun around amongst the cars, pretending the apocalypse will come if their miniature sun happens to slide under one of the many vehicles that line the street. The ill-fitting shirts draped over their tiny frames billow like parachutes behind them as their feet dart around after the ball in too-big shoes. Tripping over themselves to save the earth, they let out a fierce shriek and simultaneously drop to the floor as the ball disappears underneath a cobalt Volvo and the apocalypse arrives. When a skinny arm fumbles blind under the sooty car, catches the ball, the world and the game start up again.

The house opposite from the old woman breathes out muggy spices, pricking the air. Inside the kitchen is one of the children's mothers. She draws the back of her hand across her forehead, wiping away the oppressive air and replacing it with a thin film of oil. The ghee starting to hiss and spit at her in the battered pan snakes up and coils into her nostrils, licking the insides of them. She winces slightly as it deposits a chilli venom and reaches for a glass of water. Picking up her knife she starts cutting the pile of vegetables in front of her. The dull thud of the knife against the wooden board echoes her boy tap tapping his feet against the ball in the road.

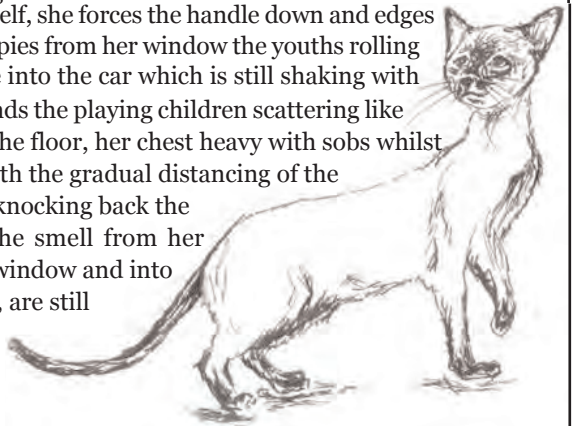
Her husband in the room next to her is flicking through the paper. His glasses peering slightly more over his left eye than his right grasp onto the end of his nose, saving themselves from toppling off. He prods at them with a single, squat finger and catches the lingering smell of curry on his skin. Like trees gaining a ring to every year of their lives, the man in the armchair seems to gain another layer of this warm scent to each of his. From when he was the age of his child, who is still booting the sun around in the street, his hands have not only thickened with bark-like skin, but have soaked up the years of spices, damp in the air. It reassures him in a strange way how the smell of home has wrapped itself around his skin. Breathing them in deep this time, his fingers and their smell paint an image of his wife bludgeoning vegetables in the kitchen.



The husband can hear a child crying next door. Its wails filter through the red bricks and raised patterned wallpaper. He turns the pages faster hoping the slice of paper through air will help cut through the screams. He cannot see the new mother next door with her fingers grabbing at her hair in fistfuls of rope trying to climb up and away from her relentlessly shrieking child. The child goes on and on, its cries getting faster, higher, shriller. The husband's paper is whirring through pages as though it were a flick book; parliament, death, cricket blurring before his eyes. He turns back to the beginning and relays the action. The new mother is also on repeat. She clutches the child once again, tries to negotiate the bottle and its mouth. Its red fists clawing at the air the mother dodges the swipes from the ball of anger. She sinks herself, still with the baby tucked like a package under her arm, deep into the sofa and joins its cries with her own. There is now nothing where the man next door was sitting. Just the failed flick book fanned out on the floor where his feet were not long ago.

The children are still skimming the ball back and forth along the tarmac. A bit away from them is a group of three youths. One leans against a wall tilting his head back toward the sun, heating himself up like a lizard, his skin slowly turning into caramel in the light. The other two are laughing, their voices fighting with the music coming from their friend's car which is teetering on the pavement beside them. The young mother drags herself up and curls her fingers round the net curtains, spying on the noise that set off the screaming ball of nerves in its crib. Frustrated, she starts cursing at them through the glass, her pitch getting higher and higher as her breath starts condensing in front of her on the window. One of the youths turns his head and spots the frantic mother silently shouting. Her mouth opens and shuts, whirring away like an irate ventriloquist's dummy. The youth nudges his friends and they turn to watch the woman gesticulating wildly in front of them, caged behind the glass. They laugh again and the bass from the car resonates harder down the street. Tears are streaming from the young mother's eyes. She feels the anger strangling in her throat as her cries try to push through the window, the bass pushing it back into her. She feels her face turning hot as the blood beats its way to the surface of her skin. The youths continue to watch the molten mother who has become a scarlet flurry of emotion.

The twisted woman who was propped up against her porch has been watching. She hears the fight between the increasing bass thudding away, the silent screams crashing in the muddy air. Grappling for the doorframe to steady herself, she forces the handle down and edges herself behind the safety of her door. She spies from her window the youths rolling about with laughter as they finally tumble into the car which is still shaking with beats. It thuds down the pavement and sends the playing children scattering like pigeons. The young mother crumples on the floor, her chest heavy with sobs whilst her child's plaints become less and less with the gradual distancing of the car's basslines. The wife next door is still knocking back the beads of sweat forming on her brow. The smell from her kitchen is still weaving its way out of her window and into the hot air outside. The man, the Siamese, are still looking for nothing on the corner.



by Lizzy Huthwaite



My Special Friend

I'VE been thinking about those statues of disabled children you used to see on the high street; there was a blind boy and another with calipers and a girl with a cane. They all had the same humbr-ol pinkey beige skin you got with home model kits and they all had a slot in their heads to feed them money. I've got a postcard of roadside saints in Ireland; Mary has the same colour skin and the same impassive stare; imploring and accusing at the same time.

If you gave your sweet shop change to these poor little frozen children with mournful eyes and silent tears then you were a good person. You were lucky to be able to see where to put your penny and could feel smug that every little helps before you went home to tea.

I assumed they had gone because of progress; a rejection of that patronising, pitiful cap in hand bullshit. It belongs to another age, not a world that values individuals and preaches that we can all be special. Unfortunately that's not entirely true. Those statues hold a lot of money and the modern world knows no shame. They were easy targets for thieves and so the poor ickle chillen are hiding from the bad men that want to kidnap them.

I got to thinking about where they were; in my mind's eye the terracotta army have a rival. I googled away and asked around; aside from a brief sighting in a colour supplement (an abandoned disabled boy in the corner of some trendy artist's flat) nobody knew where the nobody knew where the tins had gone.

I'm glad we don't have to pass those children anymore but still I felt uneasy. There's usually only three kinds of disabled people you see in the media: pitiful victims, evil and fearful warnings or inspiring superheroes. They are all extraordinary and all extraordinarily damaging. They all mean something bad and something abnormal and it's not enough.

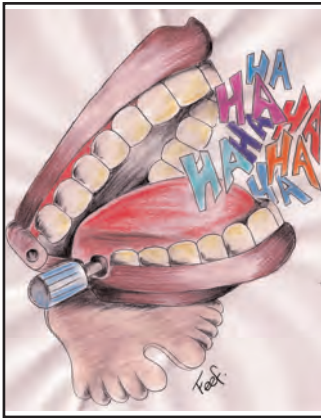
Mostly of course people with disabilities are simply missing in popular culture; it's not sexy or easy or comfortable to deal with but it's true. The invisibility is all wrapped up in eugenics and scientific claptrap now and there is an aching screaming gap in our collective consciousness.

When I was a child I wore calipers and 'spaz' was the playground taunt of choice. It sounds sick now I know but I used to love seeing the boy outside the paper shop; he was the only person I ever saw who looked a bit like me. I'm struggling to think about who my role models would be now.

That's why, despite everything, I'm just a little bit sad you don't see those statues anymore, pathetic and damaging as they are. I miss the boy because when I was lonely he was my friend.

By Morag Rose





Standing up for ourselves

THERE'S long been a debate on the lack of women in comedy, particularly their absence from TV panel shows like the BBC's *Mock the Week*. On the rare occasion a female comic is granted a slot on this show, she is 'rewarded' by being talked over and humiliated by Frankie Boyle – a comic who is rapidly becoming Glasgow's answer to

Bernard Manning. However, having just got back from a few days watching stand-up at the Edinburgh festival, I found that it wasn't the lack of female comedians that made me angry – it was their material.

Women have long been the butt of jokes. Comedians like Jim Davidson and Roy Chubby Brown have carved careers out of misogyny. But then, you could argue that some female comics have too. These are the comedians who think it's funny to portray themselves and other women as neurotic, needy and vain; the ones who reinforce stereotypes by relying on material that claims we're interested in nothing but men, chocolate, shopping and celebrity. In other words, the kind of tired old ground male comedians have exploited for years.

In a recent article for the *Guardian*, comedy promoter Tiffany Stevenson-Oake tried to counteract this view: "The very idea that female comics can only do material about periods and chocolate is idiotic." However, in the same article, she reveals she runs a comedy club, *Girls with Guns*, with Zoe Lyons – a comedienne who recently insinuated women were interested in nothing but shoes on *Mock the Week*.

Even worse than comedians like Zoe Lyons are the ones who attack their own appearance. One of the female comedians I saw at a Fringe showcase was excellent – much better than any of the men on the bill. However, her very first joke was about how the fat on her breast and 'bingo wing' hit each other 'like a Newton's cradle' when she moved her arm. I couldn't help but wonder whether she was trying to pre-empt personal criticism by saying this or whether she actually thought it was funny.

And it wasn't just new and inexperienced comics whose material was so self-critical, even established stars were in on it. One of the Fringe's most high-profile comedians, Janeane Garofalo, used her show to bemoan her 'fat back', whereas even the wonderful Sarah Millican made jokes about her belly and having a 'naughty cupboard' stuffed with chocolate. We could argue that joking about our bodies is empowering – it shows we accept and embrace our looks, but, to me, it just seems like a cheap laugh that reinforces rather than attempts to smash sexism.

Ultimately, I believe women need to be able to stand up for themselves before they can be great stand-ups. There are already some fantastically strong female comics around; Josie Long is a great example. And if all female comedians follow suit and try to progress their career through strength rather than weakness, I think they'll finally get the attention they deserve. **By Victoria Conway**



13

Vegan Ginger Biscuits by Rebecca Willmott

HERE we have a lovely vegan ginger biscuit recipe for you to drown your sugar cravings.

First you shall need to get everything ready as this I believe is the hardest part.

You will need a

- * lovely wooden spoon (I like to use one with a smiley face, makes it more fun)
- * 2 good ol' mixing bowls
- * oven
- * oven gloves (protect your mitts)
- * tablespoon
- * Rollllllling pin
- * baking tray
- * Sieve
- * cookie cutters (gingerbread man is the bee's knees)

Ingredients

- * 2 teaspoons of ginger
- * 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- * 1 teaspoon of ground nutmeg
- * 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- * 1 tablespoon of canola/ rapeseed oil
- * 3 ounces of vegan margarine (I like Suma's the best, quite creamy.)
- * 3 ounces of granulated sugar (normal sugar is filtered through charred animal bone! eep!)
- * 1 tablespoon of molasses (this is the dark liquid by-product of the process of refining sugar cane into table sugar. Is actually a sugar that is good for you, is a bit like treacle and a good source of calcium! Ooo, scientific!)
- * Soya milk as needed (my favourite flavour is vanilla but might be too much with all the other flavours! I would use Sojade brand as is the most ethical.)
- * Self raising flour
- * And a pinch of baking powder and baking soda to make it rise nicely!
- * Eggciting decorations such as jelly tots (they are vegan) or icing sugar, food colouring...

So let's get baking!

Pre heat oven to 225 degrees

We shall start by mixing the dry ingredients. Sift the flour, baking powder and soda and mix together. In a separate bowl, combine the molasses, (this is really sticky and smells a bit funny but once cooked it will be lovely), margarine, sugar and mix. Slowly adding the remaining ingredients. I always add more vanilla extract, as I love it! Then pour the dry ingredients and mix together. should smell really gingery, add more soya milk if it is not combining thoroughly. You can put the mixture in some cling film and pop in the fridge for an hour to harden the dough, once all mixed but if you can't wait you can just go straight to cutting out shapes! I love this next bit. Flour a surface and get your hands messy! Once the dough is combined it should be all soft and firm, roll out on the floured surface. Keep kneading and rolling the dough as you cut out your shapes and place on your greased baking tray I hope you have some exciting cookie cutters! Use your cookie cutters to bring your cookies to life! Then pop in the oven and watch as they magically rise!

Leave to cook for 10-20 minutes or until brown.

Once cooked, leave to cool for 10 minutes, then you can add some exciting decorations such as a fairy sprinkling of icing sugar, a spread of butter cream icing (vegan margarine and icing sugar mixed with vanilla extract) or make some exciting faces for the gingerbread man with coloured icing from a piping bag and edible metal beads for eyes.

Eat straight away or store in a glorious metal tin and give out to fellow strangers in the street, will really make their day!

Enjoy!

Other alternatives; leave out the molasses if you can't get your hands on it, use apple cider vinegar or adding more rapeseed/olive oil. Try adding almond extract and diced walnut for a nutty crunchy taste.





Autumn Porridge

by Rachel Cranshaw

THIS is a recipe I have only recently invented, but is already a firm favourite for those gloriously bright, crisp mornings that we're beginning to see increasingly more of the year wears on. The idea came to me following my mother's return from visiting my Granny in Cambridge, with a huge bag of apples she had picked up from a roadside stand giving them out for free, which she then stewed. The point of this little anecdote being; at this time of year if you can get into the countryside, you will probably be able to either go scrumping if you're feeling naughty, or happen upon folk who have had a bumper crop of apples and are quite literally begging people to take them away! If this isn't possible however, you can buy cooking apples in most greengrocers or big supermarkets (important – they must be cooking apples, not eating ones).

To stew apples, simply put them in a pan with a little water – maybe an inch or two – cover, bring to the boil and then turn down to a very low heat until the apples are soft and can be stirred into a purée. Depending on personal taste, you can stew them with a small amount of brown sugar and/or some spices; good ones being cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg (warning – tread carefully with the last two as they are strong!) However, I usually prefer to just stew them on their own and then add these things when I'm cooking with the purée.

I am a big fan of porridge; for me there is no better morning fuel. Oats are what's known as a 'slow-release' carbohydrate so you feel full and energised steadily for a long period; usually the entire morning. Tasty variations other than this recipe include adding a chopped ripe banana as you cook it which then melts, or topping it with any kind of berries. You can make porridge in a microwave but I prefer to do it on a hob; it's much easier to monitor, especially if you're adding things to it gradually.

Serves one.

Ingredients –

- * 30g ordinary porridge oats – the small ones as opposed to 'jumbo', which are good for flapjacks but not so much for actual porridge. This will seem like a very small amount of oats when you weigh them out but they inflate when cooked and once everything else is added there will be so much of the dish you may even struggle to finish it!
- * Milk – whichever kind you prefer
- * A squeeze of lemon juice
- * Stewed apples – for this and all the below ingredients, just use as much as you want/need
- * Sultanas
- * Cinnamon
- * Ground almonds
- * Toasted flaked almonds (you can buy these ready-toasted or just toast them yourself on a baking tray in the oven or under the grill for a short amount of time)
- * Brown sugar to taste – optional.

Method –

Begin by putting the oats in a small, uncovered saucepan with about half a mug of milk. Bring to the boil and then turn down to a very low heat and add more milk. Stir until the mixture begins to resemble porridge, adding more milk gradually and making sure it doesn't stick to the pan. Add the stewed apples and sultanas; continuing to stir and add milk when necessary. Add the cinnamon, ground almonds and squeeze of lemon juice. Have a taste; if you like things quite sweet then add a very small amount of brown sugar, to taste. I do not find this necessary but some may. When you are satisfied with the mixture, take off the heat and serve topped with the toasted flaked almonds.



15

Good things happening soon

Thursday 1-Monday 12 October, Manchester Food and Drink Festival. Events at venues across Manchester, including St Ann's Square and Albert Square. Coincides with the 1st Manchester Whisky Festival, the Greater Manchester Ale Festival and the Chorlton Food and Drink Festival.

Friday October 2, Scrapbook, Kro Bar, Oxford Road. New indie-pop night with lollipops, cupcakes, facepainting and balloons.

Saturday October 3, Carefully Planned All-day, Saki Bar, Rusholme. Acts from Manchester and further afield; Ed Cottam, Tom Kerswill, Another Airport, Deaf to Van Gogh's Ear, Shana Tova, Beat the Radar, Air Castles, Pompeii, Chrik, Itch, plus Mat Riviere and Grace Denton collaboration.

Sunday October 4, Your Mama's Cookin', Oddest, Chorlton. Popular '50s themed rock 'n' roll night moves its spin-off bar sessions to Odd's new Chorlton venture. Free Charleston lessons. (monthly)

Victoria Baths open day, 12-4pm. Manchester's water palace throws its doors open with live music and guided tours. (monthly)

Loiterers Resistance Movement walk around Manchester (see www.nowhere-fest.blogspot.com). (monthly)

Life Drawing, Sand Bar, 4pm. Take your own paper and pencils, plus a pad to lean on. £3. (monthly)

Tuesday October 6, Fiery Furnaces, Night and Day. Brilliant American brother-sister bonkers pop duo.

Slow Club with Doris & the Jumpers, Moho Live. Heartwarming, ramshackle Sheffield indie with heart-melting Manchester lo-fi pop.

Friday October 9, Apoc-atopia, Castlefield Gallery. New exhibition starts, based on the aftermath of an economic apocalypse. (Until November 22.)

Saturday October 10, John Peel Night, Night & Day. Bands play in memory of John Peel, who died five years ago. Featuring Malcolm Middleton, Sky Larkin, The Loves, Sweet Bamboo. Compered by DJ Marc Riley. Money raised goes to charity.

Sunday October 11, Jonathan Richman, Deaf Institute. The icon of alternative rock plays an (unfortunately sold out) small show.

Mountain Goats, Ruby Lounge. Cult American indie band.

Monday October 12, The Slits, Deaf Institute. Influential female punks.

Wednesday October 14, Sic Alps w/ Ty Segall, Former Bullies, Brown Brogues, Irma Vep, The Corner, Fallowfield. Comfortable on a Tightrope presents, with Beat Unhappening DJs.

Thursday 15-Sunday 25 October, Manchester Literature Festival. Events across the city, including Simon Armitage in St Ann's Church (October 20), Rainy City Stories guided walk (October 20) and the Manchester Blog Awards (October 21).

Manchester Comedy Festival. Annual festival spread across various venues. Big names include Jimmy Carr.

Thursday October 15, Furthur, Star and Garter. Golden Lab's new alternative disco.

Friday October 16, Asparagus Next Left, Star and Garter. Classic indie disco with an emphasis on the '80s and '90s.

Wednesday October 21, Victoria Baths swimming club, Levenshulme Baths 7pm. (monthly)

No Age, Now Wave, Deaf Institute. LA punk with a retro, '80s tinge.

Thursday October 22, Alaska in Winter, AirCav, Gossamer Albatross, Nexus Arts Cafe. Electro-indie with support from Hereford's winged teenagers and folky Mancunians.

Saturday October 24, James Yorkston with Mary Hampton, David A Jaycock, Night & Day. Fife folkie and Fence Collective member James Yorkston makes some of the loveliest, yet most unassuming, music around.

Sunday October 25, Oxfam Takeover, Northern Quarter. Manchester bands and promoters takeover various Northern Quarter venues for charity. Acts include Peter Hook, Cats in Paris, Former Bullies and Waiters.

Thursday October 29, Danananakroyd, Academy 3. Noisy Glaswegians.

Friday October 30, Kissing Just for Practice, Star and Garter. Belle and Sebastian/ twee-pop disco with DJ Jamie.

Saturday October 31, Hey! Halloween with Efterklang, Deaf Institute. Orchestral Danish indie plus fancy dress contest.

Things that might be in the next issue: Manchester's lost palaces, feminism, recipes, photographs, illustration, things to make and do and more.