

Fresher's Week

The phenomenon of *Fresher's Week* entered my consciousness in the form of a leaflet innovatively entitled *Fresher's Fortnight* and offered an array of activities which intrigued and terrified me. As a mature student of the really quite ancient kind (41), I began to wonder if I was seriously expected to attend the *Silly Games Night (featuring Bar Bunjee)* or the *Rugby Club Pub Crawl* with follow-on disco.

Having heard of the legendary *Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll* culture peculiar to university life, I was severely tempted by an event called *Sex, Hugs and Chocolate Roll*, but unfortunately a nasty sense of advancing geriatrics temporarily overcame me at the last minute – plus the fact that I knew no-one I could go with. The loss of what must have been a truly mind expanding experience sadly remains with me, as throughout two complete years of life as a psychology undergraduate, I have experienced not even a hint of sex, hugs or chocolate roll (not inside university premises, anyway).

The *Sex and Drugs Wacky Theatre Group* likewise intrigued me – but surviving the Sixties has left me a legacy of being invariably jumpy at the mere mention of drugs. I do admit to popping a few of those nice little round white things as a last resort during the past two years when lecture-induced headaches were interfering with my will to live, but I don't think paracetamol really counts. I have to say that I was not at all tempted by the final social event of *Fresher's Fortnight – Mike Fab-gere 70s revival* – in fact, to this very day I am unsure whether Mike Fab-gere ever was actually revived.

Socialising aside, what did the more serious aspects of *Fresher's Week/Fortnight* offer? Introductory talks about deadlines, exams and counselling availability were really fun and it wasn't a bit stressful rushing around the campus with a plan of the university, becoming hopelessly lost and late for the next item on the agenda. Being given a plan of the Psychology Department helped, especially after finally realising that room numbers beginning with 1 were on the first floor and room numbers beginning with 2 were on the second floor. The art of loitering with apparent intent in corridors became second nature during that first week, although the art of queuing cheerfully for necessities such as coffee, registration, grant cheque, coffee, library card, coffee, student card, photocopy card, coffee, etc, was a little harder to achieve.

Notice-board awareness was a quickly acquired must. The importance of reading the right notice-board also revealed itself to me with startling clarity, after missing my first ever tutorial through reading the second year notice-board. Thankfully, I realised my mistake before actually turning up at a second year tutorial. Later, I was very relieved that my personal tutor accepted my apology and garbled explanation without even the twitch of an eyebrow. However my feelings towards him were not quite so positive when he proceeded to subject our tutorial group to one of those horrendous "I'm so-and-so and I'm scared witless" (or words to that effect) icebreaking situations. The resulting 'What have I let myself in for?' feeling was strengthened when he began to ask us questions such as, "What is 2 + 2?" and "Will the sun rise tomorrow morning?" However, the vagaries of inductive and deductive reasoning were explained and so mind expansion proper had begun...

Two years later, though, *Fresher's Week Fever* seems to have somehow metamorphosed into *Final Year Fatigue* – and just how much can a mind safely expand anyway?

This article won 3rd prize in *The Psychologist Students' Page Fresher's Week* competition.