

# Mirafiori Magazine

written by 3<sup>rd</sup> year Lingue students, Lettere e Filosofia

## Degree course reform

by Luna Proietti and Sara Tedesco

This year "La Sapienza" University, like other Italian universities, has begun a process of further transformation of its degree system to reflect the content and rules of Ministerial Decree DM 270/04.

Implementing the new rules has meant the introduction of a new academic regulation that will complement the one already in force.

In addition, there will be two "Manifesto degli studi", to regulate the courses activated according to the earlier DM 509/99 and those based on DM 270/04.

The new decree aims to rationalize university studies and reduce the fragmentation within degree courses. It includes greater university autonomy over the courses offered by each university.

Many courses, including "lingue e culture del mondo moderno", have now set limits on student numbers by means of an admission test. Degree courses also have a maximum number of exams (20 in total).

Each course of study establishes its educational objectives according to the "Dublin descriptors". These include goals related to knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, learning skill, making judgments, and communication skills.



## Contents

**Erasmus, scholarships and other experiences abroad:** this month four 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of *Lingue e Culture del Mondo Moderno* talk about their experiences in Paris, Dublin, Athens and London, respectively, and Luna Proietti interviews Carlo, who spent his 4<sup>th</sup> year of school in Seattle (pages 2-3)

**Points of view:** What do people know about tattoos? Should animals be used in medical experiments? Read what Federica Pittori and Oksana Hnatyk have to say (page 4)

**Discussion on language issues:** Ionica lordache provides an insight into some of the controversial issues raised by David Graddol in *English Next*, one of the books on this year's English 3 bibliography (page 5)

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**Nightlife Tips:** Jennifer Romeo suggests a way of combining fun with English language practice (page 8)

## Erasmus, scholarships, experiences abroad...

### Paris: from the boutiques to the nightclubs

by Ludovica Tranfaglia

What can I say about a city like Paris beyond the usual stereotype of a romantic city, of lights, perfumes and boutiques? It's superfluous to specify that my experience has been that of a young student with a strong dose of curiosity, not exactly a researcher.

Nevertheless, I've had the opportunity to observe, even if only for a few days, fragments of Parisian life: workers and students crowded in the metro, tourists heading off to the Eiffel Tower of the Champs-Élysées or young people in nightclubs, a bit drunk, seeking out new acquaintances.

I'd say that life in Paris is not all that different from life here in Rome, but it's a worthwhile trip for anyone who wants to get to know not only a country's monuments but also its culture.

### Scholarship in Athens

by Giulia Sinibaldi

Hi! I'm one of the very few students taking Modern Greek at La Sapienza. Last June I won a scholarship (thanks to my teacher who told me about it), which enabled me to study in Athens for 6 weeks. At first I wasn't very enthusiastic about being alone and communicating in a language I wasn't so good at... Yes, I was a little scared about that, but in the end it was one of the best experiences of my life. I was able to visit wonderful places, improve my Greek and most of all, I met lots of people from very different countries. Would you ever imagine that there are people studying Modern Greek in Egypt, or Russia, or Ukraine, or Brazil? So many different cultures, all sharing the same passion for the same language. It seems quite incredible to me. So if you study languages, any kind of language, and if you enjoy it, you really should try to have such an experience!!!



### Loving Dublin

by Chiara Petrilli

In the summer of 2003 I spent two weeks in Dublin to improve my English. But what I brought back home wasn't simply better pronunciation. While in Dublin, I felt emotions that I find difficult to describe.

It was probably thanks to the atmosphere I found in Temple Bar: it is promoted as "Dublin's cultural quarter" and has an exciting nightlife with its pubs, clubs and street artists.

Or maybe it was thanks to the curious popular folk song, like the sad Molly Malone: it is about a young fishmonger who plied her trade on the streets of Dublin. As the story goes, there was an historical Molly, hawker by-day and prostitute by-night. She is commemorated in a statue colloquially known as "the tart with a cart".

What about the Medieval Castles? I remember Malahide Castle well (not too far from Dublin). Visiting it was like travelling in time.

It's also amazing to visit The Guinness Storehouse (even though I don't like drinking beer!). I know it's difficult to convince you with so few words but I think everyone should visit Dublin at least once in their lives.

Dublin is welcoming, warm, multi-ethnic, colourful, modern, folkloristic. It's the perfect place for experiencing life as a young person. Believe me.

## ...and more experiences abroad

### London calling

by Stefano Monterosso

I decided to go to London for three reasons: a friend of mine has been living there since September; another friend was going to live there (he left with me), and the magic A.S. Roma was going to play Fulham at the awesome Craven Cottage stadium.

I stayed for ten days with my two friends in a house in Chalk Farm, zone 2, near Camden Town. I had a lot of fun, and actually I'm still a bit homesick for the house and the boys. Nightlife in London is terrific, every night there is something to do, and there is always a night bus to take you home.

The first night we went to Fabric, one of London's most famous clubs. It's on two floors, the crowd was hard-dancing and the music was amazing, the djs were Andy C and Dj Hype, with their blasting drum'n'bass sound. We paid £15, which in the end is a fair price. The only disappointment was at the entrance: everyone is stopped and searched by the bouncers. I found it a bit sad to be searched all over just to get in a club, but I suppose they have their good reasons.

Fabric is ten minutes' walk from the Farringdon tube station in the city centre. We also went to Matter, another club situated in the gigantic O2 arena. The Dj was John Digweed, one of the top djs of the progressive house scene. We paid £20. It was a perfect night, trippy music, trippy lights and cheerful people, but even there they stopped and searched us even more thoroughly. The O2 Arena is accessed directly from the North Greenwich tube station.

I don't want to bore you with football, but let me just say that equalising a match you were losing, at the last second of the very last minute, surrounded by 30,000 odd Englishmen who were mocking you until just a few minutes before... is priceless!

### A SCHOOL YEAR ABROAD!!

"I spent my fourth year of high school in Seattle (Washington U.S.) through a program of intercultural exchange run by Intercultura. Living entirely as an American teenager in the home of a family of stars and stripes, I attended the last year at a US high school. I always find it difficult to describe this unique experience, because I was quite young when I had this experience, and because it taught me so much besides fluency in English."

Marco, currently studying at the faculty of medicine at the Catholic University of Rome.

interviewed by LUNA PROIETTI

## Points of view

### What do people know about tattoos?



by **Federica Pittori**

Nowadays a lot of people show their tattoos, but probably none of them knows the original meaning of what they decided to draw on their skin.

Some ancient cultures, such as the Egyptians and the Romans, used tattoos as an “identity card” for each individual or as a “ceremony” to underline the passage to maturity, whereas other cultures, such as the Maori and the Japanese, developed their own tattoos with their symbols and their meanings and then they became the most famous tattoos all over the world. The Maori tattoos are also known as “tribal tattoos” because they were common in the native tribes of the Pacific Islands (Hawaii) and in New Zealand.

In Japan, tattoos are called IREZUMI (which means “to put black ink”) or HORIMONO (which means “to write something”). The most common Japanese drawings are dragons; cherry flowers, which are a symbol of human life; KARA-JISHI, which is a mythological animal and the KOI carp, which is a symbol of courage.

Obviously there are a lot of tattoo techniques, but the most common is the one used above all in the U.S.A. (known as the “western technique”). It entails the use of an electric machine with needles that dig into the skin and leave the ink 2 or 3 mm under it.

Young people don't usually want to have tattoos because they are fascinated by the origins or ancient meanings: they're interested in tattoos only because they're fashionable.

To support my hypothesis I interviewed some friends (about 20 people) and it emerged that 15 of us have a tattoo: only two have it as a symbol, while the others only because it's fashionable.

### Should animals be used in medical experiments?



by **Oksana Hnatyk**

Animals are often used in medical experiments, but some people care about them by protesting against this use, while others see no problem.

Using animals in medical experiments may speed up the process of inventing new things, such as a cure for cancer. What is more, animals do not have to be kept in bad conditions and their suffering can be limited.

However, there are other ways of testing new products. People can volunteer to take part in experiments when they want to earn some money. Some people think that it is much better than testing medicines on animals, because the reaction of human organisms may be different from the reaction of animals.

It seems clear... but do you know that during the second world war prisoners were coerced in to participating in testing? They did not willingly volunteer. The experiments resulted in death or permanent disability.

I asked a specialist in space medicine, Dr Lucani Enrico, to explain the process of medical experiments. His answer was: “These experiments are so called drug research studies with human volunteers that are conducted to ensure that a new medicine can be used safely. New drugs are first tested in the laboratory. But even sophisticated computers are unable to model interactions between molecules, cells, organs, making animal research necessary in many areas. Only if laboratory and animal testing demonstrate that a drug product is reasonably safe can it be tested on human volunteers”.

I would suggest that involving animals in such experiments be banned. We have to find another way of testing new drugs and conducting medical experiments.

## Discussion on language issues

### The importance of learning languages

by Ionica Iordache

We all know that languages nowadays play a very important role in our lives. It could add *essential* in many fields, such as the tourist industry, education, business, culture, scientific research and so on. There have also been some dramatic changes in the way that languages are taught and learned, and even if English remains the preferred language because it is so widespread, there are many languages that challenge the domination of English in some regions.

David Graddol, in a book you might have heard of entitled *English Next*, warns us not only about the transformations we should be aware of as students of languages but also regarding the future of English and with it the future of the world.

First of all, in many Asian countries, in Europe and in the USA, Mandarin has emerged as the new must-have language because of the rapidly growing economic importance of China, so there is a sense of urgency about the need to acquire it. On the other hand, countries such as India which have capitalised on their English language skills, are already discovering that they need more languages. Spanish is challenging English in some parts of the USA, where a number of towns have predominantly Spanish-speaking populations.

Secondly, English may have dominated computers and the internet in the early days of the technology, but lack of English is no longer the barrier it once was. While English isn't becoming any less important on the Internet, other languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish are becoming comparatively more important.

Another controversial aspect that is worth taking into consideration is this: the way English is taught should reflect the needs and aspirations of non-native speakers who use English to communicate with other non-natives. The target model of English as a lingua franca framework is not a native speaker but a fluent bilingual speaker, who retains a national identity in terms of accent and who also has the special skills required to negotiate understanding with another non-native speaker.

Of course, David Graddol underlines many other important phenomena in his book so if you are one of those who would like to know more, I suggest you take a look at it. Let me now conclude with the idea that the global position of English is now in the care of multilingual speakers and where English has led to competitive advantage, learners are now punished for failure.



## An Interactive Tale

by Aurora Mazzoni, Cinzia Bianco, Chiara Petrilli, Stefania Sorge, Ludovica Tranfaglia,...

It was an autumn evening. The first stars appeared at dusk while the blowing wind messed up Dr. Sam's hair. From the terrace of his laboratory he glanced with a melancholy air his town's degradation. Crime, poverty and intolerance tainted and destroyed what used to be a happy and prosperous land. Dr. Sam just couldn't believe all the time spent on his research would have led to these results.

Everything started with a brilliant idea: top secret research about time travel. Oxford University gave him the funds he needed after countless meetings during which Dr Sam presented his basic idea. Changing the molecular nature of a simple clock thus enabling its user to travel back or forward in time. A great idea. Extremely stimulating. Exactly what he needed after years and years devoted to teaching mathematics and chemistry at the University: every year the same syllabus, every year students with the same difficulties, their astonished faces each time he tried to go beyond the usual subjects. Quite different from the life he had dreamed for himself when he was a student like them. This nostalgia for the feeling he had lost was an inspiration for his research. And, beyond the fact that he himself thought he was doing all this work in the name of science, maybe there was one more feeling guiding him.

**He found himself thinking about his past yet again, suddenly realizing that he had to act: it was now 1950, but by going back in time he would be able to find her, Marianne, the woman he had lost when the country had been on the brink of war. All his friends tried to stop him: time travel was too dangerous. But he was still in love with her and, when the time machine was ready, he went back to 1940.**

*Once in the 40s, he went around looking for Marianne. He was sure. She was the right one, she was the woman he wanted to spend his entire life with. Those streets and those buildings reminded him of every moment spent with her: The park where they had met for the first time, the restaurant of their first date, the place where they had celebrated their first year together. And that house. When he saw it, a strange feeling arose and it was so overwhelming that he could hardly stand it. The walls of that house had seen their naked bodies joined in love. He could never forget the promise he had made to her:*

He started walking fast towards the building, he wanted to find her as soon as possible. He realized that he was no longer walking but running like a fugitive, but from what? His life? How could he explain his ageing appearance to her? If he told her about the time machine she would never believe his words. She would laugh outright, or think him mad. But it was too late now, he was at her door, ringing the bell.

Nobody came. He forced the door and let himself in. While he was wandering around Marianne's house lost in thought, he heard gunfire. Looking out of the window he couldn't believe his eyes. Seeing Marianne shooting at someone and searching for something near two dead bodies really made him jump in fright. From the street she saw him staring at her and before he could work out what was happening, she fired straight at him...

to be continued...

# Horoscope of the Month!

by Chiara Pietropaolo



## ARIES

Advice of the month: be careful, the stars are against you! The great strength that characterize you will be completely useless these days. If I were you, I'd remain in bed, shut in my room, like a vampire who hates light!

## TAURUS

You have to face a period of hard work: you'll be tired, worn out and your body will feel like it's broken into little pieces, but your usual patience will overcome this negative month!

## GEMINI

Twins all over the world, be happy because these days your body will be powerful and your mind will be very sharp. A considerable improvement in your finances will make your days even better.

## CANCER

Your mood will swing more than usual: sometimes bristly, sometimes sweet, but for most of the month you'll be unbearable! Calm down and be patient: quite soon you'll turn over a new leaf and you'll receive love and opportunities.

## LEO

Your huge ego will extend even more. Fame and glory are on the horizon. Love will grow stronger, but you should show a little more affection to your partner with small gifts. You'll shine like a diamond and you'll be centre stage even more than usual.

## VIRGO

A quiet month. Your body is at full strength; your healthy is pretty good, but you have to be careful about the thorny items... Watch out! You'll meet someone and receive some unofficial news.

## LIBRA

You are the luckiest sign of all! You are going to have a wonderful month, full of good experiences, love and work. Yes, you will have to work a lot, but in the end you will receive a great reward...!

## SCORPIO

Well, what can I say? You are more grumpy than usual because you are tired. This will be a hard month, in which you'll be fighting about nothing in particular with people who love you. This time your charm won't save you. If you want to triumph you'll have to work.

## SAGITTARIUS

You will experience a period full of enthusiasm! You will be strong at work thanks to your way of living life to the full. Last but not least, you are going to experience love full of romance, like a teen relationship!

## CAPRICORN

You will never be stricter than now: this is not a good month for you. My advice is: don't waste time in useless anxiety; focus on love: this will give you only happiness.

## AQUARIUS

Stars shine in your sign! You are going to feel great whatever you do. Are you sure that Luck is not your best friend?? Go out for a nice meal with your partner and enjoy!

## PISCES

You are just getting over a bad experience, but don't worry: your renaissance is coming soon! Be careful with your money, or you will remain without a penny (or a cent)!

## NIGHTLIFE TIPS...HOW TO ENJOY YOUR ROMAN NIGHTS



### Irish pubs in Rome: a place to practise your English

by Jennifer Romeo

Rome has lots of Irish-owned or Irish-themed pubs, although before coming to live here I had never heard of such places.

I decided to write a short article on pubs not because I am interested in advertising them but because I think they are good places to practise your English.

This is because you will usually find lots of people from abroad in them, especially English-speaking people. So it seems a good opportunity for us to go there both to enjoy ourselves and to try and speak English with people we don't know. I believe that we lack actual real-life experience in speaking English and this is the reason we find it difficult to develop our fluency.

There are plenty of pubs in Rome where we can have this kind of anglophone experience, such as The Scholars Lounge, The Druid's Den,

Mulligan's, The Fiddler's Elbow, Finnegan's, and The Abbey Theatre.

The Scholars Lounge is just around the corner from Piazza Venezia, in Via del Plebiscito.

The Druid's Den is located only a few minutes' walk from Termini Railway Station, down via Cavour in Via di San Martino ai Monti.

Mulligan's is situated just off the central Viale Trastevere, in Vicolo dei Cinque.

The Fiddler's Elbow in just ten minutes walk from the Colosseum, in Via dell'Olmata.

Finnegan's is on the corner of Via Leonina and Salita dei Borgia, just by Via Cavour;

The Abbey Theatre is located just a short walk from Piazza Navona, in Via del Governo Vecchio.

If you want my advice, these are the places you should go to. In any case, there's no harm in trying. It would no doubt be an enjoyable and entertaining experience too.

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#### BUDDING WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS!

*Are you interested in contributing material for our next issue? If so, get in touch with us now to tell us about what you have in mind.*

*Letters, articles and other material should be sent to the editors by email.*

*For help with language, please see your English teacher before sending your written work to us.*

*Please note that the deadline for issue no. 2 is Wednesday 18 November, 12.00.*