

The NUS Roundabout

Imperial College Union calls for another NUS referendum. This time it's whether to stay or to leave. It's up to you to decide, then cast your vote next month. See page 3

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News

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Elections results galore

This year's freshers get excited about student politics and begin their quest to take over ICU, College and the entire universe

Kadhim Shubber

Results for the recent Faculty and Union elections have been released with David Charles, Mark Mearing-Smith and Mark Chamberlain elected as Presidents of the RCSU, CGCU and ICSMSU respectively.

Voting was strongest in the ICSMSU Presidential election, most likely because it is a Sabbatical position. Mark Chamberlain, the only candidate, won with 454 votes. RCSU President David Charles, however, won with only 207 votes, less than the number of votes newly elected RCSU Vice-President Andreas Esau received.

In all, turnout and participation was high with few posts left unfilled. One notable exception is CGCU Mechanical Engineering Society; all of the posts available were uncontested with the exception of Departmental Representative which was won by Leo Tagg. This leaves MechSoc in the strange position of having a DepRep but no Treasurer or indeed Chair.

Two elections were particularly interesting in terms of the contest and the result. The post of RCSU Treasurer was contested by two first year students: Ravi Pall and Jacqueline Fok (the eventual winner). Both candidates played on Jacqueline Fok's surname in their campaign material. On her posters, Jacqueline Fok promised, "I won't Fok with your money" while Ravi Pall printed T-shirts featuring the slogan "I Fok harder and better."

The race for Council Chair saw the current RSM President, Danny Hill, defeated by newcomer Afonso Cam-



What a lovely bunch. Clockwise from top left: **Mark Chamberlain, Medic President; Mark Mearing-Smith, CGCU President; David Charles, RCSU President; and Afonso Campos, Council Chair**

pos by a convincing majority of 390 to 128 votes. During the election, Afonso Campos made use of the recently created rules that allow candidates to campaign on the record, by highlighting that Danny Hill had walked out of a recent Council meeting. Danny Hill and current RAG Chair Karandeep Dhanoa produced little or no campaign material in response. Danny Hill's campaign

may have suffered further because the majority of RSM members were absent during the voting period, due to various field trips around the country.

There was a large number of freshers running for positions, with 3 out of the 5 Central Union positions won by freshers. Hacks were not under-represented though, with current Deputy President Education & Welfare, Kirsty Patterson, and unsuccessful Sabbatical candidates John James and Matthew Taylor elected to positions within CGCU.

You can all now breathe a sigh of relief that this year's elections are all over (hopefully), but don't relax for too long; the NUS referendum is just round the corner.

Dalai Lama's Royal Albert Hall visit met with protests



Last Wednesday, the Dalai Lama attended the Royal Albert Hall to give a speech on 'Universal Responsibility in the Modern World'. Tibet's spiritual leader, who was in London for ten days, was greeted by two sets of protestors. The largest body (pictured above) shouted chants of "stop lying" and "give religious freedom," in protest of the Dalai Lama's denouncement of the Buddhist deity Dorje Shugden. A smaller group of protestors also gathered, to vocalise their support for the unification of China and Tibet

Summer Ball 2008 tickets running out

Dinner tickets for this year's ICU Summer Ball have now sold-out. Entertainments tickets for the Union's premier mash-up event are still available. To book, head to imperialcollegeunion.org

felix 1,405
Friday 30/5/08



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Printed by The Harmsworth Printing Ltd, 17 Brest Road, Derriford, Plymouth. Registered newspaper ISSN 1040-0711. Copyright © Felix 2008.

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STUPID
LOL



OFTEN
WEEK

Q: Should I stay or should I go now?

A: The choice is yours. After one year of NUS membership, the Union has called for another referendum

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

Last week, Imperial College Union (ICU) confirmed that a referendum on NUS (National Union of Students) membership will take place at the end of this term. The decision was confirmed after ICU Council voted almost unanimously for the referendum, with 24 committee members voting yes, one voting no, and the final person abstaining.

The referendum has been pencilled in for the last two weeks of term, taking place from 17th to 23rd June. The entire student body is eligible to vote and the question posed to them will be: "Should Imperial College Union disaffiliate from the NUS?" to which they must vote 'yes' or 'no'.

The last referendum was called only 18 months ago. At that time students were asked to consider if the Union should join the NUS or not. A slight majority of 53% favoured rejoining, leading to ICU reaffiliating for the fourth time in its long and protracted history with the NUS. But after a year of NUS membership fraught with farcical conferences and few tangible benefits to the main student populace, ICU has decided that spending £44,000 per year on membership is a waste of money.

Calls for a referendum began circulating soon after April's NUS Annual Conference 2008. Major reforms that the NUS had been striving for throughout this academic year were met with even fiercer opposition at the conference than before, leading to their rejection, much to ICU's distress. Ultimately, the prospect of undergoing another year of fruitless attempts at reformation has triggered this year's referendum. The Union is now pressing to leave the NUS before the end of term, otherwise it will have to shell out another £44,000 for a further year of affiliation.

ICU has been criticised for its tim-



Left, current ICU President, Steve Brown gives a speech during April's NUS Annual Conference 2008. With 25 more votes in favour of some major reformations, ICU probably wouldn't be calling for a referendum. Right, the front cover of Felix when the result of last year's referendum was announced. John Collins (second from left) "loses his cool" as Steve Brown (far right) "expresses his dissatisfaction." My, how it's all changed...

ing of the referendum by last year's President, John Collins, who told Felix that although he understands the "rationale" behind the review, he doesn't "think the timing of the vote is particularly fair."

Indeed, the timing of the voting period is key to this year's referendum. 15% of the student body (approximately 1,800) is required to vote for the referendum to be valid, but with many students still undergoing exams, there are fears within the Union that the minimum number of voters might not be obtained, regardless of the overall result. Mr Collins is quick to point this out stating that: "Voter turnout in the summer term has historically been very poor so I would be surprised

if more than a few hundred students vote."

To put the situation in context, 1,800 votes is on a par with the very high turnout in last term's Sabbatical elections, however, the target was easily surpassed in the previous NUS referendum during Autumn 2006 when over 4,000 students voted.

This year's Sabbatical Officers have a drastically different stance on the NUS compared to their counterparts of last year. Deputy President Education & Welfare (DPEW), Kirsty Patterson, will be fronting the disaffiliation campaign, aided by current President, Steve Brown, who led last year's anti-NUS campaign and is famed for slating the institution as a "comedy sideshow."



Left to right: Jon Matthews (Returning Officer) announces the result; John Collins (Union President and Yes supporter) loses his cool; Gemma Tumelty (NUS President) letting those back at NUS HQ know the result; Alex Guite (leader of the Yes campaign) embraces Ms Tumelty; and Stephen Brown, vocal No campaigner, expresses his dissatisfaction.

body Sykes numbers, this means more than 4,000 students voted. John Collins, Union President, said he was "delighted (with) what has become the largest union democratic exercise ever to take place at Imperial". Collins also had words of praise for both camps: "I would like to thank both Alex Guite and Steve Brown for their leadership and the success of the referendum. The Union has never affiliated to the NUS for more than 12 months."

Imperial College to support Council Tax exemption for writing-up PhD students

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

Imperial College has said that it will "support" the notion that PhD students should be exempt from paying Council Tax once they enter the writing-up phase of their doctorate. The approval came this week during a presentation to College's Strategic Education Committee (SEC) made by Officers from the Union.

Currently, Imperial's PhD students are defined as 'full-time' for the first three years of their doctorate. Most students are then granted 'writing-up' status for six months whilst they complete their thesis; however, they lose various privileges such as access to the library, swipe card access around campus and full-time status. The latter means they are also required to pay Council Tax.

The situation varies throughout the country, with different rules for students depending on the institution they attend. Ultimately, the privileges given to a writing-up student are decided by their university, and over the com-



College will revise its definition of a writing-up student

ing months Imperial's academic staff will be revising their own criteria. It's currently unclear the extent to which writing-up postgraduates at Imperial will be classed as full-time students, since some of the existing restrictions placed upon them will likely remain. However, those students can expect to be exempt from paying Council Tax when the classification of a writing-up student is eventually redefined and put into effect.

"We now have the committee's [SEC] support," commented Imperial College

Union President, Steve Brown, "and hopefully the revisions will be in place for the next academic year."

Seemingly, the revisions are very unlikely to help students, such as Matthew Yong (issue 1,404), who are currently battling with their local Councils over unpaid Council Tax. If Mr Yong was declared a full-time student during his writing-up period, it would potentially pave the way for numerous other ex-postgraduates to claim Council Tax exemption for the duration of their writing-up phases.

Poorest students restricted to six hours work per week?

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

Students who receive a bursary should be working no longer than six hours per week, that's according to regulations imposed by College's Payroll department. The restriction has been in place for many years now, though it was seemingly dormant.

Recently, however, College has begun to impose the regulations more stringently; specifically when Payroll told Deputy President Finance & Services (DPFS), Chris Larvin, that the Union shouldn't be paying numerous members of their casual staff (ie: bar staff and stewards) who are exceeding the limit.

Study Support Bursaries are sums of money awarded to Home students every year, and the amount depends on their family's income. They range from £50 to £3,000, and are intended to cover "maintenance and study related costs."

The exact reason why the six hour working restriction exists is "uncertain" according to Mr Larvin, which raises the question of why they are even nec-

essary in the first place.

Bursaries are intended to be given to the poorest undergraduates, and despite student loans being inflated for those based in London, many students still find it very difficult to live off just their loan and bursary. Potentially, this leaves students affected by the six hour working limit left in a quandary where they can't afford not to work, but if they do, they will be violating the Bursary contact.

It's believed that many students are unknowingly breaching this rule, however, as long as they are working fewer than 48 hours per week, they are not breaking the law.

There are further complications when students who do not receive a bursary are involved, since they can work in excess of 20 hours per week, depending on visa requirements; something Mr Larvin feels is a "double standard" in terms of students' welfare.

Presently, the Deputy President Education & Welfare, Kirsty Patterson, is in communication with College staff and hopes the issues will be ironed out soon.

The world beyond College walls...

Mass Flooding

Colombia

Flooding has left over 100,000 people homeless in Colombia after weeks of rain finally caused the country's principal river to break its banks. 80% of the country is severely affected by the disaster, with villages isolated, roads no longer navigable, and thousands of houses under water. Current Red Cross stocks are unlikely to last the week, and the rain is not expected to stop any time soon. The combination of appalling weather, lack of emergency supplies and poor hygiene are devastating the country, where a state of national emergency may soon be called.



Amnesty Report

England

Amnesty International's annual report was released earlier this week, reporting on human rights legislation and abuses around the world. This is the organization's sixtieth such report, and is as outspoken as it has ever been, referring to a world 'riven by inequality, scarred by discrimination and distorted by political repression.' The US, China and Zimbabwe all pass under the microscope, with numerous criticisms of Guantanamo Bay, ethnic persecution in China, and the 'deplorable conditions' in Zimbabwe. The 398 page report, as always, compares figures on issues such as torture, unfair trials and freedom of speech in countries around the world, and is available online.



‘Ogre of the Ardennes’

France

A French court has sentenced Michel Fourniret to life imprisonment for the murder of seven girls and young women between 1987 and 2001. Fourniret's wife, Monique Olivier, has been awarded a similar sentence for complicity in the murders, the largest serial killing spree in recent French history. Known as the 'Ogre of the Ardennes', Fourniret would get the unsuspecting women into his car, where his wife's presence would foster a feeling of security. After being kidnapped, the girls were usually raped by Fourniret, who would later dump their body somewhere in the area. The man was finally arrested in 2003 while attempting to kidnap a 13-year old Belgian girl. Although Fourniret has confessed to most of the murders, he has been markedly uncooperative in the court's proceedings.



Summit Held

China

Last week's election of Ma ying-jeou as President of Taiwan bodes well for an easing of tensions between Taiwan and China. Significantly less independence-minded than his predecessor, relations with the mainland are set to improve dramatically under his leadership. This was made particularly obvious this week, when the head of Taiwan's ruling party (the nationalist Kuomintang) met Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing's 'Great Hall of the People'. This is the highest-level encounter between the two parties since the split in 1949, and the second such major meeting arranged by the Kuomintang.

Gilead Amit

It's a comparatively upbeat double page this time round, with murderers being convicted, peace summits being held, monarchies being dissolved and the occasional election taking place. The only real cloud over the general festivities is the continued flooding in Colombia, which has recently taken a significant turn for the worse. Oh well; we couldn't really take our news seriously unless someone somewhere was suffering.

But just look at what's happening in Nepal – a country with regions compared by some to a Dark Age Europe. A dictatorial monarchy was first relieved of all power, and has now been abolished. Celebrations in the street, no reported violence; a new republic has peacefully been brought into the world. It's a touching sight.

The former Marxist dictator of Ethiopia, who has been living in comfort chez Mugabe for the past seventeen years, has just been awarded the death sentence in absentia. I find it deeply unsettling that the nightmarish rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam is so little is mentioned in the Western world. Still, we've got better, right? We would know and care more if people were being murdered in Africa today.

On a bittersweet note, Amnesty International has published its annual report. The world is a place where terrible things can still happen, but fortunately fewer pass unnoticed. I suggest you at least read a summary of AI's report; I'm not their biggest fan, but they have a lot of important things to say.

Ethiopian Dictator

Ethiopia

Mengistu Haile Mariam, Ethiopia's former President, has been sentenced to death in absentia by a court in his home country. Mengistu was forced to leave Ethiopia in 1991, ending a 17-year term described as employing 'one of the most systematic uses of mass murder by a state ever witnessed in Africa'. The 'Red Terror' of 1977-8 is believed to be the seventh worst genocide in human history, killing hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. Mengistu has since been living in Zimbabwe, and is unlikely to be extradited while Mugabe remains in power.



New Speaker

Iran

Former nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani has recently been elected as the speaker of the Iranian parliament. The post, to which Mr. Larijani was elected by a large majority, effectively makes him the leader of the opposition to current President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Speculation indicates that Larijani may prove a welcome alternative to the current regime, providing a more pragmatic stance on economics, combined with the same popular conservatism. Larijani's pragmatism has not endeared him to the government, however, as his preference for practicality over ideology led to greater collaboration with the IAEA and helped end the crisis over captured British sailors in 2007. This mindset contributed to his losing his job as chief nuclear negotiator. His return as one of the most powerful figures in Iran, with the support of kingmaker Ayatollah Khomeini, may well allow him to provide a challenge to the presidency in the 2009 elections.,



New Republic

Nepal

After more than two centuries of existence, Nepal's monarchy has been abolished by the newly-elected national assembly. King Gyanendra famously came to power in tragic circumstances in 2001 after his nephew's drunken murder of most of the royal family. He went on to reign for five years as head of government before being forced to return power to parliament in 2006. Since then, the ancient monarchy has held a purely ceremonial status in Nepal, a status no longer accorded it. Under the new legislation, the entire royal family must leave the palace within 15 days, though they will be allowed to remain in the country.



Comment, Opinion & Letters

Let us know your views: comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Letters may be edited for length and grammar purposes
Views on these pages are not representative of Felix



A. Geek

/// We get it – less trees, more pollution. We all watched Captain Planet, we don't need to see it animated ///

A repetitive truth

I don't know how many of you grabbed the celebrity whine-fest that was Channel 4's *11th Hour* last week, but if you did you might be interested to know that I'm hosting a group counselling session in the JCR this coming Tuesday to try and recover from it.

Although I've envisaged television shows combining the concepts of Leonardo DiCaprio and loss of human life before, the producers of this show didn't combine the two ideas as I might have, presumably for legal reasons. What results is a kind of whiny, watery program that's a bit like *An Inconvenient Truth*, but with a friendlier look on its face. Like being told you've got an incurable disease, but by Emma Thompson.

The programme probably could've been made by anyone who's picked up a copy of *The Independent* recently, but that's not the point – I associate MS Powerpoint with global warming so strongly now, that whenever someone shows me a pie chart I immediately strip down to my hemp underpants. The point is that I can't think of a single reason to broadcast a show like *11th Hour* anymore, because the message it had for us boiled down to this – the world is in trouble, but there's still time.

Well, that's all very well, but the world and its solar panel knows about global warming these days. Sure, there are some who refuse to accept it in public, or downplay its significance, but there isn't a single person who doesn't see the processes in effect. The naysayers are just outward deniers – as with me, I know that Boris is mayor, I just feel better if I whisper to myself that it's not

true.

What I suspect was the real reason behind it was to keep pressure on the people mentally. There's a widespread belief that if you stop bellowing a warning at people they will forget it, which is why we still have "Kill Your Speed", "Don't Drink And Drive" and "Half-Price Sale Now On At DFS" despite the fact that we know it all by heart already.

However, I'm of the opinion that this has the opposite effect. Global Warming is something of a unique problem – similar in structure to voter apathy, it requires individual involvement on a large scale. Whisper the message in people's ears too often, and they switch off the recording equipment. The treadmill is still running, but the seventy year-old with a weekend gym pass is now firmly embedded into the wall.

It's made even worse by the "we can still save the day, if we act now" subtext, because act now has been the mantra for two decades, and the fact that the situation is still being marketed as reversible is causing a lot of people to switch off.

People and business are changing. They may be changing too slowly according to most studies, but the fact that they're acting at all suggests that now is the time to stop lecturing and start the practical work.

Programmes about real-life conservation, green practices and how-to's would do a lot better than trawling out the same carbon dioxide cycle diagram all over again. We get it now – less trees, more pollution. We all watched Captain Planet, we don't need to see it animated.

I have no doubt that we'll see more



Leonardo DiCaprio staring out the camera in *11th Hour*

of these shows this year and further on. The combination of celebrity with a Panorama-like taste for hysteria is a good mix for the media outlets, and for all I know it may be the only way to get the topic shown on American TV at

all. But I'm left with a nagging feeling that we'll look back in ten years' time and decide that the real reason things progressed so slowly is because we spent too much time debating, and not enough time acting.



Michael Cook

I guess there's a lesson here for us all

Humanity has some curious constants about it. Even after thousands of years we still enjoy urinating on the little guy when we can, and most of us are following our ancestors in front of crucifixes and prayer mats each week and day. It also seems that the thirst for two-way backscratching hasn't lessened since the times of empire-building loons either, if the latest hijinks in Burma are anything to go by.

Reports from news services and the conference in Rangoon suggest that human compassion in the modern day could come with a pricetag – help to the cyclone-devastated population of Burma could be restricted based upon the government's motions towards open and free democracy.

No-one could claim that Burma's military junta are anywhere near the top of the global sanity rankings, and their response to protests last year are still fresh in many people's minds. Nevertheless, the idea of holding a nation to ransom for the glory of democracy seems slightly bitter tasting, given the initial rush to help the population who seem to be suffering terribly.

For me, it strangely brings back memories of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Over time, everyone accepted that



The Burmese government's refusal to accept international aid has left hundreds of thousands homeless after Cyclone Nargis

there simply were no weapons of mass destruction within the borders. But those who still wanted to support the war quickly found new justification. Most often, this proved to be something along the lines of "Iraq is better off without a dictatorial ruler." And while twenty-four hour news channels were happy to prove this at first, it

quickly became evident that this wasn't the case. Look at Iraq now, and even through the media's eyes it's a sad story. What little stability is present there is not enough to rebuild a nation, and elsewhere there is chaos.

The West always presumes to know better, and that's understandable. We invented the Computer, the Ameri-

can Dream and the Teabag. Naturally, we feel that we know where the world should be heading. Many postgrads at Imperial are working on this very principle – that faraway countries are doing it wrong, and we can do it better, and here's how.

It's a policy that overstretches infrastructures at home, fuels suspicion of Western culture, and damages the countries in question by stop-starting their way of life. That's not to say Imperial's work is second-rate or damaging, but there are questions to be asked when considering intervention at this high political level.

If we make these bold demands of Burma, they will almost certainly be rejected. And then what? Either we lose face on the international scene by giving in to a police state, or millions die. Alternatively, we suck it up, do the humanitarian thing, and give aid to people in need.

I'm not a particularly compassionate person when it comes to international politics, but I do think that if any of the world's major problems are to be solved, then countries need to co-operate without an agenda. Britain's response has shown that we're still as petty as the states we oppose – and the time for pride swallowing is running out.

/// The West always presumes to know better ///



Caz Knight

Revolutionaries wanted

All power to the imagination! 1968 and its legacies: since April 10, and until 10 June, London has been celebrating a 'season' of cinema, talks, events, visual art, literature and music which has commemorated the cultural, political and social protests of that significant year. Forty years later, the season strives to place the lessons of 1968 in today's context; how relevant are the struggles and ideals of that swinging decade in the era of iPods, iPhones and i-don't-give-a-shit attitudes. I am betting the majority of "young people" will not have the faintest clue what is meant by 1968 and they would be forgiven for their ignorance.

The term itself is rather ambiguous given the plethora of events of every nature that occurred in those 366 days (for it was a leap year). 1968 has become symbolic with the plight of the people, protests and attempts at revolution which sprung up throughout the world, sweeping the US, France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Mexico and Brazil; whilst Britain remained alarmingly quiet throughout this time: perhaps the hangover from winning the World Cup in 1966 had not yet abated?!

1946 to 1964 saw the birth of the baby-boom generation following the war years and so the 'youthful population' changed from 11.5% in 1958 to 17.2%

in 1978 causing a huge rise in university students by the late sixties. The change to the university demographic, notably the rise in percentage of women and black students, added fuel to the already fiery climate in campuses across the globe. Equal rights for all, free love, sexual liberation (something this campus should start campaigning for), an end to an unpopular and failing war, changes to the higher education system were things wanted by the 'soixante-huitards'; many things today's students take for granted. Rudi Dutschke at the Frei Universität in Berlin wanted war against capitalism via "upheaval in centres of imperialism". Courses sprung up in American universities with names such as 'Radical Perspectives on Social Change' and groups such as the Workers-Student Alliance emerged with a very Marxist flavour.

Humanity's climate was perhaps best summed up in Germaine Greer's book *The Female Eunuch*, where she wrote: "it may be possible to leap the steps of revolution and arrive somehow at liberty and communism without strategy

or revolutionary discipline." This is what the students wanted. A revolution, but the urge to party and have sex was stronger. The human condition is one of pleasure seeking and has been since Caligula's rampant hedonism in ancient Rome to today's unruly binge drinkers. (But let us not for a second put the two on equal footing!).

So why is it that today, and indeed in 1960s Britain, there is a lack of revolutionary zeal amongst the youth? Is it the British condition to be more passive than our Yankee counterparts? Do previous British 'philosophies' such as "musn't grumble" and "know your station" infer an attitude of putting up with things, or is it laziness?

One of my qualms is when British people complain about immigrants stealing 'their' jobs: the jobs are there, it is up to *you* to go and get them!

Maybe this attitude has also hindered a revolution among the people: as a nation we (I hesitate in using the term 'we') just cannot be bothered.

There certainly is a lot worth fighting for and fighting against. Conserv-

ing the planet, for example. Climate change or not, isn't saving Earth's beauty just cause enough? I shudder at the thought of a planet in a thousand years with nothing but man-made edifices. Another thing I feel very strongly about is the sheer volume of youth violence in this city. Who brought these children up to harbour such resentment and, dare I say it, evil? Or do they have no responsibility for their actions and are simply a product of their environment? The 'Nature Vs. Nurture' argument goes on. The main administrative building at Harvard was renamed 'Che Guevara Hall' in April 1969. He was a revolutionary and is still revered today. However great he was/is, surely it is time for our own revolutionaries from this millennia?

Perhaps this is too much to ask with many able-bodied people coerced into inertia by the Internet; it seems we are spellbound by our screens. Or maybe it is the fact that it has all been done and we fear the prospect of "unoriginality".

This summer's Secret Garden Party has the theme "Come the Revolution", exploring those who have affected our paths and inviting all attending to create their own temporary revolution within the Garden.

The tents in Parliament Square have lost all their potency; it is time for a political shake up of this stagnating government.

Viva la Revolución!



/// The human condition is one of pleasure seeking and rampant hedonism ///

The Guardian London Graduate Fair

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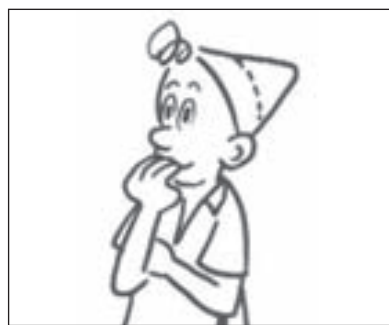
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Gilead Amit

// Do we still need an anachronous equal rights movement in today's enlightened society? Yes, I believe so //

Feminism – are we right to laugh?

As I write this, it occurs to me that I'm very much out-on-a-limbing myself. I'm far from being an expert on issues of gender – even less of an expert on issues of sex, might I add facetiously – and God knows I lack the necessary qualifications to discuss feminism from the right side of the playing field. Nevertheless, I like to think of myself as an intelligent, open-minded male member of society, and I believe that gives me some right to deal with a topic that affects us all mentally, morally, emotionally and sociologically.

In my limited personal experience, I've heard a great deal of exasperated denunciation of feminism. Both men and women of my generation seem fed up of hearing provocative talk of equal opportunities and glass ceilings. I don't doubt that representatives of other generations feel the same way; I just imagine they feel less comfortable saying so. When pressed, however, the majority of people admit that the fundamental message of equality is a valid one. What they object to is the 'unnecessary extremism'. Extremism in the way people feel the message is being rammed down their throats, and unnecessary in that people believe the main goal of feminism has been granted, and that the persistence of the movement itself is a redundant left-over from a more oppressive period.

As a result, the obvious questions pour forth: is there any more work left to do? Does our society need to get any better? Do we still need an anachronous equal rights movement in today's enlightened society? These questions are a little blunt for me. I do not have the statistics or, as I never tire of telling you, the personal experience to say if today's society is an equal one. But, I hasten to add, I doubt it. I am as certain as I can be without bothering to do serious research that there is still a long way to go for practical equality to be reached. In any case, that's not the area that interests me. What interests me is if such practical equality is even possible, let alone within our reach.



Sexism: Germaine Greer thinks it's naughty

There is no escaping the fact that the differences between the genders are and always have been an intrinsic part of our society. Whether it be in our choice of pronouns, our perception of a family's principal breadwinner, or the choice of careers one feels comfortable in pursuing, the weight of historical prejudice inevitably piles up on our shoulders.

Take a look around you, if you happen to be at College, and work out the female:male ratio. If it's greater than 1:2 I'm sure that somebody will be happy to pay ready cash to know where you're sitting. Those of us who are aware of the gender bias at Imperial are willing to make light of it, but it nonetheless exists – and more significantly, it's not considered surprising.

Society has come to accept the differences between men and women, and extrapolates what it believes to be necessary differences in their corresponding lifestyles. The physical and emotional rollercoaster of pregnancy remains the defining element in the imbalance, and helps to explain away almost all of the differences in the way the genders are treated. But does it still have to be that way? Medical alternatives to in utero aside, there are elements of the male perception of women that rest uneasy.

The use of gender-inclusive nouns is

still sometimes seen as a target of ridicule: another useless invention of the political correctness squad. It seems to me that such critics are missing the point. The evolution of our language explains away its inherent chauvinism, but it doesn't do anything to justify it. Half of the users of our language – a more educated half, by recent figures – are female. Half of the users of our language are made to feel as though they are not represented by it. Some women have no objection, that's fine, but they are more than entitled to have one. A language that refers to the male of our species by the same word as used to describe the collective, that treats officials as masculine as a matter of course, does nothing to advance ideas of equality. No tremendous fuss need be made over this topic anymore: what remains the key issue is what people think and not what they say. If a man talks about "policemen" and "chairmen", the only real objection to have is if it does not occur to him that a woman could fulfil those roles with as much success as a man could. Precision of speech is no indicator of precision of thought, and a sanitized tongue is likely to be the most in need of cleaning.

This battle can be said to be won, for even if the linguistic bias remains, the motivation for it is disappearing. The same enlightened spirit that purged

our dictionary pages of "jewling" and "gypping" as synonyms for theft will gnaw at our consciences as much for "Man" and "Mankind". But what about our thoughts? What about our perceptions and preferences? Are they inherently sexist as well? Yes, I believe so. Centuries of art, literature and cinema influence our reactions in every conceivable way, and that certainly applies to questions of gender. Our image of family life, to take an obvious example, is fraught with stereotypes – roles we naturally attribute to either gender. While it is now perfectly acceptable for a woman to be a major earner in any household, the idea of her being the principal breadwinner is uncomfortable for some. In addition to which, who takes care of the children? Who takes care of the household? Should the wife be the one who prepares the meals? The more questions I ask, the more inconsistencies I perceive in my knee-jerk responses.

We do think in a gender-based way, which is perfectly acceptable. We should not, however, allow this to lead us to irrational conclusions based on non-existent differences. Yes, it is difficult – both difficult and uncomfortable – to shake off some of these more resilient stereotypes. Much as our language risked becoming more burdensome with the partial elimination of gender, our society seems ready to fall apart at the seams if we reject the traditional male/female roles. Nevertheless; apart from the theoretical moral considerations, it is only possible to achieve real balance if the scales undergo recalibration.

And I have hope in the recalibration process. The prejudices of generations unfamiliar with the concept of women in charge have faded to an astounding degree. By continuous exposure to capable women, fictional and real, we no longer find it unusual for women to be accomplished at things previously the prerogative of men. If we change the paradigm enough in our lifetime, then future generations will, in their turn, grow up without even the most persistent of our cultural hang-ups.



Jellybean

A lesson from Norman

For the price you pay, you half expect Sainsbury's basic onions not to be onions at all, so it brings some solace when you need a whole box of Kleenex just to stay the tears generated when making a simple curry. Of course the peeling and slicing operation will take until next Tuesday because they are so darn small, but hey, you saved a good 30p. (Incidentally, in case you are the budget type you might be interested to hear that you can get an entire jar of Basics curry for a mere 5 English pence. Don't ask me how

that works out in terms of profit generation, just keep your will up to date and roll with it.) I have recently grown emotionally attached to a Sainsbury's basic onion on a less superficial level; whilst Norman has not made me cry, I have experienced perhaps a glimpse of some of the joys of parenthood in watching him grow. I would describe the feeling as one akin to the satisfaction of taking in an abandoned puppy. Left to die in a cupboard with the rest of his litter Norman stood little chance before I came along.

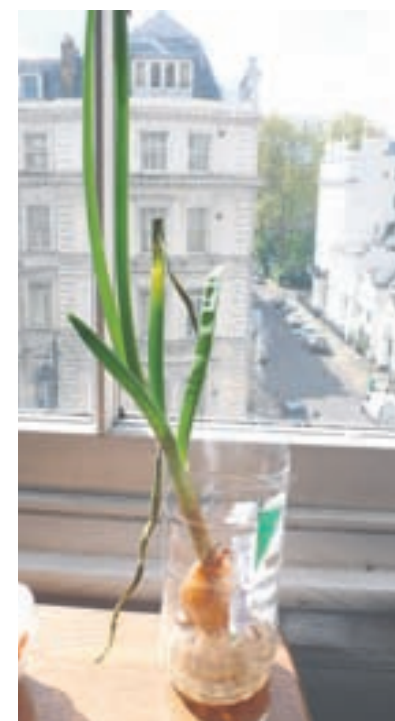
"Who put the onions here? We never put them here, we don't even use this cupboard. Woah! Look at them growing... wait... what does an onion plant look like?" Google could easily have answered me and Norman may never have been, but I was determined to find out the hard way. I took him in, gave him a place to sleep, even bought flower food for him at one stage. It was an emotional roller coaster as he struggled to grow up and fulfill his dreams. But yes, Basics onions can grow long lush green leaves. They can escape their upbringing and be who they were made to be if you just give

them the chance. The cheapness and GM-ness of them doesn't take away the fact that amazingly they are still living and still more complex than anything that mankind has managed to make. If Apple made an onion, or even for that matter an apple, you would have to sell off both your kidneys and get a mortgage to get hold of one. People would finally stop choosing to deck out their cars in white, black and chrome so that they look like iPods but would take to wrapping them in layers of brown paper. Stylish.

So Norman is a success story from humble beginnings, a role-model for many of us. His old life was somewhat analogous to the lives of IC bioengineers, who despite having 'bio' in their name have dwelt until now in perhaps the most lifeless and dark pit on campus; the MechEng basement. Even you my friends, have a future. Don't let your surroundings define you. Of course the same goes to the CivEng's, who are forced to study in the least architecturally inspiring building owned by Imperial. That said, I'm afraid even the national phone book is against you. See Exhibit A.



Exhibit A



Say hello to Norman, nurtured from poor health and now exuberant with life

WANTED: INVENTOR

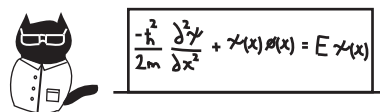
Prize: \$200,000

You are an Arab Student
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Science

Science Editor – Ed Henley

science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Accidents will happen: serendipity versus safety

Chemistry provides many examples of involuntary self-experimentation. But this doesn't always lead to the next wunder-compound: **Andrew Turley** explores the flip side of finding unlooked-for formulae

Imagine the following scenario. You are a diligent young research chemist (they do exist) working alone in the lab late one night. Glancing at the clock you decide you've done enough for the day so you make some final notes in your lab book, put away the chemicals and wash up the dirty glassware.

As you walk towards the door you peel off the latex gloves you are wearing, being careful to roll them inside each other more out of habit than any conviction it helps with safety. Then you take off your safety specs and your lab coat, but in doing so you notice something oily on your fingertips.

Casually inspecting your lab coat you discover a small but unfamiliar stain. A quiet pang of anxiety gives you cause to consider the many compounds used since the morning but this reflective mood passes quickly and after washing your hands a little more carefully than usual the incident is forgotten.

What happens next? Probably nothing – the oily compound is most likely nothing more than a little vacuum grease you think, transferred to your lab coat whilst you fiddled with the line. But, small though it may be, there is a chance it is something more significant.

A few weeks ago Albert Hofmann, the Swiss chemist who first synthesised LSD, died at the grand old age of 102. He famously discovered the psychotropic effects of the drug by accident, after getting some on his fingertips – it passed through his skin and into his blood. His discovery brought him widespread acclaim as 'the father

of LSD' and a highly successful career as a research chemist during which he published over 100 scientific articles before his retirement in 1971.

Such stories of serendipity are common in science and highlight something fundamental about the nature of scientific discovery and progress. Many have become extremely well-known even outside the scientific community and have acquired an almost mythical status. Everyone knows, for instance, the story of the apple which fell on Newton's head and inspired his musings on gravity, even though it seems doubtful the event actually happened. Penicillin, x-rays and the smallpox vaccine, to name but a few, all provide further examples of discoveries made by accident. Together, these stories form a kind of scientific folklore in which serendipity correlates with fame and fortune.

But the Hofmann story has one aspect that sets it apart: involuntary self-experimentation. This type of serendipitous misadventure is not new and seems most common in chemistry. The sweet taste of saccharin, for instance, was discovered by a young chemist who simply failed to wash his hands before eating lunch. Constantine Fahlberg had been working on coal tar derivatives at Johns Hopkins University when in 1879 his carelessness led to success. After quickly patenting the compound he went on to reap considerable financial rewards.

Falberg and Hofmann both benefited from their mistakes, but others have not been so fortunate. In 1996 Karen Wetterhahn, a chemistry professor

at Dartmouth College, died several months after spilling a few drops of dimethylmercury on her gloved hand. The compound permeated the latex barrier and reached her skin, where, as in the case of Hofmann, it entered her blood. But unlike Hofmann's, Wetterhahn's story ended in terrifying tragedy. She deteriorated over several weeks experiencing nausea, weight loss, loss of balance, and slurred speech before finally falling into a coma and dying of mercury poisoning aged 48.

The remarkable similarities between the stories of Hofmann and Wetterhahn – both researchers who were completely unaware they had ingested the compounds under investigation until they started experiencing symptoms – contrasted with their startling different outcomes highlights the capricious nature of accidental discovery in chemistry.

It is often said that chemistry does not warrant its reputation for being the most hazardous of sciences – such superstition harks back to a bygone era. Whether or not this is true, the imperfect nature of any safety precaution means accidents will occur from time to time – it is the nature of the beast, however well the risks are managed. But we should be wary of allowing beneficial accidents, such as Hofmann's, to slip surreptitiously into our collective conception of what science involves in practice.

Bedtime stories of serendipity are fine for captivating young minds with the thrill of discovery, but when safety is compromised the distinction should be clear.



What's up his sleeves? Well, hopefully not the contents of that test-tube in a second: no telling what that might do...

When a national animal becomes a public enemy: Oz's kangaroo culling

Mico Tatalovic
Incoming Science Editor

Three times more numerous than the human inhabitants of the Australian capital, Canberra, kangaroos are now being culled by the Ministry of Defence. Eastern grey kangaroos, *Macropus giganteus*, have provoked the authorities with their overgrazing of Canberra's outskirts, leaving no grass for the other wild species which live there.

These species include the endangered golden sun moth, *Synemon plana*, and the grassland earless dragon, *Tympanocryptis pinguicollis*, a tiny lizard once thought to be extinct. Overgrazing by large numbers of kangaroos exacerbates the effects of droughts in Australia and diminishes numbers of other animals, especially invertebrates, say researchers from the Institute for Applied Ecology at the University of Canberra and from Leipzig's Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research.

Human settlement and agriculture in the last 200 years led to fragmentation of natural grassland habitats and endangering of this fragile ecosystem, yet kangaroos adapted to this change better than other animals. With their main natural predator – dingoes – absent their populations go unchecked. Kangaroos that would once die from droughts now find waterholes installed for cattle and thrive in this human-al-

tered environment. This leads to populations too dense to be sustainable and calls for human control of kangaroo numbers.

In February 2008 when the local government declined the Ministry of Defence's proposals for translocation of kangaroos, due to high costs, the culling strategy had to be adopted to prevent further damage to the grasslands. However, culling of thousands of kangaroos just outside the capital provoked animal rights activists who called the kangaroo shootings 'barbaric'.

Yet the Ministry of Defence claims the culls are carried out humanely: kangaroos are tranquilised from a distance and then captured while sedated to avoid stress and pain. The animals are then euthanized with a lethal injection.

A number of people were arrested for trespassing at the site of the culls, the former Belconnen Naval Transmission Station. This did not stop some of the protesters from cutting the fence and releasing six still partly-sedated kangaroos from the site. Mary Hayes, of local campaign group Animal Liberation, told the BBC "It is a very cruel, violent way to treat animals – on a par to just treating them as if they were weeds to be mown or pulled out". Another wildlife campaigner added that the cull plan was "just an excuse to kill them". Defence spokesman Brigadier Nikolic called for protesters to "act in a



Ain't life a beach. Canberra's not on the coast, but its kangaroos have been left high and dry, facing a controversial cull, brought on by their overgrazing of grassland habitats surrounding the city

peaceful and law-abiding way".

And while the kangaroo culling is hotly debated not only in Australia but in the media worldwide, another Aus-

tralian wildlife icon, the Tasmanian devil, has just last week been listed as endangered. Contagious cancer disease has hit the populations of the

devils hard and many are now worried for their survival. *Canberra Post* calls this the "Australian dilemma: too many kangaroos, too few devils".

Robot to the rescue: Hobbelen's no-hobble bot

Daan Hobbelen's robot Flame learned to walk like a child does, and might help people with disabilities

Tamsin Osborne

One foot after the other, it advances, blue lights flashing, down the hallway. Its blank, steely face stares blindly ahead of it as it marches steadily onwards.

Is this the trailer for the next episode of *Doctor Who*? No, this is a video clip of Flame: 1.3 meters tall, 15 kg, and the hottest thing in the world of robotics.

Flame is the brainchild of PhD student Daan Hobbelen of the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. Walking robots are often designed using industrial engineering techniques, but Hobbelen has taken a slightly different approach. "This type of robotics research is mainly focused on trying to mimic the human motion system," he says. "If you look at the robotics world, that's something that's not often done"

Flame uses algorithms to stabilise itself, ensuring that the next step is placed in a way that prevents it from falling. Mirroring the way children learn to walk, Flame walks by falling forward in a controlled fashion and righting itself using a built-in computer. The result looks disconcertingly human.

As well as learning to walk like a human, Flame could provide further insights into how people walk. "We know that the stiffness of the ankle joint influences the stability of walking," explains Hobbelen. "With these robots, we can actually change the stiffness value to make it higher or lower, and see what the result is".

Studies like these will help scientists understand more about how the ankle works, so people with walking difficulties

could benefit.

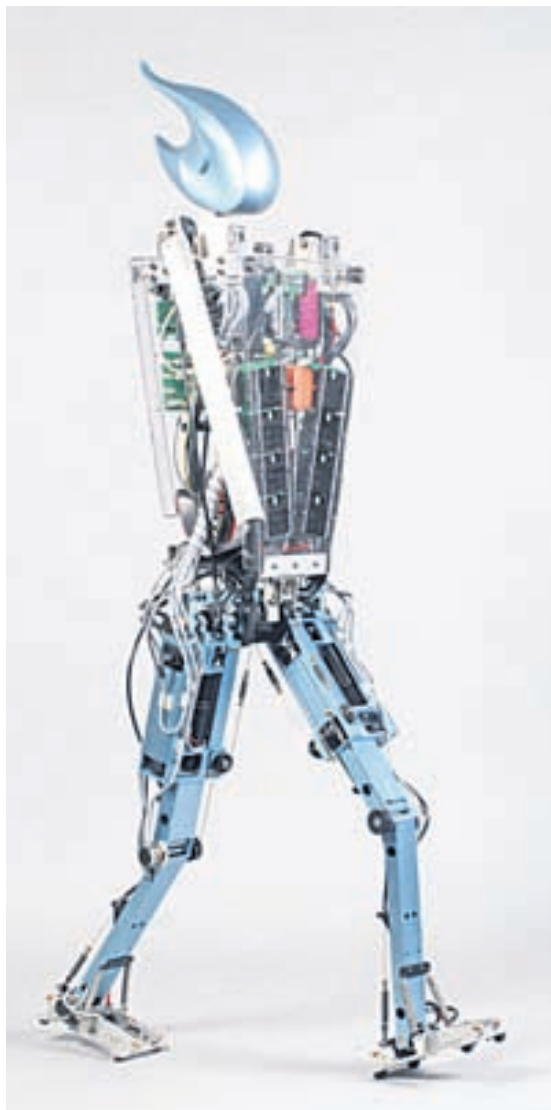
What's more, people who are missing a limb altogether could be lent a helping hand – or leg – from the likes of Flame. Hobbelen explains how his research could improve the design of leg prostheses for amputees. "If you understand better the actual function and working of the joints, you can make a much better replacement," he says. "They could just walk as they would typically have done before they had an amputation and they wouldn't have to use extra energy".

Hobbelen hopes that in the future walking robots like Flame might be useful for assisting with dangerous assignments, such as carrying out tasks in nuclear plants. And they might also be handy round the home to help out with the housework. But Flame's true moment of glory will come later this week when it is presented as part of the Dutch RoboCup team that will play in this summer's RoboCup Soccer championship in China.

It might look like one of *Doctor Who*'s Cybermen, but Flame's potential to provide insights into walking, to brave nuclear plants and even do the vacuuming sounds far from threatening. And who knows, one day Flame might even give David Beckham a run for his money.

For more on Flame, including movies, follow the "Walking like a human" link through from <http://home.tudelft.nl/en/>

Apology: The spruce mentioned last week is found in Dalarna province, not Darlana, as reported. Sorry.



Flame in action – by falling in a controlled fashion, before righting itself, the robot mimics the way children learn to walk. Those hamstrings must help it on the RoboCup pitch – as must its sure-footedness

Mission to Mars: Phoenix examines soil using Imperial technology

Katrina Pavelin

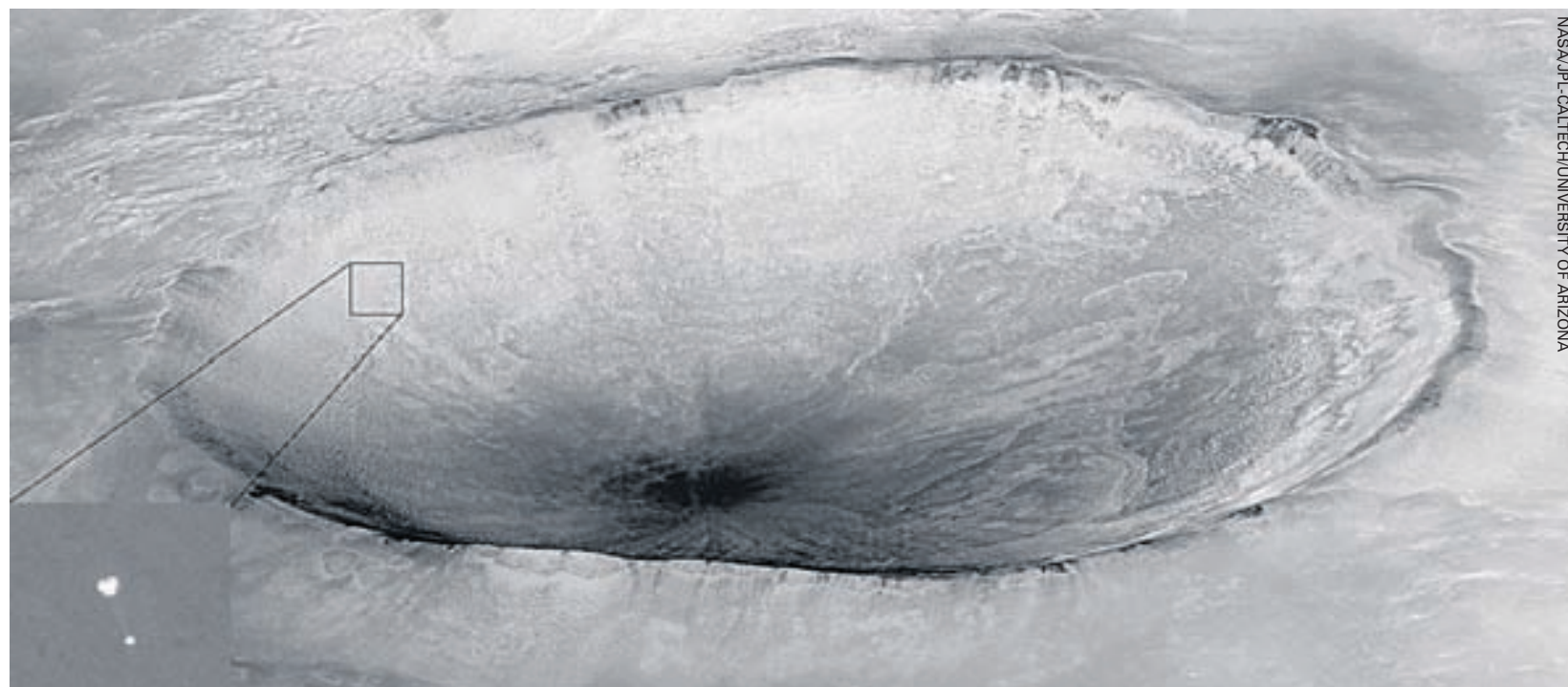
There is a question that has long fascinated mankind. Most people have gazed up at the stars at some point and wondered: Are we alone? This week a spacecraft completes its ten-month flight to Mars, and we may soon be closer to knowing whether life exists on another planet.

A good way to begin the hunt for Martian life is to look for what living things need – such as water. "We've never been in a position to look for water," explained Dr Tom Pike, from Imperial College London. He leads a research team that has developed silicon discs with a finely etched surface for holding Martian soil samples. "The water on Mars is below the surface, it's not on top. And nobody has dug down to any great depth."

But on the 26th of May, NASA's Phoenix spacecraft will land on Mars and its central mission will be the search for water at the planet's north pole. A robotic arm will dig for ice that has already been detected under the red planet's surface by NASA's Mars Odyssey.

Dr Pike's team will work at mission control at the University of Arizona to study microscope images of the Martian soil. The images are capable of showing features one thousandth the width of a human hair – the highest resolution ever used on soil from another planet.

Once Phoenix returns its data, the researchers will be among the first



NASA/JPL-CALTECH/UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Nicely done, especially in perspective. In fact, Phoenix passed 20 km in front of Heimdall crater, and landed successfully just days ago, beating the best efforts of the "great galactic ghoul", which has claimed so many previous Mars missions., including both of Phoenix's progenitors. In other news, if you've not spotted, the BBC is running a diary from Imperial's Dr. Tom Pike – well worth a read!

people to conduct the most detailed analysis of Martian soil and dust samples. They can then look at questions about the history of the ice: was it once part of an ancient ocean? Is it the remains of a retreating ice sheet?

This may tell us more about the climate cycles on Mars, for instance

whether the ice occasionally melts. If so, microbes may be able to live in the melted ice, provided that other factors are right. NASA's Phoenix will also search for these other features, such as compounds containing carbon. These carbon-based compounds include the chemical building blocks of life and

substances used as an energy source.

However, Phoenix is unlikely to show that life definitely exists on Mars, "unless we see a little bug crawl across the substrate under the microscope – we're not expecting that," says Pike. But a future European mission, ExoMars, will search specifically and thoroughly for

signs of Martian life.

For now, the scientists hope to find out whether anything could live on Mars. "We are going to be able say whether Mars is a potential home for life, rather than directly answer the question of whether there is life on Mars."



Emily Wilson
Arts Editor

Hello my little arty friends. I'm writing this over the Bank Holiday weekend, and the weather's awful. Rain on a Bank Holiday weekend? Not acceptable. Mind you, it's not like we're able to enjoy ourselves in the sun at the moment, what with exams and miscellaneous other tortures. I have spent my rainy weekend camped out in the library, lovingly crafting (read: hurriedly botching together) an essay about fungus (such is the glamour of biology). I hope you've been doing something more fun.

Here at *Felix*, we don't let exams stop us. No sir! We've been turning our backs on our expensive educations to bring you some more lovely articles. This week we have some controversial views on *Pygmalion*, a delve into the valley of delights that is Radio Four (featuring David Mitchell – can I just say that the last episode of *Peep Show* was *excellent*? Best thing on TV), and a review of *Marguerite* by Lucy Harrold (you've been treated to a lot of Lucy recently – we've been working our favourite journalistic slavey person hard).

Before you get stuck into all that, I've got some hot tips for you. Now, part of my job as an editor is emailing press offices and PR people to beg for free tickets and pretty pictures. Some are more helpful than others, and sometimes they get a bit overexcited and pelt us with information about all the obscure events they're promoting. Mostly we hit the delete button, but this week I've received news of two potentially nifty events I think you might be interested in.

Firstly: *Dirty Dancing*. Film from the eternal genre that is "boy meets girl, boy and girl get caught up in gritty issues, but gritty issues are resolved by having a bit of a dance". But it's also a West End musical! To honour the famous line from the film "I carried a watermelon??", the first 20 people who turn up with a watermelon at the Aldwych Theatre at 10am on August 4th will win top notch tickets to see the show that night. Do you know what August 4th is? National Watermelon Day. No, I'm not making this up.

Secondly: MEDICS, LOOK HERE. In the next few weeks I'll be treating you to a review of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons (aka Museum of Medical Oddities in Jars). But in case you can't wait for that, they've got a fancy lecture coming up on 12th June at 7pm. The title is "Anatomical dissection: is it still relevant to surgical training?". Tickets are apparently free to all medical students (you might want to book though – go look at their nice website for details), and just think of all the flashy surgeons you could meet! A prime opportunity for some networking, I reckon.

Don't say I don't keep you informed. Remember, there are always dozens of other exciting artistic things happening in London, and we can send you for free (all we ask in return is a few words...). Say hello via arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk.

Moral of story: sex with Nazis never works out well

Lucy Harrold goes to see a brand new musical with everything – sex, Nazis, Jewish musicians and good, old, French sauciness. But has it all been done before?

M*arguerite*, with music by Michel Legrand and book by Boublil and Schönberg (of *Les Mis* and *Miss Saigon* fame), has just opened at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. The Theatre Royal Haymarket looks huge and impressive from the outside but it's tiny from the inside hence you'll need to get further back seats than you usually would. What's the bonus of this? Cheaper tickets!! The theatre also boasts gallery seats, the only theatre in the West End still to do so, at a bargain-alicious £25.

Marguerite is the latest in a long series of artistic pieces to be based on Alexandre Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias*, a supposedly autobiographical piece about his love affair with Rose Alphonsine Plessis (later renaming herself Marie Du Plessis). Du Plessis was a notorious seductress, mistress and possible whore in mid-nineteenth century France. She eventually settled with an eighty year-old Russian diplomat only to have an affair behind his back with the penniless writer Dumas. She died of tuberculosis aged 23, impoverished and alone. Hmm... that story sounds familiar. Why it's just *Moulin Rouge*... oh, and of course Verdi's opera *La Traviata*, the 1936 film *Camille* and Margot Fonteyn vehicle *Marguerite and Armand*.

This version is set in the occupied France of World War II, amongst the upper classes who see the war as a big inconvenience- having to hold one's dinner party in the cellar and finishing before curfew. Just like *Moulin Rouge*, *Marguerite* starts at the end of the story. We are addressed by a solemn chorus telling the audience to "Come One, Come All" and hear the tale of



Don't play with Nazis, children. Particularly if you're planning to fall in love with a Jewish musician later

Marguerite as the negligee-clad girl is battered and dragged around the stage. This made for a promising start as I'm a fan of the Baz Luhrmann-style of reversed story telling. I also like deep,

gritty musicals; which this looked like it would be, considering the subject matter. I was wrong.

Half of the first act is situated at *Marguerite*'s fortieth birthday party at

her lavish house owned and paid for by Otto, *Marguerite*'s rich Nazi husband from whom she gets whatever she wants, be it new clothes or petrol tokens for her friends. During this a



Marguerite is another one of those musicals full of raunch and sex. We get a lot of that in the *arts* pages. Not that we're complaining

bomb goes off, leading to an extreme case of love at first sight as Marguerite falls for Armand, a penniless musician (hmm, familiar?!). The rest of the first half is spent with the two lovers pinning over each other. The introduction of a subplot adds a welcome break; also in Armand's jazz band are his sister Annette and her Jewish lover Lucien, who get caught up in a resistance ring whilst Lucien is trying to leave for the Independent South of France. I felt this storyline was much worthier and the chemistry more genuine than the Marguerite and Armand story, which seemed fleeting and meaningless.

The Annette/Lucien storyline developed further in the second act with Annette being taken and tortured by the Gestapo, but somehow managing to escape thanks to Marguerite's manipulation of Otto. Here the storyline just seems to stop, with Annette and Lucien only appearing at the end for their bows. I really wished this storyline had been developed further as it was a glimpse of what the show could have been. So, back to the main plot. Marguerite spends the second act doing just what she did in the first act, falling in and out of love with Armand and Otto and eventually being forced to dump Armand in exchange for his family not being hurt. This scene was done much better in *Moulin Rouge* with the heartbreaking 'Tango de Roxanne' and its ensuing scenes. Then suddenly the atmosphere changes with the finale reverting back to a chilling reprise of "Come One, Come All" complete with more beating up, removal of clothes and cutting of Marguerite's hair, making for a harrowing finale. I left the theatre feeling satisfied... until about the tube journey home, when I realised I was satisfied by only half-an-hour of a two hour show.

The best thing about *Marguerite* was Michel Lagrand's spellbinding music. But the mixture was not quite right; there were too many love songs and



You can't tell in this picture, but they're doing that up against a piano. Wouldn't that hurt? In case you wondered, that young man all over Marguerite is Armand the nice young Jewish musician who steals her heart. He's played by Julien Ovenden

only one exposition setting song ("Day by Day"), although this was cleverly split into four parts to move the plot along at particularly slow points. For me, stand-out songs were "Intoxication"- a strong, well-executed con-

trapuntal number between Marguerite, Armand and Otto, "Take Good Care of Yourself"- the Act One finale much in the style of "One Day More", the Act One finale from Boubilil and Schönberg's biggest hit, *Les Misera-*

bles, with overlapping motifs and a revolving stage (yep, you can't have a Boubilil and Schoenberg without a revolve), And "The Face I See"- the best of Marguerite's 'yearning for love' type songs. The set was also magnificent,

with a faded grandeur of marble and elegant architecture. It was cleverly designed so that the actors could be terribly lazy and never just walk off stage – everything was brought on and off automatically.

Although they gave competent performances, the three leads – Ruthie Henshall (Marguerite), Julien Ovenden (Armand) and Alexander Hanson (Otto) – seemed slightly miscast. Marguerite is supposed to be celebrating her fortieth birthday yet Henshall appears much younger and Armand is the 'young musician' roughly twenty years her junior but seems older. This made the relationship between the pair difficult to justify and detracted from the believability of the story. The supporting cast did well with the material they had, especially Armand's friends Lucien (Simon Thomas), Annette (Annelene Beechey) and Pierrot (Matt Cross) who gave tender, heartbreaking performances.

The failings of *Marguerite* lie largely in its book, which doesn't stand up to the sombre setting of Occupied France and the reputation of the "filles aux boches" (women who slept with Germans during the war). The storyline is basic and shallow, with only the Lucien/Annette subplot to satisfy anyone wishing for a serious musical about the politics of upper-class France in World War II. The pacing was also patchy, nothing would happen for a long time and then suddenly the plot would move at a tremendous pace. The characters were underdeveloped caricatures; the German is boring and serious whilst the French are flirty and sexy. This makes it difficult for the cast to truly shine.

If you want a nice love story that happens to be set in France in the forties see *Marguerite*, if you want a serious piece about World War II, go see *Cabaret* instead.



Here is Marguerite, the star of the show. Played by Ruthie Henshall. Whore or heroine? Watch the show and make your judgement

***Marguerite* is on until 1st November 2008 at Theatre Royal Haymarket, so you've got plenty of time to go see it!**

The Great Culture Crawl

Chapter Eleven – Not your average cafés...

Written by Caz Knight, designed by Rosie Grayburn

Camden Arts Centre, cafe and garden

According to the *Evening Standard* this is London's best contemporary art space and, despite my comparative lack of knowledge on contemporary art spaces, I would have to agree. With three gallery rooms, a reading room and a drawing room, it is rather small compared to a lot of museums but this only adds to its charm and makes for a very relaxed and personal experience.

The interior alone is something beautiful to behold. Wooden floorboards, high ceilings, tall windows which let in a breeze, all make you wish you were rich enough to buy the place and convert it into a private house, complete with extensive personal art collection. Currently on show is a sculptural installation by Claire Barclay and the exuberant large-scale paintings and etchings by Israeli/Danish artist, Tal R.

What makes this space so special is the café and garden. Set on two levels, the garden provides outside seating as well as some art of its own in the form of interesting benches and the odd sculpture. It truly is something different to be in such a quaint and isolated green space in the middle of the city. The café itself serves the best coffee in north London, according to one source (I am not a coffee fan so can not comment, I am afraid) as well as cakes (yay), homemade hummus and flowering teas.

My Village

Although My Village is “just” an organic café/shop, its proximity to Camden Town in all its eclectic glory warrants it a place in this week's tube map. Quite a contrast to the rest of Camden in atmosphere, this wonderful organic haven sells delicious cakes, freshly prepared cold food as well as making amazing juices and the best hot chocolate you will taste (this coming from a hot chocolate snob!). It is owned by two Kurdish brothers who clearly love and take great pride in their job and this is evident by the warm welcome you will receive every time you drop by: a breath of fresh air when you are lucky to get a smile from a nameless barista in Starbucks. The décor is also absolutely beautiful. Designed by one of the brothers himself, the wooden interior resembles Moroccan tea room fused with French farmhouse and tables are available outside if one feels the urge to watch the ebb and flow of interesting folk passing through Chalk Farm Road. The perfect oasis to refuel mid or post-shopping and to escape the market dust.

Coffee, Cake and Kink

The one and only of its kind in London and nationally: kinky art gallery, shop and café. Even if it were just a café it would it be worth the visit for its delicious selection of cakes and extensive range of coffees. (And for those who do not appreciate coffee, they make an excellent pot of tea which is a hard thing to come by these days). The ground floor of CCK is a shop selling a well chosen array of comics, photography, fictitious and non-fictitious books on many fetishes and other, not so deviant, sexy subjects (all tastes catered for). The more prudish among you, please do not be put off: if one had no idea CCK was in any way kinky it would be perfectly possible to visit the café and spend at least the first part of your visit blissfully unaware of what the shelves hold! The walls belie this fact, living up to the kinky nature of the establishment with gorgeous art from a new artist each month; prints of past and present work are available for sale at a reasonable price, too.

What makes CCK such a delightful place to bring a friend or spend an idle afternoon, are the friendly owners, unique atmosphere and the ability to read the books while enjoying your cake and coffee without having to purchase them! Portfolios of previous exhibitions are also put out next to the tables. Another bonus of CCK is that after 6pm you can bring your own wine (small corkage fee applies). I recommend the chocolate fudge cake: ridiculously indulgent served up with dollops of fudge sauce and ice cream although you will not be disappointed by any of the cakes or your visit there.

Curzon, Soho

The Curzon is a small chain of independent cinemas with branches in Mayfair, Chelsea and Richmond, but the Soho branch is particularly special for its adjoining café and bar. Situated on Shaftsbury Avenue, the cinema is a blessing for fans of those interesting, 'limited release' films directed by random people and starring unheard-of actors, that are not often shown at standard cinemas. Those who enjoy foreign films should keep an eye on the listings. Currently on is Argentine film *XXY*, black and white cartoon *Persepolis*, *Joy Division* and an array of films celebrating the 1968 season. Every Friday at 11.30pm is the 'Midnight Movies' bringing the best in “cult classics, trash beauties and art-house jaw droppers” and this week the film is *Skidoo*. To enjoy the Curzon properly it is wise to arrive an hour or so before the film starts to allow time for a drink in the bar or food in the café upstairs. The food here is predominantly devilishly tempting sweets made by the bakers Konditor and Cook (utterly genius) but there is also a small array of sandwiches. The Lemon Chiffon cake goes down a treat; believe me, although you might want to add an extra ten minutes for 'decision time'! Equally tempting is the large selection of DVDs available for purchase.

Pulkra

Pulkra is the height of health and before you shudder at the thought of dry Ryvita and oil-free salad, take a look at what Pulkra offers. A clean and airy feel will welcome you and your stomach will growl when beholding the array of freshly prepared home-made foods out on display. Pulkra is also a yoga studio, feeding your mind and soul as well as your body, and its location on Fulham Road is perfect for those at Imperial wanting an escape from college life or Ethos, or somewhere which offers a huge number of daily classes to choose from.

Being Italian run, it is therefore no surprise that the quality of the food and the delicious home-made gelato and sorbets are magnificent. They are all made the “artisan way” with the finest ingredients, fresh whole milk and unrefined sugar. The sorbets are completely free of dairy, great news for the lactose intolerant or anyone watching their figures with the swimsuit season fast approaching, or for anyone who just loves good food such as myself. Self-confessed cake junkie, I was definitely not let down by their cakes which are all homemade and also wheat free, although wheat tolerant persons should not be put off by that fact. Pulkra in the Park is another branch on Eel Brook Common (a short walk from Fulham Broadway), which is quieter and allows you to enjoy your food on the grass, in the sunshine (fingers crossed).

The Troubadour

“The best eatery West of Big Ben” according to one review of this 50's coffee house on Old Brompton Road. I stumbled across this delightful establishment before a play at the neighbouring Finborough theatre, and was drawn in by its relaxed atmosphere and wooden interior which set it apart from the generic chain restaurants nearby. It reminded me of something you would find the other side of the Channel, perhaps in France. Indeed, that is from where the tradition of the Troubadour sprung. Composer and performer of songs, the Troubadours emerged from 11th Century France and sung mainly of chivalry (since extinct) and courtly love. This café opened in 1954 as part of the second coffee house revolution to hit London. These cafes became places of rebellion, new music and meeting places for groups such as the Black Panthers. Other claims to fame include being the first place where the *Private Eye* was distributed. Not just a café serving delicious food, cocktails and more, the venue has a club downstairs (where Paul Simon, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zep and Bob Dylan have all jammed away) with events on every night of the week, an art gallery, a deli and also The Garret: a secret hideaway luxury suite. This is an ideal place to come for a unique environment with a bit of history thrown in for good measure, too.

The Ritzy

The independent Ritzy cinema is a different kind of cultural offering amid an already culturally colourful borough. If you are used to seeing the more “down market” side of Brixton, it is easy to forget where one is once inside the Ritzy and you would be forgiven for thinking you were back in Soho. The film showings change weekly, unlike larger cinema chains, but the variety of films on will match an Odeon or Vue. As well as providing for the ‘masses’, the Ritzy will show limited release films, foreign films and even films that premier at the picture house. The latest example of this was “H.R. Giger Revealed”, a documentary and 3D animation of the artist's work with question and answer session with its director. There is a very intimate feel about seeing a film here, not dissimilar to the feeling one gets when seeing a play at the theatre: feeling as if we are taking part in a unique experience. The Ritzy bar allows you to take alcohol and soft drinks into your film and upstairs is a very pleasant café selling a gloriously smelling array of healthy (and not so healthy!) snack and light meals. Live music is put on at the cinema bar, too, and on Friday 30 May the cinema is celebrating the advent of *Sex and the City* to British screens with *Cosmopolitans* in the bar and guests dressing up as their favourite character.

Radio Four treats us to “Charles Dickens after too much gin”

Sian Williams heads over to the Beeb to witness the recording of a new Dickensian radio comedy



In case you didn't get the title, Bleak House + Great Expectations...

Having never actually voluntarily listened to Radio 4, I wasn't sure what to expect when a friend offered me a free ticket to be part of the audience for one of their comedy series. Luckily, *Bleak Expectations*, described by the BBC as “A Victorian Epic of evil un-dead guardians, very rotten boroughs and a railway built of beef and pastry, in the style of Charles Dickens after too much gin,” definitely hit the funny-spot.

First of all, I feel I have to say that watching a radio show being recorded is a bit weird. Warm-up sessions (for the audience, not the cast), re-takes and a little green light going on whenever someone was supposed to speak definitely set the whole ex-

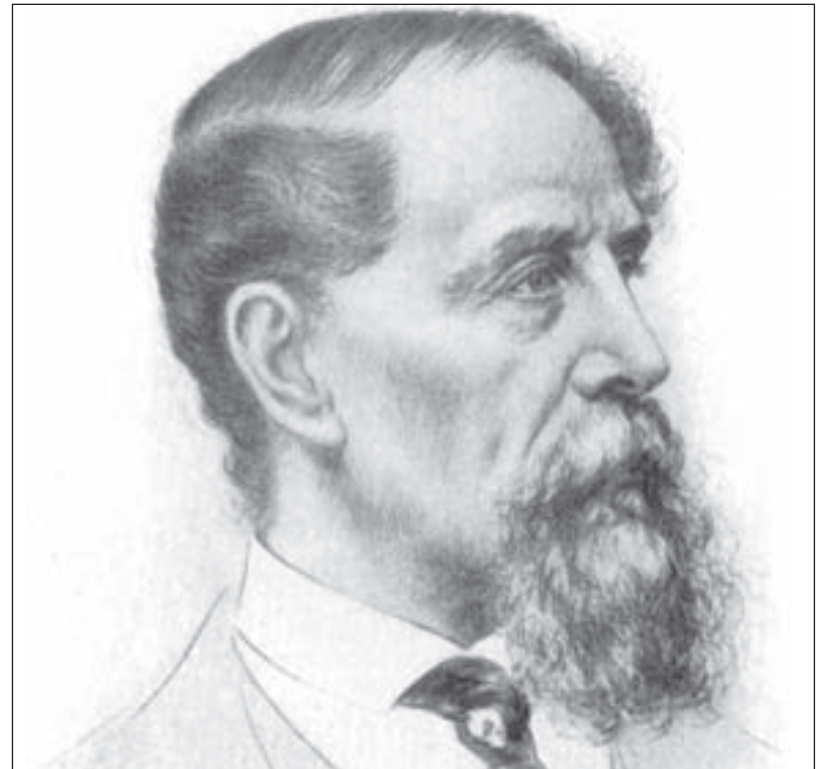
perience apart from a usual trip to the theatre. Getting into the Radio 4 theatre at the BBC Broadcasting House is a bit like getting through security at an airport; we were even ushered into a waiting area before being shown to our seats. Much to my friends and my delight “That Guy Off The Peep Show”, David Mitchell, was sitting about three metres away from us, looking slightly dishevelled and unshaven. Even if the show had been absolutely rubbish I would still have been ridiculously smug about the evening.

My limited knowledge of Dickens (just the obligatory reading of *Great Expectations* in Year 8 and a school trip to Rochester) meant that I didn't get some of the parodies. However this didn't interfere with the humour of the show as the general gist gets through to even the biggest Dickensian simpleton like me.

The plot of the series revolves around the character Pip Bin and his various friends and relatives, including the evil Mr. Gently Benevolent, brought back from the dead in a Frankenstein-style manner, and played by Anthony Head (the Prime Minister in *Little Britain* and the clever one out of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*). A favourite character of mine was Harry Biscuit, son of the inventor of the biscuit and apparently a parody Herbert Pocket of *Great Expectations*. His actions included being too preoccupied by having missed lunch to remember to look for his kidnapped wife and saving the day by eating his way out of a train tunnel made of food-truly a man after my own pie-loving heart.

As a first experience of being part of the audience of a show, I was smitten. Unfortunately, my fantasy route to stardom was crushed as it seems about half of the small audience had my idea of ‘use-an-individual-laugh-to-get-heard-on-the-radio’, with many chortles, cackles and whoops being heard. Or maybe that's just what Radio 4 listeners sound like, who knows? Metaphors using pots of brewing tea, incidents with horses and balloons and jokes about teenage boys being rendered blind by the sight of a full-grown woman added to the archetypically British style of comedy. The balance between slapstick and dry wit reminded me a bit of *Blackadder*, and thanks to this brilliant show I am now officially a Radio 4 convert (especially the comedy bits, although I did listen to half of *The Archers* the other night), and proud.

Sian saw part of Series Two of *Bleak Expectations*, recorded on 18th May. This means it should be coming out of your radio box very soon, so listen out for it!



Ol' Charlie, back in his prime before he was, y'know, dead



Anthony Head stars as “the evil Mr Gently Benevolent”

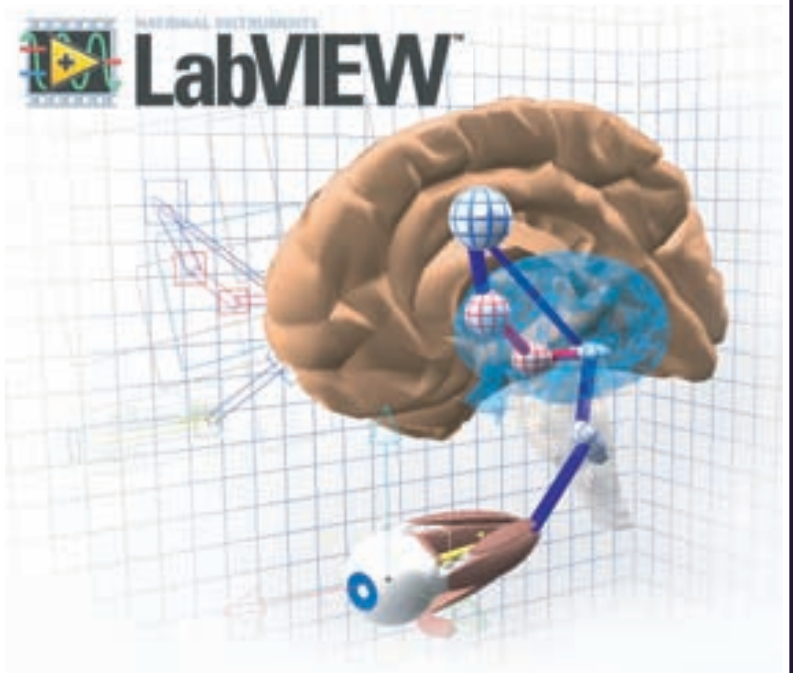


Department of Clinical Neuroscience.

Part-time programming opportunity.

We are looking for a talented and enthusiastic computer programmer with experience in LabVIEW to work on a project modelling neural systems. We will use be using the new 3D capabilities of LabVIEW to provide a graphical output to a computational neural network of eye movement.

The contract will be for 6 months, starting in June. The hours are flexible and the work can be done both in our lab at Charing Cross Hospital and at home. This would suit a student looking to supplement their income.



For more information or to apply for the position, please write to Stephen Hicks <s.hicks@imperial.ac.uk>

Please provide a description of any relevant programming experiences. Experience in neural networks would be an advantage.

President's Update



Summer Ball Dinner Tickets Sold Out!

Dinner tickets for this year's Summer Ball have unfortunately sold out now due to unprecedented demand. Despite our Summer Ball team working closely with College catering to increase the number of diners by a further 100 more than last year it seems that there are still a number of disappointed students out there! However, if you are interested in coming to the dinner then please register your interest and we will contact you if any tickets become available, just email summer.ball@imperial.ac.uk. You can still buy entertainments tickets! These offer all the great attractions, DJs and acts for this un-missable evening. You can buy online now, or from 2 June at the Union Reception, Union Bars and the Union Shop.

For those of you who have already purchased their tickets I advise you bring your confirmation emails to the Union Reception from 2 June to exchange them for your tickets. Of course you can do this on the evening, but exchanging early will save you from queuing on the night.

This year's ball is really shaping up to be the best yet and I look forward to seeing you all there! Check imperialcollegeunion.org/summerball for all the info.

NUS Referendum

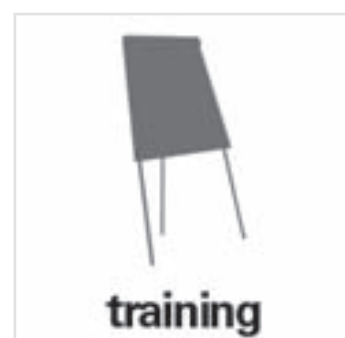
Last week we announced that a referendum had been called on our continuing membership to the National Union of Students. The referendum will take place from 0.00am Tuesday 17 June 2008 and end 23.59pm Monday 23 June 2008. Our Returning Officer will be Alistair Cott with the referendum asking whether or not we should remain in the NUS.

This referendum is very important and I urge you to read next week's Felix and Live! where both sides of the argument will be put forward. If you do feel strongly either way about this issue then please do vote. Any questions should be directed to Alistair Cott dpcs@imperial.ac.uk.

Club & Society Update

Hopefully by now all clubs should have held an election for next year's committee members. It is vitally important that you let us know who these new officers are so we can inform them of training opportunities and ensure the correct contacts are published in the 2008-09 Clubs & Societies handbook, which will be sent to all new students. The form for letting us know who your new committee members are is available online at imperialcollegeunion.org/forms

Don't forget that this weekend is the deadline for sending in your updated contributions for the handbook.



Training for new Club and Society officers will begin next week, all the information is available online at imperialcollegeunion.org/clubtraining. If you are going to be a club officer next year please ensure you sign up for the relevant sessions.

Election Results

Over the last few weeks many elections have been taking place with votes in all Faculty Unions and central Union elections also. All had a great turnout and produced some hard fought wins for the successful candidates involved.

Imperial College Union Results

Community Action Group (CAG) Chair
Christoph Aymanns

Council Chair
Afonso Campos

Equal Opportunities Officer
Bhavesh Patel

RAG Chair
Jonathan Downing

Welfare Campaigns Officer
Tim Barrett



Stephen Brown
President
president@imperial.ac.uk

ICSMSU Results

President
Mark Chamberlain

Deputy President
Albert Poon

CGCU Results

President
Mark Mearing-Smith

RCSU Results

President
David Charles

Full results are available from the Union website - imperialcollegeunion.org



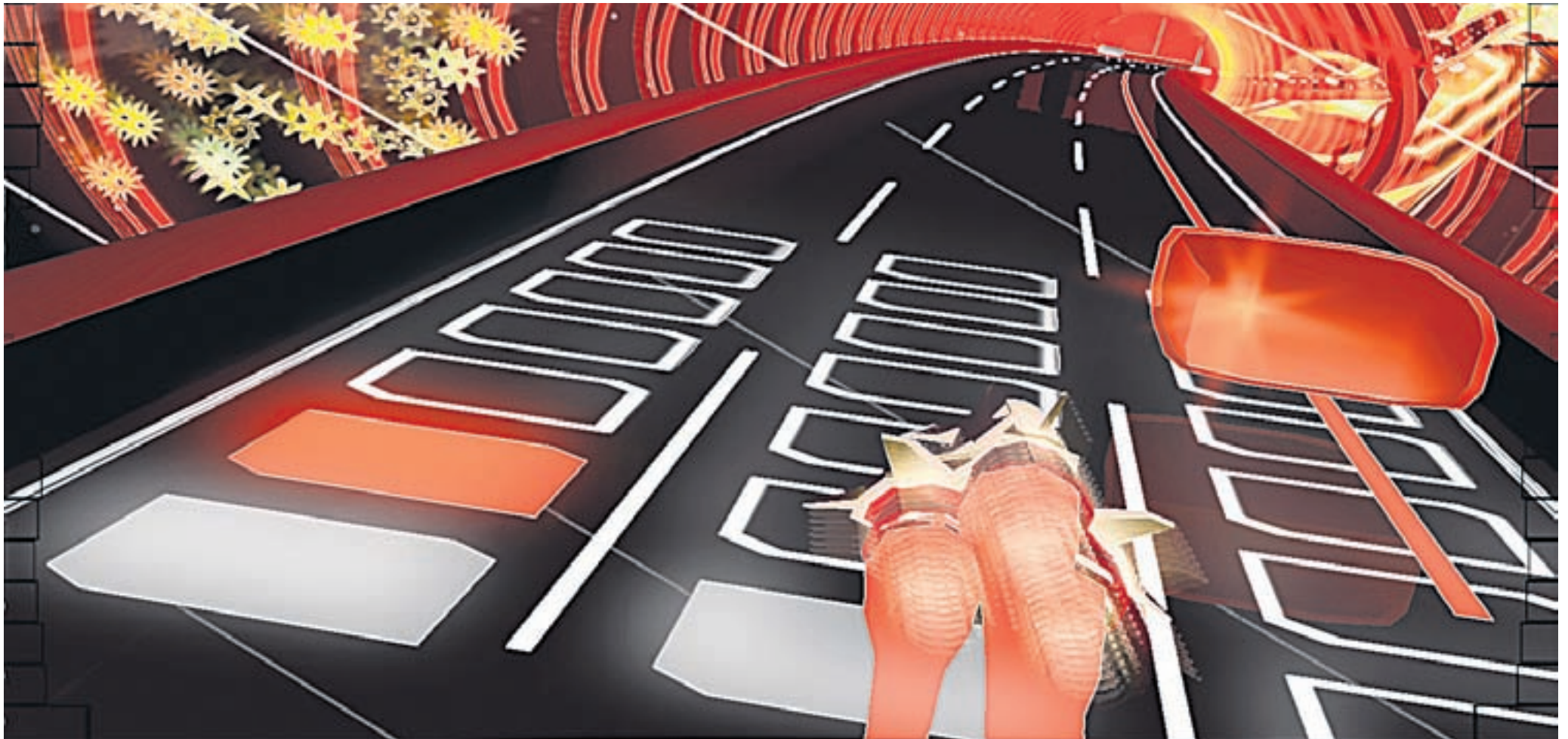
Music

Music Editors – Peter Sinclair and Susan Yu

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Thanks for all the songs I'm winnin'

Gene splicing music and video-games finally comes up with the goods, as Michael Cook discovers



Music has never been a huge part of my life. Since the age of around seventeen, I've had bands that I like and listen to, yes. But someone who genuinely loves music – and there are plenty at any university – get a much more complex kick from it that I can never understand.

Now, this may make you a bit suspicious of my writing for this section – I did once own an Avril Lavigne album – and if you're one of the people who go into anaphylactic shock upon contact with a video-game then this article may be fatal. However, I need to do it, because if music is your religion then Audiosurf could well become your virtual rosary beads.

Let's get straight down to it – Audiosurf is a game about Music. It's not about guns, or strategy, no-one ever uses the word "grind" when discussing it, and there are no Americans unless you listen to Neil Diamond a lot. The game is here to make your music interactive, and that's exactly what it does.

Give Audiosurf a piece of audio – usually music – and it'll number crunch the noise into a three-dimensional racetrack that rises, twists and curls in time with the music. You can then race along the track in a variety

of modes, grabbing colours blocks that appear in time with the music.

If it sounds basic, then that's because it is. Audiosurf is just five pounds or thereabouts, and there is nearly zero included content – everything comes from the files already on your hard drive. But describing it doesn't do justice to just how clever the number crunching actually is.

Pop on some rock or pop and the guitar thrashing causes huge downward surges in the track, with flurries of high-scoring reds shooting up towards you. Stick on some heavy-bass music and the track bounds up and down in time with the line, tossing groups of colours as each instrument kicks in.

Of course, the algorithm isn't perfect and so the best results come from something with noise, rhythm, or a bit of variety in its instruments. My current love, The Divine Comedy, reacts well to Audiosurf in most places, but the mournful piano of Regina Spektor is too tame to produce anything worth playing in most cases.

Everyone has something playable, though, and what's really fun about Audiosurf is this social aspect. You'll spend lots of time telling people the really good songs you've raced on, and thanks to recent updates it even scrobbles the tracks you ride to Last. FM too.

Most important, however, are the scoreboards. Each track has its own ranking system on the Audiosurf servers, and as you play your high scores are uploaded to compete against other players nationally, internationally, and just amongst your friends. It's just as much fun to discover you're the only person to have ever played a song (made obvious by being the only one on the scoreboard) as it is to top out a high scoreboard for your favourite song. It'll even email you to tell you when friends beat you, or when you're knocked off of that elusive top spot.

For a measly ten dollars, Audiosurf is a great piece of kit – barely even a game. It's got a visualisation mode which is great for parties, social bits and pieces that make it great with friends, and in general is a unique way to experience music.

There is one downside – you need to install another program, Steam, to play it – but it's relatively unobtrusive nowadays and allows the game to update itself automatically, which is handy. Once you've played your favourite album at one in the morning with the lights off and your best headphones on, you'll never look back. Suck up those gaming phobias, and get into the best thing to happen to music since the mp3.

The Audiosurf Ear Buffet



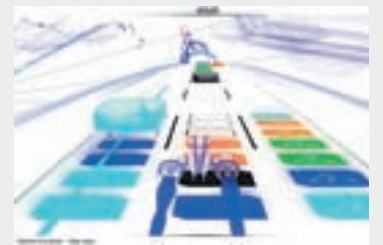
The Postal Service
Brand New Colony
<http://tinyurl.com/62bx4y>



Belle And Sebastian
Le Pastie De La Bourgeoisie
<http://tinyurl.com/5zw6rw>



Steve Ouillette
Devil Went Down To Georgia
<http://tinyurl.com/6e7wtw>



J.S. Bach
Tocatta And Fugue In D Minor
<http://tinyurl.com/5l9qde>



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The Imperial College London Summer Ball 2008 is a fund raising event for Imperial College Union with all proceeds going towards the Building Redevelopment Fund.

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Games

Games Editors – Azfarul Islam and Sebastian Nordgren

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Michael Cook Smooth Operator

The difficulty with running a student paper is that you don't always get the big exclusives. Imagine my surprise, then, when we were approached by Rockstar last week to test drive their latest addition to the GTA IV franchise.

We obviously leapt at the offer and have got our first thoughts just over the page for you to take in, mull over and reflect upon.

On an unrelated – and possibly more truthful – note, it looks like the next love of my gaming life will be severely delayed this year, as Left 4 Dead seems destined to not make it onto Steam before the next Imperial year begins.

However, that's probably not bothering many of you, as 2008 looks to be a stonking year for gaming. We've still got big hitters like Spore to come, Metal Gear Solid IV has probably been post-it-noted by Playstation owners on everything they own, and some nonsense about Gears of War is going on in Winter too. I guess.

Look, Gears of War is fine, it's just very brown. Most of my gaming time these days is spread across Team Fortress 2 – which is the gaming equivalent of being shotgunned in the face with Skittles – and Company of Heroes – which, whilst being brown, also includes swearsy British people in red berets, and therefore is ten times as good.

The gaming industry has good years and bad ones. Sometimes you get a lot of disappointments and a lacklustre Christmas season. This year is the opposite – a lot of the key franchises have come full circle to release again, and the next-gen consoles have really found their feet which means people can actually admit to owning one without sounding like they've got too much money to spend sensibly.

If you didn't make it to the Games and Media Event a few weeks ago, you missed out on some thought-provoking stuff. Some of the talks were so far away from what we think of as gaming today that they seemed sci-fi; there was talk of AI sophisticated enough to read the player's mind, or solve problems by being shown the kind of solution the player wants.

That makes this year's release schedule look a bit tamer. We've had a few quantum leaps in recent years – the Wii revolutionised how we thought about console interaction, and the other two key consoles have really pushed the graphics fidelity. But GaME reminded me of all the things that gaming doesn't really concentrate on any more.

A good year in gaming is one with more than just a higher polycount. Keep an eye on STALKER's prequel, the latest Total War game, and Spore for an indication of where the other side of games are going. Short answer – impressively far.

Lisa and The Masked Balls

Michael Cook would like you introduce you to his lady friend. Have you met?



A girl, here? On the Internet? Then the hour has finally arrived. Prepare the inappropriate comments and overcompensating co-operation!

So Lisa, you a girl?" Okay. You're completely prepared for this, and it's *perfectly okay to lie*. All the good journalists have pretended to be a woman on the internet at some point in their lives. It's culture. It's how the world works nowadays. It's edgy.

"The hell does it matter, exactly?" Yeah. That's exactly what a girl would say in this situation. Well done. That's smooth.

For the record, I didn't do this for weird kicks. The problem is that I don't believe most of what I'm told about gaming. When I strayed onto the internet yet again to research a piece on Pink Gaming, I found so much sensationalist claptrap being written, that I decided to see what it was like being a gaming girl. What follows is my personal experience only. I could well be wrong in my conclusions.

The game is *Company of Heroes*, and despite hypothesising that the community would treat 'LisaFinn' more humanely than the testosterone-filled world of first-person shooters, this actually proves to be incorrect. Waiting in the lobby to start an eight-man game (or rather, a seven-man, one-woman game, wink-wink), the chat finally strays towards me, with the line I used to open the article.

I stare at my response and consider whether it was as subtle as it sounded in my head, but they don't seem to care.

"ok, ok, cool. but are you?"

There's a 'lol' or two, and then he tells me he's joking. And that's it. That's the extent of the abuse. We start the game up, and within ten minutes they're quite rightly abusing me for playing

the game on a computer so ancient it probably saw action in World War 2 first-hand.

The weird thing is, it's like this pretty much everywhere. I concede, someone added me to their friends list with essentially no interaction whatsoever, but I put that down to high spirits and the fact that he was trying to convince everyone that 9/11 was a plot by the US Government.

I moved onto the raging man-fest that is *Team Fortress 2*, and here my presence barely registered. I was rubbish at the game, was occasionally ridiculed for it, and just went on playing. It got to the point where I forgot I was using a female pseudonym at all.

I tried more. Gaming chat rooms – nothing. CounterStrike – nothing. Failure after failure after failure until I just gave up. It's been done so many times before, those extended features,

confessions of journalists who dove deep into enemy territory and tricked dozens before escaping, cover story intact.

By contrast, all I found was complete apathy. Either I'd stumbled onto the Asexual United Clan's private server, or the girl gaming story wasn't what it was cracked up to be.

I think it's partly a question of perception – at the end of the day, I'm not a girl (apologies to my fans), and so maybe I don't pick up on the slights and prejudices as they might. It's true that if I asked for a game setting to be changed, it generally was without question. But the story of the oppressed girl gamers isn't one of over-the-top help and assistance. Where were the insults? The patronising offers of explanation? The request for 'pics plz'?

I'd imagine there's more to the idea of being a girl in the online arena than can

be gleaned from changing your name to Lisa for the day. But I think the idea that gamers are naturally sexist, that the world of videogames is one that is dominated by penis-wielding maniacs and entirely shut off to anyone of the fairer sex, is something that's going to go out of the window along with incitement to violence, decline in motor skills, and a lust for animé boobs.

The only barrier left now is the term itself – 'girl gamer' now conjures up bizarre images of the gaudy blogs that treat themselves like revolutionaries fighting for liberation, or the atrocious attempts to promote girl gaming as a sexy occupation.

Once that's all out of the way we can get back to the real issues facing gaming – why do some people insist on using control-groups zero and nine for anything other than artillery? Now that's prejudice I can get behind.



Girl gamers – being taken seriously since the 21st Century. Unless there's stuff to be sold to guys

GTA IV expansion city revealed

Michael Cook has seen and played the first downloadable city, and he's got all the details for you



The promotional art is still being finalised by Rockstar, but they feature Len Kivingstone, the protagonist who's pictured above, prominently. Jeremy Paxman may also feature

GTA IV has been a cash cow waiting to burst open with the money-milk for some time now. Downloadable content featuring entire cities had been mooted for ages, and I'm pleased to say that Felix has seen and played the first city release, and it's just as brilliant as you might expect.

First, let's get the obvious stuff out of the way – yes, it's set in London. We don't have any screenshots to show you, so the pictures that adorn this page are only mockups, but London was Rockstar's choice for the first release and it's a good one too.

We played the expansion for around two hours, as well as being shown sneak peeks at later content too, and we're ready to spill as many of the beans as we can to you – we've got a good feel for the story and the locales, as well as the characteristic GTA charm that you've come to expect from the missions and so on.

You play Len Kivingstone, a disgraced political candidate who's been voted out and left for dead by a rebel faction led by John Borisson (voiced by Ian McKellen). We only saw the humble beginnings of the promised eight-hour storyline, but Rockstar say that it's about "Len's fight to regain his power and take revenge on the man who murdered his reputation."

But it won't be an easy fight. When you start out, you've got few friends and many enemies. People spit at you in the street and regular newspaper releases mock you with cutting words that eat away at the newly-introduced 'Feeling Of Self-worth' meter.

Crucially, it's still GTA IV. The taxi service is retained and looking lovelier than ever – although in-car radio is now replaced with a complex conversation system which takes some time getting the hang of. At first we just hammered the racial insult button, but found that the drivers just talked for even longer – watch out.

The beloved mobile phone system is carried through too. Now you can choose from a huge range of phone models and serv-

ice providers – 3, for instance, has almost no service connection wherever you are in London, or you can sign up to O2 which allows you act like a tosser whenever one of their adverts comes on the TV.

Ah, TV. Rockstar went to great lengths to license huge amounts of authentic British viewing. One channel shows reruns of the same four episodes of *Only Fools And Horses* over and over again, one just plays a loop of Ant and Dec laughing, and the other has Jeremy Paxman asking a red-faced man to 'answer the

question' for four hours..

"We originally recorded a whole host of programmes for the city, but playtesters found this unrealistic," my guide explains, "We think we've got the television spot on now."

They have indeed. Right down to the way Ant and Dec blend into each other as they speak. Animators worked for eight months in order to turn motion-captured actors into the lifeless goons that ITV viewers know and love.

Guns are a controversial point in the new pack.

Because of their dedication to realism, no-one has a gun

in the game. Lead Designer Tim 'Mitch' Mitchens explains, "We experimented with a few different loadouts, but we think our approach now works best – you never see anyone with a weapon, you just hear about it."

It's a step away from the violence of GTA IV, but that's not to say they haven't lived up to the mean reputation some parts of the city have.

"Yeah, the insults had to be there. It's quite graphic, some of it, and we're expected more complaints than with the original. We drop the f-bomb a lot. People insult your choice of clothing. Some of it's pretty close to the mark, but we really wanted to convey the grittiness of living in the big smoke."

To demonstrate this, he takes the controller off me and takes a taxi up to Hampstead. There we find an artist sitting on the heath, sketching passers-by. He hits a shoulder button.

"Your use of colour is mediocre!"

There's an awkward silence in the room, as he knows that I haven't seen anything like this before in a game.

"We're known for pushing boundaries," he explains, "There's more that opens up as you go along. You can throw bottles at people and spit in the street. We think it's good to have that kind of freedom."

The storyline is a mix of mission styles. At first, Len's mainly small time, giving interviews and hosting radio shows from time to time. The media seems to be a big thing – the more listeners you have, the more respect you've got.

Later, though, the storyline picks up. After our two hour play session was over, we were shown future missions including hanging around outside the Newsnight studios to face off with Jeremy Paxman, mano a mano.

"Jeremy was great fun to work with. He really got into it and even agreed to do a little motion capture."

It shows – he sneers and cocks his head around in the cutscenes, relentlessly asking the same questions with a dead facial expression.

"We can't do dead like Jeremy can. Our animators have forgotten how to do contempt."

The final mission – an impromptu debate during the Olympic opening ceremony – looks positively electric. "It's all about how well you've grasped the insult system, the anecdote-telling. There was originally an option to headbutt Konnie Huq [during the ceremony] but Konnie requested not to be a part of the game."

Even with our extensive look, we know we've seen very little. The promised story time is just the tip of the iceberg – you can buy shares in Transport For London and eventually incite industrial action, you can file complaints with the Metropolitan Police about the noise generated by your various neighbours, you can even take a stroll around Imperial itself, which operates as a hideout during the series of missions that sees Len gain an honorary doctorate.

All in all, a solid-looking release from a game that was already pushing the boundaries of taste and quality in videogames. There are plenty of changes, but plenty to look forward to, and there's no doubt that residents will thoroughly enjoy to bombing down the London streets in a stolen taxi, on their way to purchase the expansion pack when it's released next month.

Where next for Grand Theft Auto's winning formula?

"We're thinking GTA V may actually be set in Slough. It's pretty rough. I went there once and someone actually called me a tosser."

"We've interviewed Bloods before, gone with cops on the beat in New York City, but that really cut. you know? In here."

He touches his chest and looks mournful. This is a developer with an understanding of the modern world, and the emotional rollercoaster it can be. The future's looking good for both Rockstar and their runaway gaming success story.





Touching down in the Olympic city

Nadine Richards ventures to the Land of the Rising Sun to battle with angry taxi drivers and her guidebook. But will she ever find her friend and make it out of the airport alive? Read on to find out...

I defy anybody to classify Japan and China as being the same generic category of Oriental. Having spent nearly a month in Japan, my two-hour plane journey from Osaka left me in an entirely different world of Oriental – or so it felt, having reached Beijing. I had decided to take advantage of both Air China's free stopover, and the fact that my close friend was on a University exchange there, and could thus act as my personal guide during my five-day visit. I found, in fact, that five days was not nearly enough time to come to grips with this hugely overwhelming city, but I hope to at least to get a taste of what's on offer.

These days, nobody can hear of the place Beijing without instantly associating it with the Olympics. Or Tibet. Or both simultaneously. In a similar way, nobody can visit Beijing without becoming aware that the Olympics are being held there in a matter of months – and that would include even the most ignorant child, blind person, deaf, alcoholic or otherwise incapacitated person. For the kids, there are the somewhat uncharismatic new Olympic mascots – BeiBei, JingJing, Huanhuan, YingYing and NiNi. I do like their names – taking the first syllables of each, they end up reading Bei Jing Huan Ying Ni -- Welcome to Beijing. I would love to see Boris attempt something similar with the English language in for London 2010.

In an attempt to 'Westernise' the city's residents in preparation for the hordes of people who will descend upon Beijing in August, there are the sounds of announcements running throughout the city trying to 're-educate' them and encouraging them to stop the age-old tradition of spitting in the streets. A shame really, as the odd game of 'dodge the spit' never goes amiss. Then there are the huge boards which have been erected on every street corner, with a glaring electronic countdown being shown to the precise second. (Having come back to England, I've noted that these are a particularly popular choice of background for BBC news presenters on anything Olympic related. To be honest, I realise that's a rather dull fact....) For the alcoholics, there is the new Olympic Cocktail, which I can



One of the entrances to the Summer Palace in Beijing. The climb to the top is not to be taken lightly

tell you nothing about, either because it was unmemorable or because I had already had a few too many for it to be memorable. Not to mention that vast number of construction sites that are currently taking over the city, that are all to be completed before the Olympics, or the fact that my friend on exchange with Beijing University informs me that all her Chinese conversation classes now centre around... wait for it... the Olympics.

My first day and first proper encounter with a true Beijing-ian was the taxi driver who drove me from the airport to the station, where I was to meet my friend. I wasn't sure if I aggravated him by having a bad hair day, but he proceeded to shout at me for the entirety of the trip in Chinese, with my obvious lack of understanding of Chinese or re-

ply not seeming to act as a deterrent. I meekly pulled out my *Lonely Planet* and flipped to the Language section, only to realise that like in most situations abroad, phrases such as "I need a mechanic" or even "could you repeat that please" were not particularly going to help me out. I like to think he was giving me a personal tour for the journey. Upon arriving at my destination, he refused to hand over my luggage until he had found some English speakers who could translate – "why are you going to this station?" and "why do you want to be driven here?" The fact that I was meeting my friend seemed to satisfy him – otherwise, I assume he would have held my luggage hostage until I agreed to be driven to wherever my train was supposed to take me. Either way, I was then left

with my luggage on the sidewalk, wondering how the hell I was supposed to locate my friend in this mad environment, where cars were racing past me as though they were on the M25, and people were crushing past me on all sides as though I was at Glastonbury. Nevertheless, after a painful half hour of navigating myself with two suitcases (I hate Japan for being such a shopping mecca) past all the human traffic, I managed to locate a phone and then cursed myself a thousand times whilst waiting for my friend. Never again would I tell her not to bother skipping class to greet me at the airport, or even worse, not bother arranging to meet in an exact place. It felt similar to a mission of trying to re-locate someone at Glastonbury without having a mobile. The sight of the head that bobbed a

good twenty centimetres above the rest of the Chinese crowd as I caught sight of her walking towards me, is one that remains one of the most beautiful visions during my trip in Beijing.

The next day, I experienced a whole other type of beauty. The Summer Palace was to be my first tourist destination. The UNESCO world heritage describes it as being an "outstanding expression of the creative art of Chinese landscape garden design, incorporating the works of humankind and nature in a harmonious whole" which I'm not fully certain I can decipher, but I'm certain that the gardens there were some of the most stunning I had ever seen, as well as being the largest. It appeared that the crowds had decided to visit en masse at the same time as me, but I quickly adjusted to the fact that in Beijing, hordes of tourists were the norm, with there being probably at least ten times as many as I was used to in a particular attraction. Considering its huge population and the vast amount of culture to be seen within China, this isn't actually surprising. Having said this, I found that it was difficult for anything to retract from its beauty. The walk to the hill on which The Summer Palace itself stands is incredibly rewarding. After climbing the never-ending steps with ornamental detail rivalling that within the Vatican, you're then greeted with a breathtaking view across the vast Lake Kunming. Suddenly, the rest of the world was forgotten and it left me imagining myself being transported back to the time of Empress Cixi and the 19th century.

...and more on Beijing to come soon. Bizarrely enough, I find myself writing from an internet cafe in Buenos Aires, with my time about to cut off at the internet cafe. So apologies for the abrupt ending.



The traffic in Beijing stretches as far as the eye can see



Friendlyes! China's cuddly Olympic mascots

Hangman

Putting the cat out to dry



hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk

67% of Imperial students would masturbate over this picture

In a recent survey carried out by the Hangman team; I say team, really it's just the two of us and we are about as far removed from the word 'team' as humanly possible... Anyway in a recent survey of Imperial students, the Hangman team discovered that 67% of Imperial students would masturbate to this picture, if only they had a copy; I told you I'd come through guys.

The survey was carried out late at night in the library last week. If a student replied "Get that picture out of my face", we added them to the 'No' column. If the student replied "Can I have it, I really need a break from all this revision and I think the toilet's free", we put them in the 'Yes' column. Disturbingly, it soon became clear that we needed a 'Been there, did that' column after a whopping 48% of respondents told us that they had already masturbated over the picture and that we might want to wash our hands after handling it.

More male Imperial students responded 'yes' than female students. The breakdown of male students is as follows, of those who voted 'yes'; 39% were frustrated Physics post-grads who haven't had sex since they joined Imperial, 51% sabbatical officers who have lost touch with real, enjoyable student life and 4% computing nerds who were too busy watching 'Two guys, one horse' to notice what we showed them.



The kind of girls Ross Goldberg used to get before he got stabbed. Now that he's out of the way, its my turn

Much more interesting results were thrown up by the female respondents. 12% tore up the picture, grabbed me by the shirt collar and made violent love to me in front of the water fountain (is it obvious that I'm really frustrated, good thing I've got this picture). Another 34% turned out to be friends of these Page 3 beauties and set upon me screaming a combination of "Pervert! Rapist! Deviant! Lecher!", to which I replied "Ladies, ladies, hey... please... stop that... it kinda of hurts". Needless to say I spent that night in hospital suffering from stiletto stab wounds... sigh.

If you would like Hangman to continue publishing photos of beautiful women please email hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk. If you want Hangman to go away, also email and we'll ignore you and publish a picture of you looking stupid as revenge

IC student buys election



"I'm naked from the waist down"

Did you vote in the the elections just gone? No? Neither did the rest of College. How then did Afonso Manuel anão Costa Campos win?! I'll tell you how; with money. This guy is so rich he rents the penthouse suite in Beit, you didn't know there was one? Well that's because you're not rich enough. There's a joke in here somewhere (email us if you find it. We sure as hell can't).

After many minutes of investigation we uncovered the truth. Afonso "Fonzie" Campos hired a 4th year

computer science student to hack the union voting system, swaying the elections in his favour. 390 votes Campos? I bet my left testicle (Bob) 390 votes weren't cast for the entire election.

Tracing the e-paper trail back to the source, Hangman confronted the mercenary student named Hacker McRandy (a really l33t hack0r in the online community know as McRandy_1). When questioned McRandy broke into tears, saying Afonso paid him £3.7 million. The sexy truth is exposed!

Unfortunately Bob couldn't be re-attached and passed away last night.

Scientists discover negative mass... really far away



The truth is out there... sigh, I am such a douche

A new study conducted by Imperial College's Einstein Institute has made a ground-breaking discovery: negative mass.

For years it has been believed that negative mass did not or could not exist but according to Professor Twiddle-dee Twiddle-do this was a result of insufficiently powerful technology "The negative mass is just really far away, it is only now that we have the equipment to contact it."

The technology that allowed this discovery is BT's new ultra-fast broadband service. With new high capacity integrated servers you can now keep in touch with your friends no matter where they are, even at the other end of the galaxy.

We are unlikely to see negative mass on Earth any time soon, apparently it is wary of strangers and repelled by 'positive devils' as it describes us. All this reporter has to say is "Don't be scared, let's hang out, let's be pals."

RAG to... umm ZOMG

After a year running ICU RAG and dressing up as a zombie on a regular basis (the picture on the right is the day of his first exam), you'd think that Luke Dhanoa/Karandeep/ choose a name and stick to it you bastard, would be in a prime position to become Council Chair. Unfortunately

of all people running for the positions in the previous elections he's the only one who deserves the crown of loser. Only 55 votes, sigh... less than RON.

Who knows why nobody liked him enough to vote for him? All I know is that I can't wait to have dinner with the girlfriend I would have if I didn't spend all my time making fun of other people on this page... Wanna go out? Please?



Dhanoa eats babies, FACT



Needy McNeedy: raped Slitherlink 1,405 in ‘88

She’s watching over your shouler whilst you read this. Email your problems to: agony.felix@imperial.ac.uk



All of you look like complete crap. I walk around college spreading seeds of joy and knowledge but sometimes I’m just overwhelmed by your pitiful faces staring blankly back at me. If you emailed agony.felix@imperial.ac.uk then at least you’d be in some kind of orderly queue. It would make my life easier. After all, even agony aunts have to look out for number one.

Dear Needy McNeedy,

One night I went out and got really wasted with some friends, and the next day I woke up to find that I had a massive tattoo of the Nernst Equation on my left forearm. It turns out my so-called friends had plied me with alcohol and convinced me that the tattoo would help me in the upcoming exams. How can I get revenge on my mates?

Studentx

Dear Studentx,

You are an idiot. Tattooing formulae on yourself is the only way to get through this tough exam period. Why would you want to get revenge on these peo-

ple who are just trying to help you pass your exams? I think you owe them all a stiff drink.

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

I’m doing a group project with some mates from my course. One of them is HIV positive. The other day he gave me some notes for the project we’re doing. I was looking through them and I accidentally got a papercut. (Hurt a lot.) I know it can be transmitted by bodily fluids. Could I now be HIV positive?

Worried, 20

Dear Worried,

Did you know Imperial is a college of Science? You know, that thing based on all the logic and stuff? You are an imbecile. If I knew which department you were in I would write to them and get them to fail you immediately. You won’t be HIV positive, although I would suggest you get a medical check up because I think your brain might have malfunctioned.

Needy xxx

Dear Needy Mc Needy,

Recently, I’ve been feeling really down about life. I graduate this summer, and I haven’t got a job lined up. My exams aren’t going really well, and I just feel like everything I do is completely pointless. Everyone is having a better time than me. Sometimes I think it would be really cool to commit a crime or something and then I could go to jail, which would probably be better than Imperial. How can I cheer up?

X

Dear X,

Firstly, stop spending your free time writing into agony aunt columns. You need to remember to learn how to laugh - watch some Peep Show. I love Peep Show, it soothes all ailments. Secondly, just lighten up. You actually have your whole life ahead of you. It’s not like you’re pushing 40 and in a dead end job, or avoiding prison showers with burly tattooed men, or answering a daily influx of emails from complete fools. Your life could be so much worse. Can you imagine how hard this is for me?

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

I watched the Eurovision Song Contest every year, and just can’t understand why Britain bother to enter when we’ll never beat political voting by Eastern Europe. Although our songs are always rubbish, I think we’re better than a measly 14 points. Are there any other trashy song contests I can watch that we actually stand a chance of winning?

SecretCombination

Dear SecretCombination,

None with the legend that is Terry Wogan. Let’s face it, nobody watches it for the singing.

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

How’s it going, dawg?

Tom Roberts, Felix Editor

Dear Mr. Roberts,

It is fine.

Needy xxx

H to the o, r, o, sizzle copes – it’s the Horoscopes



Aquarius

This week you are really depressed. There’s so much fun you could be having if you weren’t trying to educate

yourself. We all know you don’t actually need a job, your parents could probably support you, I mean your Dad’s minted, he does work at Citigroup... oh right, sorry dude. It just came out, yeah I know everything is going to be OK and you can always stay at mine yeh?



Taurus

This week there’s thunder and lightning. You throw open your curtains, draw a 6-pack onto your stomach and

stand at the window pretending you’re in *Sin City* or some other over-hyped film. As morning breaks you realise that you’ve been standing, looking cool for over 6 hours and that you are absolutely screwed in the exam you have that day... still you looked really, really cool.



Leo

This week you have superpowers, specifically the “power of persuasion”. You go to the swankiest

club in London, persuade them to let you in free, persuade them to give you and your friends free drinks, then persuade the hottest girl in there to dance with you and then get beaten up by her boyfriend. Persuading your legs to work again doesn’t work, it seems.



Scorpio

This week you give more away about the Felix Editor that you fancy... ok, her name may cause confusion if she

introduced herself to you and put emphasis in the wrong place. Yeh you’re confused now! Coz you thought it was the really fit one, haha! I’m going to make a move this week, so Felix Editors if you find someone hiding under your bed this week, don’t be alarmed, it’s just me.



Pisces

This week’s Pisces is brought to you by Imperial College Union.

Have you heard about the SUMMER BALL 2008! It RAWKS, yeh bruv mashup. Put down the *Felix* and go buy a ticket coz then people will think you’re cool. If you’re mega-cool then you’ll stay up until 4am for the survivors picture. Btw 4am is nothing, I’m never going to sleep again...



Gemini

This week you’re elected Felix Editor. You discover the secret identity of Angry Geek. IT’S YOU! You write an

article exposing yourself. Put it away! We don’t wanna see it! Although... actually, on second thoughts... You’re overcome by the mountains of fan-mail you receive and choke slowly to death. How painful is a paper-cut to the throat? Dead Geek. With huge wang.



Virgo

You get a lobotomy. Blerrrrrghhhh duhhhh gerrr... Durr A booger booger booger... duhhhhh

blahhh... errrrgghhhuhhhh... Oh wait, vote BNP! Blurrrrrghhhh arghhhhhh duhhhh nnnrrghhh skkkkurrrgggggg blahhhhh blurrrrr duhhhhhhhhhhhhhh booger boogy digger blah blurghhhhhhhhhh d-d-d-duuuuhhhhhh. Oh wait, I’m fine.



Sagittarius

This week you decide to read Sagittarius in the Horoscopes section. STOP READING. NOW! You didn’t

listen to me did you? Well, guess what’s going to happen now. Er... you’re going to get bored and move onto one of the other horoscopes. Then you’ll probably realise it’s all getting horribly self-referential and burn the copy of the newspaper. Then you’ll die.



Aries

This week you try your very hardest to complete a happy horoscope, including unicorns, pink ribbons,

fluffy bunnies and love. Unfortunately it all goes horribly wrong when the rabbits hang themselves with the ribbons on the unicorn’s horn. You then marry the deceased rabbit and have a threesome with the unicorn. Horny.



Cancer

This week the moon’s all up in your grill. You and Mars go ‘round his house and kick his teeth

out. Unfortunately he calls on Mercury and together they do a drive-by on your mate Pluto. The summer’s over *Requiem For A Dream*-style. This horoscope ends with homelessness, prostitution and amputation.



Libra

This week the fate of all Librans/Russians is in your hands. Insert horoscope here:

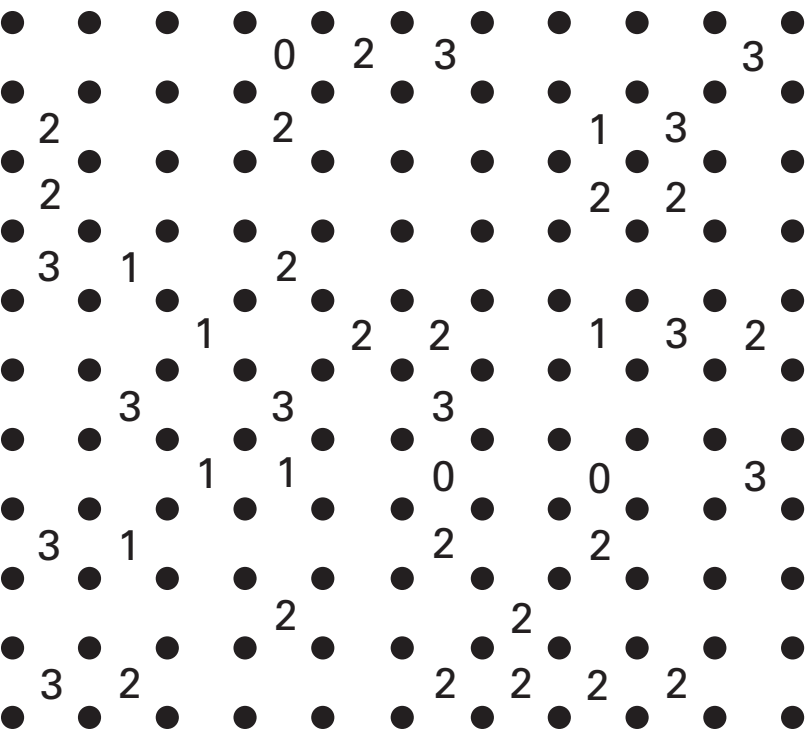


Capricorn

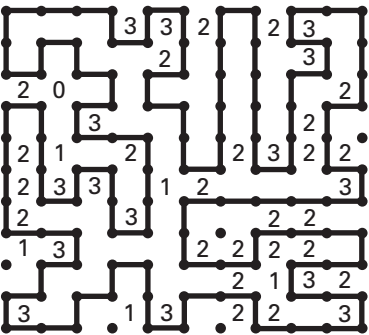
Your Libra horoscope was horrific. Don’t quit your day job, Moron. Actually, do quit your day job. You can’t be do-

ing that very well if you can’t even fucking fill in a stupid sodding horoscope. Leave the *Felix* on the table. Get out. Go. We don’t want your fucking kind round this neck of the woods. Die a slow painful death involving sandpaper.

Slitherlink 1,405



1,404 solution



The winner of Slitherlink 1,404 was **Hringur Gretarsson** yet again! Awesome cheesecake with redcurrant puree and a cinnamon biscuit base. We'll give a prize out in the summer. The more entries, the better your chances.

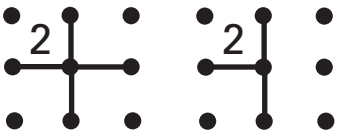
How to play:

Crudely speaking, Slitherlink is similar to Minesweeper mixed with a dash of Sudoku.
The object of the game is to draw

lines between the dots to create one long, and most importantly, looping line. It should have no start or finish; just like an elastic band.
Each number indicates how many lines should be drawn around it, for example:

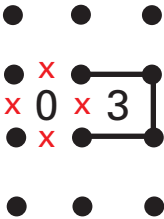


Cells which don't contain a number can be surrounded by any number of lines.
Remember, the line must form a loop, so the line cannot branch. The following situations are not allowed:

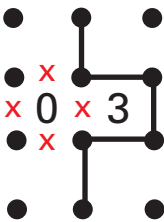


Squares are not allowed either. There are never cells containing the number 4 in Slitherlink.
So, where do you start? The most

common place to start on a Slitherlink grid is by drawing crosses around any zeros. Drawing crosses is purely done to so that you know where there can't possibly be a line. So, take the pattern below as an example. Begin by drawing crosses, then by filling in some lines:

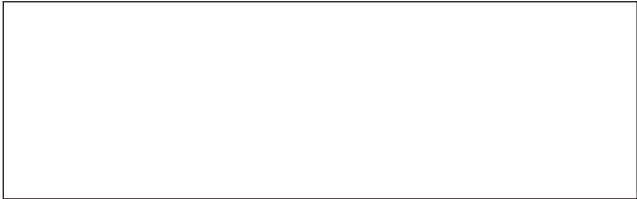


Now the lines can only continue in the following directions:



Wordoku 1,405

	N		B		L		
B		Y		A	T		
				T		Y	B
A		L				R	
Y		R				A	N
	T				B		L
I	Y			H			
		B		R		N	H
		N			T		B



1,404 Solution

H	M	E	S	F	I	A	T	K
F	K	I	A	H	T	S	E	M
T	S	A	M	K	E	F	I	H
S	T	H	I	M	F	K	A	E
E	I	F	K	T	A	H	M	S
M	A	K	E	S	H	I	F	T
I	F	T	H	E	K	M	S	A
K	E	S	F	A	M	T	H	I
A	H	M	T	I	S	E	K	F

Wordoku is identical to Sudoku; we've just replaced numbers with letters. Once you've completed the puzzle, there is a hidden word to find. Email answers to **sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk**.

The winner of Wordoku 1,404 was **Louis Tsang**. Congratulations! The hidden word was: MAKESHIFT. Keep those entries coming in.



07980 148 785

TEXT US! OR
WE WON'T
FEED THE CAT!

This week's texts:

"[continued from last week] "5 minutes remaining," I'm fucked, this is crazy... What the fuck is wrong with me? "Finish writing please," That's it, all over... Bye-bye 2:2, Bye-bye masters... 32 marks not answered, out of 60, that's 36% max... Maybe even a 3rd, a pass, fuck! So much for 90%... I ain't ever felt that blank before, I got a problem for sure... However hard i work, However much i believe... However much i prepare, Its da same old shit... Fuck this, bitch, Studyings not for me... Fuck this place, Fuck Imperial BSc... "Nerves got the better of me," Not much on a C.V... This is the bane of my existence, Soul-killer, that's I.C.

Peace"

Adlib by Tevong You

www.tevong.co.uk



IC Boat Club bring home the bacon at BUSA

Christina Duffy

The BUSA 500m Sprints, held at Keynes Country Park, Cotswold Water Park on Sunday April 12th was very successful for the Imperial College Boat Club, winning 33 gold medals, 19 silver and 4 bronze. These sprints, however, were a mere warm-up for the more serious 2,000m BUSA University Championships. Over forty Universities from across the UK descended on Strathclyde in Glasgow over the Bank Holiday weekend from May 3rd - 5th. Sport Imperial acknowledged their heavy reliance on ICBC to account for the lion's share of Imperial's BUSA points and with this in mind, Sport Imperial provided generous funding for all squads to make the journey north to Scotland during the busy exam period.

Organisation of entry details, flights, hotels and boat-loading seemed an epic and never-ending chore, taking their toll on Head Coach Steve Trapmore in the lead up to the competition. With entrants in 27 different categories, flights and accommodation were arranged to suit each individual in order to get students back to London for exams as quickly as possible. Most rowers were racing on Saturday and had flights booked for Friday night. Others would join us later depending on their event and race schedule.

After a disappointing last minute pull-out from the WJ4+ entry due to a double-entry regulation, the novice women had no race scheduled until Sunday. This left Saturday open for a practice session on the lake and a perfectly good excuse to purchase some rosé at the Duty Free. After a short flight to Glasgow International Airport from Heathrow and an annoyingly longer wait for our bags, we were met by Steve and Nigel Atkins. Two mini buses were hired and those instructed to bring licenses stepped forward while the rest of us piled around the buses. Then John Dick informed us he had never driven in the UK before, or used manual drive. The queue for his bus made a swift bee-line for the other one. ICBC pensioners Claire Waterworth and Clarice Chung were eligible for insurance and accepted the daunting task of driving the squads around for the weekend.

The Menzies hotel in Glasgow City and the Alona hotel adjacent to the racing grounds in Motherwell would be our home for the next few days. The four star accommodation courtesy of Sport Imperial was greatly appreciated allowing squads a decent night's sleep

and a chance for revision. It was late on Friday when we arrived, slowed by the argumentative gear box in Clarice's bus, so it was bed early for racing crews the next day.

Keen for our free buffet breakfast, Clarice and I were prompt in dressing and making our way into the dining room for 8 am before our scheduled departure for the park at 9:15. It was another forty-five minutes before anyone else appeared. Clarice was weighing in for lightweight on Sunday so I generously picked up the calorie slack on her behalf. Alex McLaren initiated a mass food smuggle and crew members waddled out of the breakfast room with bananas and yoghurts stuffed into all available orifices. Various strategies were tried with newspaper folding proving a popular choice. While most of us attempted some form of subtlety Tom Sutherland requested more bread from the waiter to prepare his sandwiches for later. With time pressing on we headed for the bus leaving a trail of Nutella packets and filo pastry behind us; well foddered for the first day of competitive racing.

A somewhat disappointing opening day for Imperial on Saturday with the MC2x, MCL2-, MC4+, MC4- unable to make it into the finals, whilst the MJ2x came fourth in a straight final. The MN8+ were more successful cruising past the first heat, making it past a tougher semi-final only to lose out on a medal position by one place in the final. Ending the day on a positive

"33 golds, 19 silvers and 4 bronze medals at BUSA sprints"

note and setting the standard for the rest of the crews, the WC4+ composed of Jenny Forrester at stroke, Erica Thompson at 3, Claire Waterworth at 2, Clarice Chung at bow and coxed by Connie Pidoux dominated their heats resulting in gold in the final race.

At the end of a tiring opening day the WC4+ medals were collected and we trundled back to the bus and headed to the hotel. Clarice followed Steve's questionable navigational skills and we eventually got back on the right route. Clarice's driving skills and quick reactions were put to the test when a car veered across our lane in front of the bus to take a left turn off the rounda-

bout. Minor damage resulted, mostly to the ego of the other driver.

Safely back at the hotel we showered and met in the lobby. With lightweight weigh-in now less than 24 hours away, Clarice heroically opted for a run instead of dinner. The rest of us took our grumbling stomachs into the city of Glasgow for some hot, Italian food. Service was slow with Jenny Forrester seconds from releasing the twins and requesting faster service. Soon the plates of steaming pasta and loaded pizzas came out and all hungry rowers were fed.

The evening was rounded off with a quick trip to the local Tesco and we stocked up on Nutri-grain bars, Frostie cereal bars, bananas and malt loaves. I settled on multiple packets of fruit gums; the fuel of athletes.

It was an early start the next morning; too early to avail of the buffet breakfast so we decided to order room service. With an admittedly long request list Anna was cut-off in mid flow. Refusing to forego the toast and jam she redialled and responded to the good morning message with 'That's not all!' Soon our bowls of corn flakes, croissants and bananas arrived and we packed up and headed down to the bus for another day's racing.

The weather had been predominantly dry but a strong wind caused choppy water and bad racing conditions on day two. Sunday was a big day for the novice women racing in the WN4+ composed of stroke siders Selina Graham and Mackenzie Clavin while Anna and I took bow side. Having only one race to compete in over the weekend, we had our eyes firmly fixed on gold. There were 47 boats in our category and we had to compete in a time trial to weed out the deadwood before the heats could begin.

Time trials were occurring all morning for several of the races and Steve had been informed that we could do our trial at any time within the allotted period. Eager to race we headed out in first only to be told by the marshall at the start line that all men's boats had to race before a women's boat could start. This meant sitting for a good forty five minutes in the cold as the men's crews' paddled past us. Steve officially slapped the marshall with his gold medal and they consequently apologised for the misinformation.

Despite the long wait we powered through the time trial. Our heats were spaced throughout the day and we fell into a pattern of eat, race, eat, sleep, eat, race which proved a successful for-



Erica Thompson and Jenny Forrester flex for the camera

mula. The windy conditions exposed the less-experienced crews unable to steer and maintain their boats in the correct lanes. Cox Nicola Quinn Pyatt strategically coxed us into position and kept our focus in the boat. Our tide-way training stood us in good stead for the rough conditions and we made up most water in these patches. We dominated the first heat with similar results for the semi-final. The final was closer but we edged into the lead from the off and maintained this position, breaking

"Minor damage resulted, mostly to the ego of the other driver"

away from the pack in our final push for home. My first rowing medal... so proud! Weigh-in for lightweights was in the afternoon and Clarice was leaving nothing to chance spending much of the day wrapped in bin liners, multiple layers of lycra and a woolly hat for sweat runs up and down the lakeside. Others lay about the shore skimming stones and terrorising local dogs.

The MN4+ of John Dick at stroke, Adam Mayall, Andy Forester and Michael Zammit coxed by Connie also claimed gold in an exciting final race. Further victory ensued for the ML4x of Ben Newland, Ole Tietz, Andrew Gordon and Oli Mahony defeating Dur-

ham by over four seconds. However Durham was the thorn in Imperial's side taking gold from silver medallists Richard Winchester and Will McFarland in the MJ-2 and Jenny Forrester and Erica Thompson in the WC2-. Durham again narrowly claimed gold over Imperial's WLC4x entry of Claire Waterworth, Rachael Davies, Clarice Chung and Cynthia Mynhardt by a mere 0.59ths of a second. Oli Mahony collected his second medal of the day coming third in the CL1x final.

The sun broke out for the final day's racing for Monday and further glory was in store for remaining Imperial crews. Gold medals were awarded to Erica Thompson in the WN1x category and Andrew Gordon and Ole Tietz for their performance in the ML2x. Silver went to Ben Newland, Richard Winchester, Sam Lindsay and Will McFarland in the MJ4x, whilst bronze medals were taken home by Rachael Davies and Claire Waterworth in the WL2x and by Jenny Forrester in the WC1x.

Overall Imperial came third out of 42 universities with an impressive 573 points, behind Durham and Newcastle in the Victor Ludorum Trophy. Imperial was only beaten through the sheer volume of entrants by the other competitors. ICBC also qualified 4 boats for the European Universities Championships in Zagreb this summer. This was an incredible performance by all crews and shows the dedication ICBC crews and coaches put into training. Well done to all involved and a big thanks to Sport Imperial for their support.



Richard Winchester showing off his winning pose



Andrew Gordon and Ole Tietz warm-up for the ML2x race

Slick at Twick; novice squads gain senior status

Christina Duffy

After weeks of glorious sunshine across London, the rain made its return in good time for the Twickenham Regatta last Sunday, May 25th. Following intensive novice recruitment at the beginning of the academic year, only the elite few remain. Now unrecognisable behind layers of muscle, the crews have refused to submit to the lure of sleep, a good education or any form of social life beyond rowing. Both men and women novice squads have performed well over the past year, collecting medals for both regatta and head race events in the novice categories. The Twickenham Regatta was the first time the novice crews were entered in senior events.

Like all rowing-related activities, it was an early start on Sunday morning, made even earlier as I was convinced by Deeps to accompany her on the bus. Dodging rain and hopping over puddles I waved a fond farewell to my bike and braved the public transport system, catching the 391 towards Richmond, a stop before Deeps would join me. But alas, there was no sign of the Deepmeister. A phone call later I was informed that I would be wandering

alone in Richmond in search of the boating area since a certain alarm had ‘failed’ to initiate. Fortunately my incredible navigational skills (and map) ensured I arrived before ICBC boats and crews.

Racing was scheduled all day over a 1250 metre course along the Thames from a stakeboat start. Races were gladiator style; one on one; with a staggered start due to the winding nature of the river. First up was the women’s novice four coxed by Katie Oliver and entered in the WS3 4+ and WS4 4+ categories. The crew consisted of Deepika Reddy at bow, Anna Jones at two, Mackenzie Clavin at three, while I took the stroke seat. We cruised past HSBC in the opening heat but were less fortunate against Twickenham in the semi-final. A second Imperial crew was entered in the same category coxed by Connie Pidoux with novice Selina Graham at stroke, Ro Smith at three, Deborah Tamulonis at two and Clarice Chung at bow. They received a buy in the first heat, defeated Marlow in the semi-final and thwarted Twickenham to win outright in the final. The same crew were also racing in the WS2 4+ event and after another buy round had to spin and race in a straight fi-

nal against Guildford, finding victory again.

Rain continued to drizzle as afternoon approached and little grass remained in the expanding fields of mud. Most had sensibly worn wellies, but wanting to maximize boat speed by reducing extra weight I choose flip-flops, which apparently aren’t very compatible with mud. Mammy Trapmore took a break from washing and shining boats to pop down to the shops and purchase a gazebo to protect her little crews from the harsh conditions. We thank her for the bag of goodies too. What a trooper.

Eton Excelsior put a halt to Imperial’s victory in the WS2 2x event defeating seniors Claire Waterworth and Katy Smith in the opening heat and Rachael Davies and Cynthia Mynhardt in the final. However, when the doubles combined as a quad in the WS2 4x they were an unstoppable force and defeated Tideway Scullers in the semi and Twickenham in the final.

The men’s novice crew were also in action in the S3 4+ event. Coxed by Helen Waller the crew were John Dick at stroke, Michael Zammit at three, Carlos Schuster at two and Frank Murphy at bow. Despite serious Marshall calls of ‘Is there a Dick in the boat?’, made even more poignant due to John’s ‘lucky’ pink hair band, the crew remained focused and beat Staines in the opening round, Twickenham in the semi-final and Marlow RC in the final.

With most of the other crews done racing for the day, only the novice women remained to race by late afternoon. The rain had eased but a strong head wind had picked-up. After some tactical pointers from Steve, we easily defeated Thames RC in the first heat putting the weeks of bench pressing to good-use, overcame Guildford RC in the semi-final and took first place in the final by over three lengths from Eton Excelsior. Despite our comfortable lead I maintained the 34 s/m rating to the finish, ensuring Deeps would remember to set two alarms next time we got the bus.

The novice men’s crew, high from their earlier victory, stayed on as loyal supporters and were a welcome sight



Men’s novices take the lead in S3 4+ event



Former women’s novice crew win WS4 4+

cheering from the regatta enclosure. With wins across the board for all novice crews in senior events, a single ARA point was gained by each crew member disallowing any further participation in novice events. Understandably, Carlos Schuster needed a moment to compose himself during this very emotional time which revealed Frank as a pillar of support and comfort to all crews. It was a huge milestone for all involved and comes deservedly so, due to the dedication to club training that this year’s novices have shown, if I do say so myself, and I do.

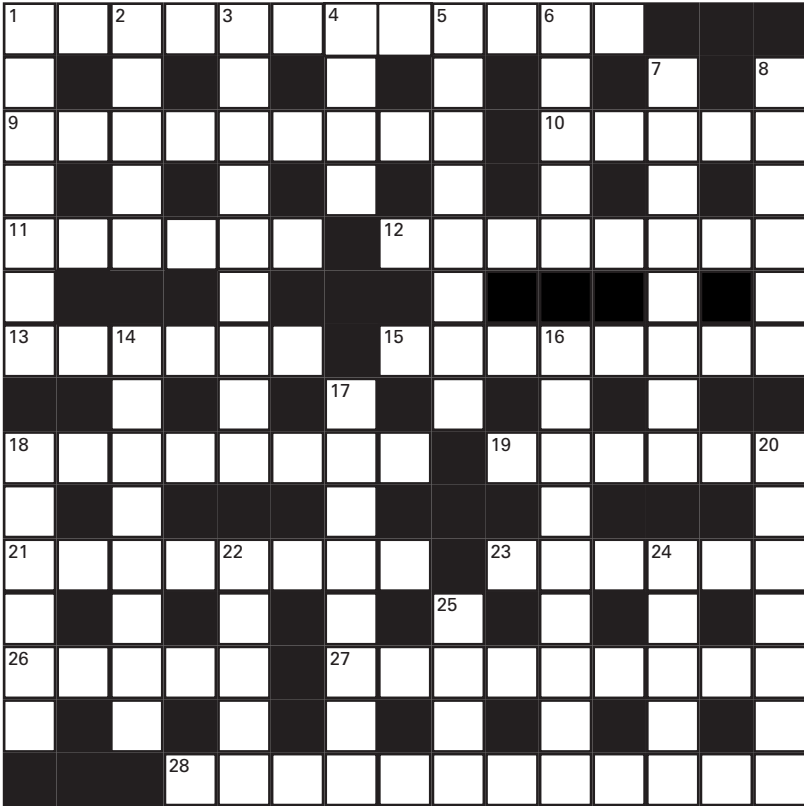
With de-rigging complete and obligatory crew photos taken we cleared up and loaded the trailer for Putney. Much to the dismay of my liver, the free lift back to Putney with Steve was sabotaged at the last minute by the novice crews. With the sun finally shining and

spirits high we skipped back to Richmond for a celebratory meal in Tootsies and a few drinks along the river. The festivities continued to Anna’s house in Richmond where 52 cards, a terrible ring of fire and some shirt swapping somehow resulted in Michael Zammit wearing a dress. And yes, there is photographic evidence of this.

Every Imperial competitor came away with a first place victory and a pint pewter tankard; an incredible achievement for the club. Well done to all winning crews and especially to former novices! Our first race as official seniors takes place next weekend in the Metropolitan Regatta at Dorney Rowing Lake in Eton. This multi-lane regatta race is one of the main events in the rowing calendar and has entries from all ICBC squads. Best of luck to everyone!

Crossword No. 1,405

Answers to: sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk

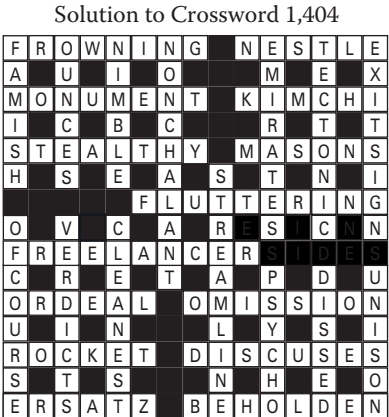


- ACROSS**
- 1 A S P L (6,6)
 - 9 Suck water in such a way as to be amazed (9)
 - 10 Provoke empty trick (5)
 - 11 Pathetic attempt to follow a friend (6)
 - 12 Cheated by where the Southern wind led (8)
 - 13 Allow Harold to be deadly (6)
 - 15 With or without the tail of preceding carnivore (8)
 - 18 Coin’s final worth caught in passing gas (8)
 - 19 More chlorine in this University’s hospital (6)
 - 21 Abandon Edward, causing him to rise (8)
 - 23 DNA reveals dwarf has Ethiopian roots (6)
 - 26 O unpleasant smell!
 - 27 Birds show East German wealth (9)
 - 28 Athletic supporters? (11)

- DOWN**
- 1 Take the top off the Spanish knife (7)
 - 2 I arrange perfection (5)
 - 3 Post-calculus results (9)
 - 4 Birds murmur sounds of revolution (4)
 - 5 Tepid apostle on heat (8)
 - 6 Armstrong’s second step in the moon made him an idiot.(5).
 - 7 Cartridge in regular newsletter (8)
 - 8 Top of the form? (6)
 - 14 Bullfighter pulled out a sound barrier (8)
 - 16 The Good Life cracks a vital code
 - 17 Deer decides to run away after an insect (8)
 - 18 The man collapsed with an exclamation of pain (6)
 - 20 Bends to stop surrounding rebel leaders (7)
 - 22 Caught between Aphrodite and Ares (5)
 - 24 Hazy echo receives initial colour (5)
 - 25 Geek-speak? (4)

Heartiest congratulations to **Thomas Dinsdale-Young**, who was one of a surprising number of people who sent in their answers. A special mention goes to Di-Emma, who, as usual, solved it flawlessly. Good luck this week – you may have trouble with 1 across. Get over yourselves.

Enoch





BUSA Championships

Imperial College Boat Club report on their exploits at BUSA, see page 26

Boat Club's Senior women's squad enjoy waffles, ice-cream, chocolate and sweet victory

Helen Waller

Two weekends ago the Imperial College Boat Club Senior Women's squad packed up their lycra and hopped on the Eurostar to Ghent. Ghent is a beautiful city in Belgium, boasting all the usual Belgian delights of waffles, ice cream and fine chocolates, as well as a multitude of scantily clad women prancing around in sand. A beach volleyball tournament happened to be taking place in the centre of town that weekend - shame our Men's squad was vomiting into its shoes in Poland at the time and hence not there to enjoy the toned thighs of Belgium's finest.

We made the trip across the Channel to compete in the International Belgian Championships and Ghent International Regatta, both of which are elite regattas attracting crews from across Europe and even some from further a field. The competition was stiff and with back-to-back races on both days, our crews had to work extremely hard but the squad performed well across the board competing in singles, pairs, quads and an eight.

Racing kicked off bright and early

with the first races coming down the course before the clock struck eight. We had a mixed bag of results across the weekend, with our eight missing out on the final by a tenth of a second. Our greatest triumph, however, was achieved by one of our quads who won their division on Saturday, fighting off strong opposition to attain the gold medal, earning themselves, and Imperial, international recognition as a high performance club. All our boats held strong races against exceptional crews, but four was obviously the lucky number for the weekend, as another of the quads finished in bronze position on the Sunday, losing by a hair's breadth to two crews with substantial international experience after a tense initial heat involving a snapped footplate and a near disqualification.

All in all a highly successful weekend with some fantastic racing, beautiful sunshine and much amusement at the expense of the commentator's thick Flemish accent! We hope to repeat this success at other regattas across the country over the coming weeks, culminating in our main goal, the Henley Women's Regatta at the end of June.



Mun Kee keeps a close eye on the boats