

THE SPECTRE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Students, beware? An investigation into exactly how much help is available for job seekers: **Page 8**

FURTHER CONCERNS OVER HOLLAND CLUB AND CLAYPONDS AT PANEL

Open discussion forum sees mixed views over ongoing developments

Maciej Matuszewski

Further student concern about the closure of Clayponds and the proposed changes to the Holland Club have been revealed at the discussion forum on postgraduate accommodation and social space held by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) last Thursday.

Clayponds Village in South Ealing is currently the most affordable post-

graduate accommodation provided by the College – housing 325 students in rooms with prices starting at just over one hundred pounds per week. The decision to close the postgraduate hall of residence was made in December by the College Management Board, a body that has no student members and whose reports are confidential. As it emerged at the forum, neither the central Union nor the GSA were directly informed of this decision. The plans

came to light after Clayponds sub-warden Craig Court heard rumours about the closure, which were later confirmed to Union President Scott Heath. Speaking to Felix the GSA President, Robert Tang, said that he deeply regrets “the lack of communication the GSA receives regarding the College decisions on the closure of Clayponds”.

According to Tang, should Clayponds close the cheapest accommodation the College would be offering to

postgraduates next year “would be ensuite rooms at Orient House, at around £199 per week”. Heath estimates that, including travel, the living costs per month at Orient House are £200 more expensive than the £600 per month at Clayponds. Rent at the newly constructed Griffon Studios in Battersea starts at £235 per week. The College is planning to open new postgraduate accommodation, Imperial West, ...Continued on Page 3

ARTS



Get Twisted at joint exhibition

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FILM



Predictions for the Academy Awards

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FASHION



Fashion Week descends on the city

Page 27

University students respond to Sentamu marriage comments

Clare Cheng

Earlier this month undergraduates of Selwyn College at the University of Cambridge voted to send a letter to the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, in light of his views on gay marriage. In an extensive interview last month with *The Daily Telegraph* about the Church, racism and his life experiences, the Archbishop stated a “relationship between a man and a woman – that’s marriage”.

This has come about in light of the government moving toward legalising gay marriage in Britain. After objections were raised a public consultation was arranged to take place in March to discuss the topic. Archbishop Sentamu raised his objections, affirming that it wasn’t the role of the State to define what marriage is. He predicts that there will be a “rebellion” in the House of Commons over the issue, being sure

that they already have “one hundred MPs signing up that they’re against to change this tradition”.

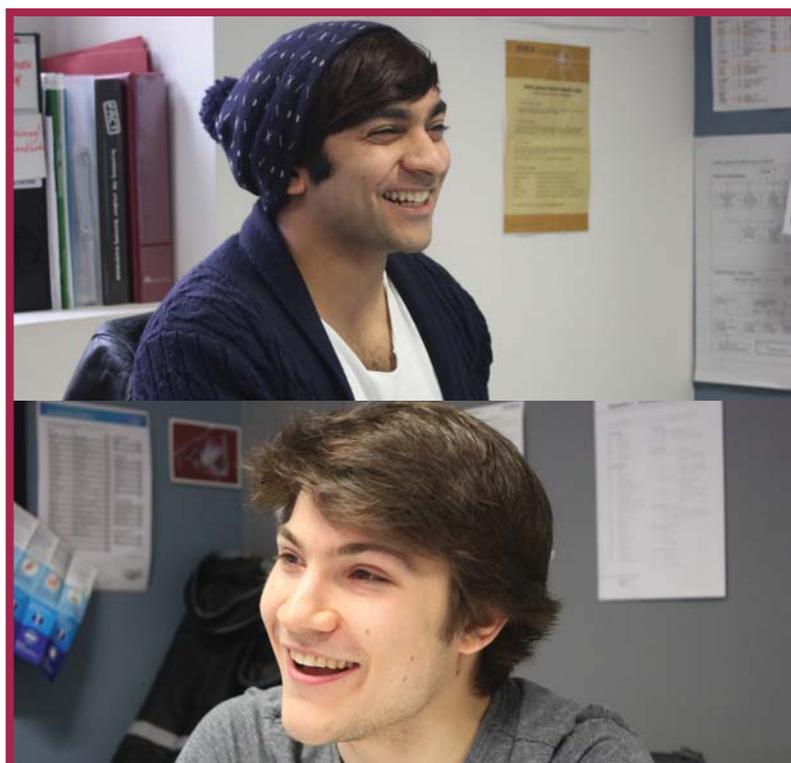
“I don’t want to redefine what I call very clear social structures that have been in existence for a long time and then overnight the state believes it can go in a particular way” commented the Archbishop, then relating this move by the government to be like the actions of dictators.

The letter appeals to Archbishop Sentamu to reconsider his comments, questioning whether marriage today really is defined as being between a man and a woman. They combat his likening the government to dictators, replying, “no new measures are being imposed upon those heterosexual couples who are already married or are planning to marry in the future”.

The LGBT Officer of Selwyn College, Lewis Bartlett, explained that ...Continued on Page 5

THE SABBATICAL INTERVIEWS

Page 7



HIGHLIGHTS

What's on

Education Matters

As part of Teach First's 10th anniversary, we will be running a series of events across university campuses in the UK entitled Education Matters.

Join us as we look at what we need to do to close the gap in achievement, access and aspiration between Britain's poorest and wealthiest children. High profile speakers will lead the debate on what needs to be done, and you can have your say on why education matters to you.

Confirmed Speakers

Richard Aung | Partner Engagement Director, Teach for All

Rich graduated from Imperial in 2005 with a Masters in Biochemistry and used his passion for the subject to teach Science as a Teach First teacher in London. After two years, he joined BT as a consultant before moving to Teach For All (TFA), a global network of over 20 charities whose mission is to expand educational opportunity. As the Partner Engagement Director for Teach First he acts at the link between Teach First in the UK and the rest of the global network.

Professor Becky Francis | Director of Education, RSA

Becky's expertise and extensive publications centre on social identities (gender, race & social class) in educational contexts and feminist theory. Becky has been involved in the commissioning of social research via her work for the Economic & Social Research Council and British Educational Research Association, and contributes to the shaping of the field in social justice and education via her media work.

Brett Wigdortz | Founder and CEO, Teach First

Brett has led Teach First as its CEO since its launch in July 2002. Brett wrote the original business plan for the charity whilst working as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company and then took a leave of absence to develop the idea. Brett is a co-founder and trustee of Teach for All, serves as a trustee of PEAS (Promoting Equality in African Schools), and was named the 2007 UK Ernst & Young Social Entrepreneur of the Year.

To book your place, email getinvolved@teachfirst.org.uk.

**LT 220, Mech Eng Building
South Kensington Campus,
27 February 18:30-20:30**

SEX SURVEY RESULTS...

...will be here next week



Our one response is set to yield most excellent conclusions

So... sorry about the delay.

It's taking its time, but it'll be worth the wait. There's some serious data correlation going on behind the scenes, with 'crucial' and 'important' findings winging their way towards next week's issue. Burning questions will be tackled head on, that I can guarantee.

At the same time, we're busy preparing a comprehensive pullout for your enjoyment.

Editor

CLASSIFIEDS

Tuition in Statistics and Computer Programming
– W9 1ET

We are looking for a statistics and computer programming tutor for 1-2 hours tuition, two evenings a week. Programming expertise should include: Python, Php, Linux, Networking in general (such as setting up a proxy server). For statistics: General stats, plus knowledge of practical implementation including statistical translation. £40 an hour. Please email Jessica@bonasmacfarlane.co.uk if interested.

Just so we're clear, Felix accepts no responsibility for services bought or sold, capiche? Good.

Lolcat (and loll-emur) of teh week



FELIX

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NEWS

Postgraduate panel highlights issues

Future of Clayponds and Holland Club remains unconfirmed

Neville Miles



Clayponds residents have voiced their support for the continuation of the postgraduate accommodation

...Continued from Front Page at the old BBC Worldwide site near Shepard's Bush, but the price that the College will charge remains unknown. There are also plans to provide a £25 per week subsidy to postgraduate accommodation, but many who attended the meeting were left sceptical whether this would be enough.

As Felix reported last month the Rector justified the decision by referring to a 2011 postgraduate focus group which revealed "that students wanted the College to provide accommodation in areas within 30 minutes travel time to the South Kensington campus [which] provides students with opportunities to socialise as they wish", which is not the case for Clayponds. Since then many Clayponds residents have spoken out in praise of Clayponds, with one commentator on the Felix website saying that "the suggestion that there's nothing to do around Ealing is silly, especially in light of the busy Clayponds social calendar", and that he can make it from the hall to College in "35 minutes". Thursday's forum also questioned the College's interpretation of last year's focus group, with it being pointed out that it showed that while postgraduates were "willing to accept a commute" as long as it was under "90 minutes", that "the preferred rent for postgraduate ac-

commodation is £145 per week".

Speaking at the forum Scott Heath, Union President, said that he would raise these issues with the College Accommodation Office, the Rector and the College Council. Speaking to Felix he admitted that the Management Board decision meant that getting a reprieve for Clayponds would be "difficult" but said that he "will push hard" to increase the accommodation bursary.

Views about the Holland Club, officially a private members club for non-academic staff but in practice frequented by many postgraduates, were more mixed. Heath indicated that while the Union will fight to ensure that student have a say in the running of the Club he believes that the College's proposed renovation of the space could have many benefits, including providing a common area for taught postgraduates, who are currently barred from the Senior Common Room. Others, however, pointed out that many postgraduates are happy with the Holland Club as it is and Club manager Kevin Young complained of the lack of communication from the College. Director of Commercial Services Jane Neary did not attend the forum.

Tang has told Felix that while he has reiterated "the importance of student input in this project" he wants to em-

phasise to students that "the proposed plans is to convert Sherfield Building level 0 into a 24/7 PG social space with a refurbished Holland Bar and not a closure as previously reported". He said that he believes "PG (Taught), who cannot currently use the SCR, can really be benefitted from this change and I expect the new space can be used by PGs who are not normally based at South Ken."

Feedback provided by attendees to the forum showed that the vast majority of attendees were still opposed to the Holland Club proposals. Heath, however, pointed out to Felix out that with only 35 people of the 100 or so invited to the event on Facebook actually attending it was unlikely that the forum was truly representative of the postgraduate population. He said that "change can be a good thing if done right" and that those who did attend the forum where the ones most vocally opposed to the changes.

The Union is planning to run a postgraduate survey in the coming weeks, which will include questions on accommodation and the Holland Club. Heath hopes that he will be able to persuade a large proportion of the student population to participate, giving both the College and Union a more accurate idea of what postgraduates want.

Sponsored Editorial

More student cuts

Discount haircuts for Imperial students at Fresh Hairdressers

More student cuts for Imperial students at South Kensington's FRESH Hairdressers.

Men's cuts £22

Women's shampoo and cut and shake dry £28

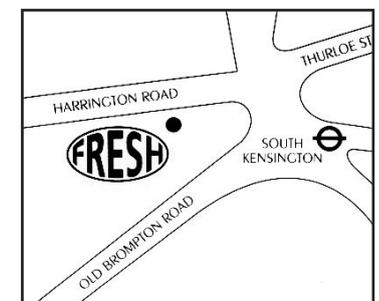
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We are only 70 metres from South Kensington tube station

To book an appointment, call **0207 823 8968**. Ask for a student discount and bring your Imperial ID.



NEWS

News Editors: **Sophia David**
Alex Nowbar

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In Brief

Deputy President (Education) seized by hitsquad

On Friday 17 February, Deputy President (Education) Jason Parmar was attacked in his office by the RAG hitsquad and dragged to Queen's Lawn, where he was tied to a bench and left to rot. It is as yet unknown who the perpetrators were, only that they were wearing masks, RAG T-shirts and for some reason had bags and rope (possibly from one member's special draw in his/her bedroom).

Their ransom demands were as follows:

- JP goes Bungee Jumping AND skydiving. Appropriate arrangements were made.
- JP leads the bucket collection on the Monday Morning of RAG week at South Ken Station
- JP does a yard of ale, at his own expense, at a time that the RAG Chair sees fit.

And he knows that if he doesn't carry them out to the letter, the same will happen again but involve the Rector's Office and a mankini.

ICU Cinema awarded compensation for Friday night Union losses

Philip Kent

A paper by ICU Cinema which has been passed by Imperial College Union's Executive Committee, the policy-executing branch of the Union, requested compensation for £94.50 in predicted losses from showings during the Film Festival, running from 10 January until 20 January, due to entry charges to enter the Union building.

It is common knowledge that the Union charge for access to Union facilities (namely the bars and Metric) on Wednesday and Friday nights, with access to other rooms (such as the basements) permitted without charge. However, on 13 January, the night of a Stooshe event in Metric, the entry barrier was being enforced "so tightly" that access to the Union Concert Hall, the venue of ICU Cinema productions, was not permitted without paying.

The extra charge of £3.50 required by the Union thus raised the cost of seeing a film at ICU Cinema to £6.50 or £7.50, depending on membership status. ICU Cinema also not-

ed that they were not aware of this restricted access until "one of our committee members was refused entry without paying".

Reduction in attendance due to the additional charge has resulted in losses for the society, which resulted in the paper requesting "compensation from the Steward and Ents team for lost ticket sales totalling[sic] £94.50", a figure described as "conservative" by the paper.

ICU Cinema told Felix in a statement that "ICU Cinema were happy that the union exec committee acknowledged the difficulties encountered by our event by approving our compensation request. While a long term solution to the problem of access to club and society events in the union building on Wednesday and Friday evenings has not yet been reached, we hope one will be found and implemented soon."

A Union steward, who was not on duty on the 17th, and also wished to remain anonymous, told Felix that there is a form that societies should submit when an event is held within the Union building, to allow access

without charging. When someone attempts to access such an event, the senior steward checks the paperwork to see if the event really is being held. He continued to say that the form may "not have been filled out correctly" or "may have been lost, or filed in the wrong folder", so causing the issue.

In addition to the approval of compensation, alternatives to the current arrangement of the entry barrier were discussed – it is partially required to ensure that the rooms are not filled beyond legal capacity. It was, however, acknowledged that this issue was a one-off, with a lack of communication from both parties being part of the issue. The union also wishes to support societies such as Cinema, especially as they want to provide entertainment and activities for students who do not wish to drink.

A loss of over £90 is significant for the society, who is experiencing a "financial deficit". Running a film currently costs the society £120, making the compensation, which was given, a large proportion of their running costs.

Imperial College
London

56 teams, 28 matches
10 sports, 1 winner

UNIVERSITY 2012
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Matches at Harlington, Wilson House, Ethos and The Stoop Stadium, Twickenham, home to Harlequins RFC



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Archbishop “hides behind banner of preserving tradition” over gay marriage statement

...Continued from Front Page
the students were stirred because “[the Archbishop] is in some respects a representative of the college”. There was a widespread outcry amongst the majority of undergraduate students at the University, showing their dismay at an advocate of their institution “promoting discrimination”. Through engaging in the public discussion Selwyn College have shown that Archbishop Sentamu’s views are in the minority, the majority of which support complete marriage equality.

Alfredo Carpineti, President of IQ, Imperial’s LGBT Society, commented on the Archbishop’s interview, seeing him as “hiding behind the banner of preserving tradition and history”. Carpineti insists that following this view would have meant, “women wouldn’t be allowed to vote, the slave trade

would still be legal and most of the advances in Science, Technology and Medicine wouldn’t exist”.

He concludes that, “gay marriage is long overdue and it’s not happening overnight. I long for the day in which discrimination of gender identity and sexual orientation is no more. I cannot wait for IQ, the Imperial College social club that I represent to become redundant: until we are all equal nobody is really equal”.

However the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey agrees with Archbishop Sentamu, but goes one step further, declaring “[we] cannot allow this act of cultural and theological vandalism to happen”. This view appears to also be backed by an alliance of Bishops, Tory MPs and other legal figures. Lord Carey informed press at the launch of Coalition of Marriage

that he was worried and disappointed at the Cameron’s move to redefine the nature of marriage. “The government has no mandate from the people to redefine marriage”, he assured, continuing to say his gay friends felt “uncomfortable” and “exploited”.

“Gay marriage is long overdue and it’s not happening overnight”

Both Archbishop Sentamu and Lord Carey both put emphasis on the fact that this issue is not about same-sex relationships, the Archbishop stating “I support civil partnerships”. The big breakthrough of 2005 gave same-sex

couples many of the same rights as heterosexual ones, such as custody of children, social security, and inheritance. However currently same-sex couples cannot be married in the same sense as heterosexual couples.

Britain seems to be behind the times in this respect as for example some states in the US have legalized same-sex marriages. The most recent state to join this group is Washington. Governor Christine Gregoire signed the new bill this month, saying, “I’m proud our same-sex couples will no longer be treated as separate but equal”. This came about just before the Governor of New Jersey vetoed a bill for the same cause, despite it being cleared by the state Senate, renewing a call for a referendum. Democrats supporting the bill were disappointed at this move, arguing gay marriage to be a civil right that

should not be subject to referendum.

Even in a country where Christianity has more influence same-sex marriage has been legalized in seven states. However seven out of the fifty states still shows that there is a long way to go in the ‘land of the free’. Over time the UK has become an increasingly secular society, so why should the meaning of the word marriage be isolated just to that of being between a man and a woman? The meaning of marriage has already changed over time with the changing of society. Previously marriage used to be for status, family honor and politics (as pointed out in the letter by Selwyn College). Today the majority of people marry because they are in love, no matter their religion, race, or social background. So why is it that same-sex couples in Britain today cannot do this also?

James Mottram



Selwyn College, Cambridge, gave Archbishop Sentamu’s views a cold reception following his statement



Attention all Postgraduates

Have you ever felt there should be more to life than labs and reports? Thought so. This is your chance to improve the life of Imperial postgraduates.

Break the mould. Every postgraduate is busy. Every postgraduate asks for more social events and services. Can you help us end the cycle?

GSA President

Top of the tree – the GSA President is the public face of all 5,000 postgraduate students at Imperial. As an active member of senior College and Imperial College Union committees, you will be responsible for overseeing all events and representational activity. If you have a talent for leadership, can be the voice of your fellow students, and want experience in the inner workings of College, this is your chance.

GSA Vice President

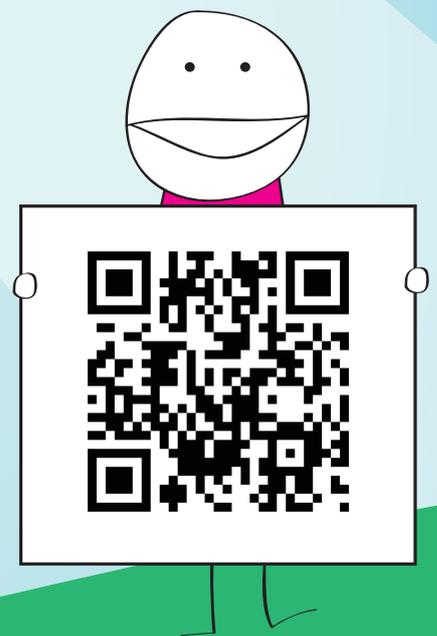
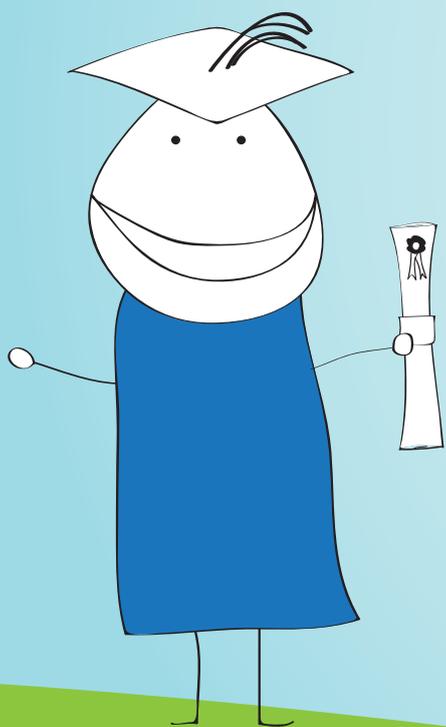
As the President's right hand woman (or man), you will take charge of all information and communication within and from the GSA. By keeping in touch with the President, the Academic & Welfare Officers, the Events Team and Focus Groups, you will make sure that all PGs are up-to-date with the latest GSA news and events. If you want to take the GSA in new directions and serve postgraduates in innovative ways, this could be your chance.

Secretary

You'll be responsible for the GSA's non-financial matters our meetings, paperwork, and electronic resources such as the GSA website and wiki. You'll also work closely with Imperial College Union staff to keep the GSA in line with Union developments and policies. If you want experience of volunteer management and building organisations, apply now.

Treasurer

You'll be responsible for the money – a four-figure annual budget that covers events, publicity and planning. You'll be crucial to the success and viability of events such as the Postgrad Mingle, Ball and Film Nights. If you see a gap in the market for postgraduate socialising, and want to stake a claim for postgraduates in the social life of Imperial, then take up this position now.



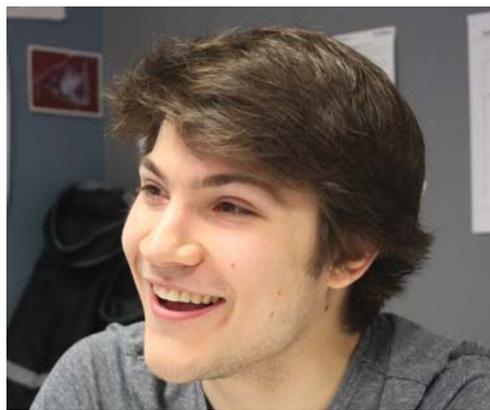
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NEWS

The Sabbatical Interviews continue

Matthew Colvin talks to the remaining Deputy Presidents about the year's highs and lows



Nicolas Massie Deputy President (Welfare)

The DPW helps students with various welfare issues that they could potentially encounter in their time at Imperial College

What have you enjoyed most?

That's hard to say – it's been brilliant, it's been exciting, but most of all I've enjoyed seeing actual change for students. Imperial has never had any support for students who aren't in halls and with a bit of effort I've managed to secure funding for them directly from college because they saw that that was something that needed doing. I guess it's just the general thing of asking for something to happen and if it's reasonable it usually happens. For example, in the cafeteria, there was no gluten-free signposting. A group of students said they wanted it so I took the issue to catering and it happened. In addition, there wasn't enough storage capacity for cycle storage in Beit Quad; students said that they wanted more and now it's more than doubled. It was also really satisfying working on the student experience survey because we got a 50% response rate. College is working on that and once that's fully unpicked a lot of interesting things will come out of it.

What have you enjoyed least?

Frustration: trying to get staff and students to do things when they're just too busy. Very rarely is it lack of will – it's almost always that it just gets left by the wayside. There's also the frustration of not having enough time to get everything you want to do done this year. However this is going to change as I've created training for welfare officers, so they'll be better equipped to do their jobs so, in turn, students are better equipped to achieve their goals in terms of campaigns. It's also incredibly frustrating occasionally not being kept in the loop with big decisions. Sometimes you come up against a wall and are unable to change things that seem easy but for bureaucratic or logistical and legal reasons that can't be done. It is also hard to let people know what you're doing and to maintain dialogue – it's not easy.

How far have you delivered on your manifesto points?

I had seven objectives. I would say the introduction of a GUM clinic at the Health Centre isn't possible, however I've been in contact with charities to see if they'll provide screenings on campus, which is looking hopeful. As for the rest of them, I've done them. Revamping volunteering is really exciting; we've engaged a staff

volunteer who is going to create a brokerage service to help students achieve their goals. For campaign weeks we have a new system – any student can campaign on anything they want. They just have to fill in an application form; they don't have to be a special officer to do that. Apart from that I've come up with a billion new objectives. We're soon going to have poster boards around college with welfare information on them in the toilets. We ran the welfare survey. We're having Imperial's first ever blood drive – that's coming up in the next few weeks, and we are about to regain our fair-trade status which we lost two or three years ago.

Is there such a thing as an average day?

There is no average day! For example, yesterday I was on the interview panel for a new disabilities tutor from 10am to 5:30pm, after which I had to catch up with 80 new emails in my inbox. The day before that I had 5 hours of meetings and emails in-between! However, in an average week I have two or three big college committee meetings, five or six meetings with senior college staff about issues such as security, accommodation, counselling, and the Health Centre. Then I have several meetings with students, the welfare officers and sometimes students come to me with campaigns they want to run or other personal issues.

What have you gained from being DPW?

I would say an appreciation of the importance of prioritising big projects. If you spend all your time answering emails or going to meetings then you don't actually get anything done. I've also learnt how much the Union does and how much you can get done in this position. I've also been inspired meeting senior people who have similar values and care about similar things.

What advice would you give to those considering running for DPW?

You really need to think carefully about what needs to change. You should find out what issues there are, learn about quality legislation, about how many different areas the DPW looks after, and how completely different your year could be depending on where you decide to prioritise. You also need to realise how important it is to decide and to have good officers so that they can focus on certain areas while you look after others.



Jason Parmar Deputy President (Education)

The role of DPE exists to serve the academic needs of the student body through liaising with academics and College staff

What have you enjoyed most?

I've enjoyed having an excellent insight into the higher education system. I get to meet representatives from other Russell Group Student Unions at the Aldwych Group where we talk about a whole host of topics. Seeing how other institutions deal with issues, and seeing how Imperial is unique in its own way has been fantastic. I've also enjoyed learning time efficient techniques that you can only learn where you're balancing a huge amount of things. I've done things I didn't think I could do in the past by effectively organising my time. I was also fortunate enough to attend the IDEA league and take charge in running my own projects, like Representation Week 2012 and working in a representation team to produce the White Paper Response and the National Student Survey Response.

What have you enjoyed least?

It was hard at the start to get things done as quickly as I wanted. There are more bureaucratic processes both in the College and Union than I naively anticipated. Although we aren't one of the most bureaucratic institutions, occasionally it can be frustrating when things move more slowly than you'd initially planned. But a larger contributor to "Sabbatical dissatisfaction" is probably the sheer amount of meetings and e-mails. Some can feel like an inefficient use of time as you often create a large workload through your meetings and then can be in the position where you don't have time to complete it!

How far have you delivered on your manifesto points?

Obviously there aren't any 8am starts, but the College Working Day is still a contentious and very much ongoing issue. It's definitely not over yet, and we're trying to make sure we get involved with all the future strategic conversations. One question that's in the back of my mind is 'is an hour too long or short for a lecture?'

This year we made sure our voice was still heard by the government by writing our response to the Government's White Paper. Interestingly, the government actually listened to us and have scraped penalties for early repayment. I'd like to think that it wasn't just coincidence and we helped the government make the decision. Soon, we'll introduce Notebox, which is a site for shared learning for all Imperial students. It has notes, past papers and forums for every module in every department.

Regarding e-learning in general, it's been fantas-

tic to see the idea of podcasting being resonated around the university (mostly with students) in line with my manifesto 11 months ago. We might still be years behind places like MIT but we've approved Panopto as the method for video podcasting after an extended pilot scheme where some 200 lectures were trialled. I ideally hope for an rollout before the end of the year, but most likely I'd be pleased if it can be fully rolled out by the start of next year.

Is there such a thing as an average day?

Just like I'm sure every other sabbatical in the country says, "there is no such thing as an average week". But it's true, our remits mean we cover so many different areas that we're always doing something different each week, it's what makes the job so interesting. Usually there are one or two of the many large committees I sit on that are usually two-three hours long, along with meeting with senior College figures. The rest of the time is spent with the huge amount of emails/tasks and some of my own projects. Finally, for a break I'll play some squash and get out some of that excess stress.

What have you gained from being DPE?

I've gained an incredible insight into how a multimillion pound company and university works, the experience has been amazing. I've been privileged to proudly represent all 14,000 students at Imperial College. I get the opportunity to work alongside world leaders, which is amazing. I've gained more public speaking experience, and definitely improved my leadership and communication skills. I've been able to significantly improve my non-academic skills in this role, which nicely compliments the excellent education I've had so far at Imperial.

What advice would you give to those considering running for DPE?

There's a huge amount of emails and meetings. I was surprised coming in and not being able to just get on with your projects. There's a large remit and it's almost like being a consultant at times. I think it's really important that next year's DPE remembers that you won't always get the quick results you expect, there's often complications, approvals or financial issues. Also, a lot of the job is thinking strategically. You can't and shouldn't always expect immediate results as much of what you do will be sowing the seeds for future generations of students, so some of your work often won't be seen for years to come.

Features Editors: **Katy Bettany**
Stephen Smith

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FEATURE

Truth, lies and tall tales about

Stephen Smith conducts an in-depth investigation of the Workfare scandal. Is it really forced

Aspectre is haunting our futures – the spectre of unemployment. Most of us are soon-to-be graduates: some of us, inevitably, are the soon-to-be unemployed. With every month, increasing numbers of young people are finding themselves jobless, and increasing numbers are turning to the government for support.

But what kind of support do they receive? The “Work for your Benefits” scandal has flooded the media with allegations and insinuations about the government’s treatment of the unemployed: is it supportive help or slave labour? As graduation day approaches, we all need to be aware of what is really going on; we need to be prepared for when unemployment comes for us.

A case study: Cait Reilly

You might be familiar with the story of Cait Reilly, an unemployed Birmingham University graduate who wanted to be a curator. Jobless for 18 months, she eventually managed to find unpaid work in a museum to gain experience while looking for a paid job. But a museum was not good enough for the government: she had to cancel the work and take up “training” at Poundland instead, or lose her £53 per week Jobseeker’s Allowance.

“It was not training, but two weeks’ unpaid work stacking shelves and cleaning floors,” she wrote in the *Guardian*, “I came out with nothing; Poundland gained considerably.” Her story started a wave of popular disdain for what has come to be known as “workfare”.

As part of its Get Britain Working programme, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has introduced new work experience schemes for the unemployed “which aim to fight poverty, support the most vulnerable and help people break the cycle of benefit dependency.”

But critics argue that the reforms are nothing more than forced labour, that they exacerbate unemployment and that they provide corporations with free work paid for by the taxpayer. “We were doing exactly the same work as the paid staff,” said Reilly, “If the Government subsidises high street chains with free labour, they don’t have to recruit. It causes unemployment rather than [solving] it.”

Reilly has become a divisive figure: a hero for those on the left, a lazy elitist to those on the right. But for all its emotional power, the truth behind her story has remained elusive. In her own arti-

cle in the *Guardian*, Reilly stresses that her work was compulsory, “I thought the ‘training’ was optional, and it came as a shock to be told I was required to attend;” but the government’s website for sector-based work academies (the scheme in which Reilly was made to participate) clearly states “taking part is voluntary”. So which is it?

The government seems to have made finding the answer to this question rather challenging. Unlike other aspects of Get Britain Working, the sector-based work academy schemes seem to have no formal regulations (or if they do, they are not publicly available).

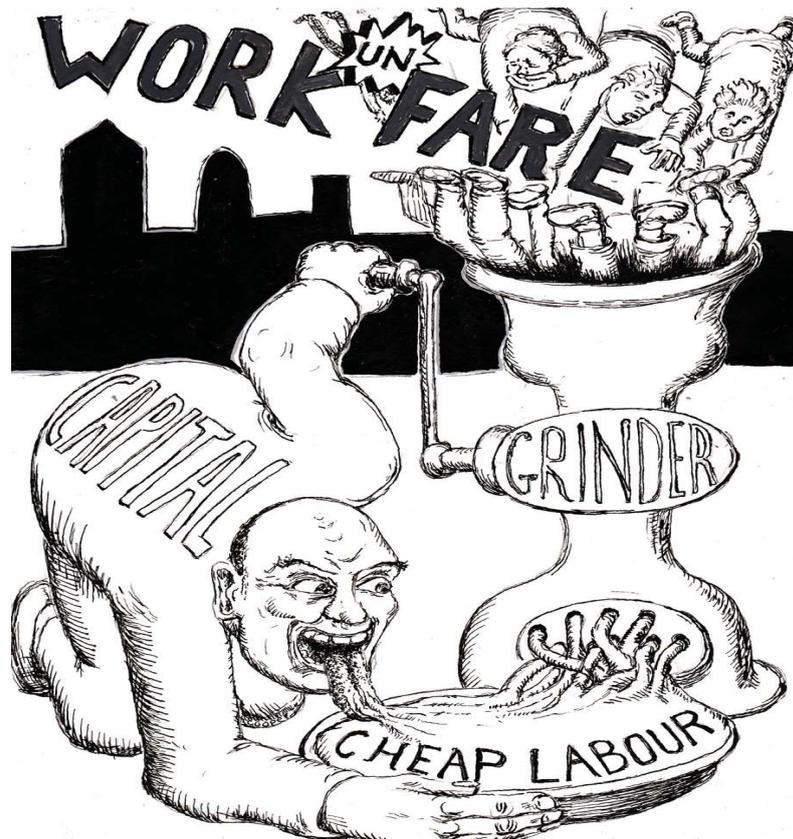
But it is possible to find regulations: simply a matter of discovering an obscure inter-departmental memo from 15th June 2011 stating that, “Service Academies ... should now be known as sector-based work academies.” Now, Service Academies do have formal regulations (though they are a challenge to find) and they make for interesting reading.

“The decision to participate in a Service Academy will be voluntary” according to the regulations, but, “once a claimant...has opted to participate in a Service Academy, taking up the place and attendance on the training becomes mandatory.” You can agree or disagree to a work experience placement, but if you agree you are not allowed to change your mind.

It sounds like Cait Reilly was the victim of a very unfortunate misunderstanding. Her adviser rightly told her the training was optional, but neglected to mention that she would have to stay for the entire training period if she agreed to it. Moreover, in her *Guardian* article, Reilly claims she was told the training would last for one week, rather than two: one week would have been fine, two weeks forced her to quit her museum job. Her adviser’s stupidity cost her her job and, quite possibly, spoil her chances of ever becoming a curator.

We might reasonably ask why Reilly was offered the training at all. According to the DWP, “sector-based work academies are one of the services that Jobcentre Plus offers to help you get back into work.” But clearly Reilly’s job at the museum was more practical than a Poundland training scheme, especially given that she “already had retail experience,” as she claims. Presumably her careers adviser simply forgot to take this into account.

Who, then, is at fault? If we believe the right-wing press, then we must blame Cait for complaining at all, but in truth Cait was completely right to complain about her dreadful treatment.



A cartoon demonstrating the popular perception of workfare

If we believe the left, then we must blame the government for having this scheme in the first place: understandable, but again wrong. The blame can only be left with the careers adviser, and her employers.

The fact that Reilly’s adviser evidently caused her suffering raises the question of how much power advisers actually have. What do they have the authority to do, who do they work for, and are they accountable when they make mistakes?

Forced labour or not?

The DWP’s Get Britain Working homepage is a chaotic mixture of various overlapping schemes, programmes and initiatives. Aside from Reilly’s sector-based work academies, the government also offers two other alleged “forced labour” schemes: Work Experience and Mandatory Work Activity (MWA). These are the source of a lot of the popular anger about the Get Britain Working programme, and, as with many things that cause anger, they are not fully understood.

Writing in the *Guardian*, John Harris said of people on Work Experience schemes, “they can refuse to take part or pull out during the first seven days, but thereafter the work becomes compulsory.” This is not quite true. Benefits

can, in fact, be removed from any job seeker who, “has, without good cause, neglected to avail himself of a reasonable opportunity of a place on a training scheme.” In other words, if your advisor suggests a Work Experience scheme and you refuse it, you risk having benefits stopped for anything from one week to six months.

But fear not! There is a way to avoid Work Experience: you must first agree to it, then attend the first meeting, and then within seven days you must tell your adviser in writing that you wish to leave the job. Simple! Not only is Work Experience rather more punitive than John Harris claimed, but it comes with a prohibitively complex set of regulations that take a lot of time to understand: it must be easy to get caught out by them, and get punished as a consequence.

The Mandatory Work Activity schemes are altogether more controversial. “Where advisers believe a jobseeker will benefit from experiencing the habits and routines of working life, they have the power to refer them to a four week placement,” according to the Department for Work and Pensions. But according to John Harris, “people are forced – via the threat of their jobseeker’s allowance being suspended – to put in 30 hours a week doing work.” Again, rhetoric about MWA is everywhere but facts are harder to come by.

The content of these schemes is very like Work Experience, the real difference is in the sanctions for failure. A job seeker cannot choose whether or not to participate in the scheme, it is aimed at those who lack the motivation to voluntarily take part in Work Experience. If you refuse the scheme, you lose 13 weeks’ JSA; if you miss a day of work, you lose 13 weeks’ JSA; if your supervisor is dissatisfied with your performance, you lose 13 weeks’ JSA. If you fail your Mandatory Work Activity twice then the penalty increases to 26 weeks. And if the Welfare Reform Bill becomes law, a triple failure at MWA will cancel your benefits for 3 years.

If 26 weeks with no income (and presumably no food or shelter) were not bad enough, note that there is no way to appeal against the decision, even if you believe the punishment to be a mistake. The only way is to take the government to court, a high-stress prospect, even worse at a time when you have no money to pay for travel or a lawyer.

If you are able to demonstrate “hardship” then you may be able to keep your benefits, but in the MWA regulations the definition of “hardship” focusses almost exclusively on those who are severely disabled, pregnant, or with young children. There is little hope for an able-bodied, childless job seeker.

It is disconcertingly easy to describe all three kinds of work experience as “forced labour”. In the case of MWA, the work is genuinely forced; the other cases provide ways of avoiding the work, but the regulations are so unnecessarily complicated that knowing how to quit is a huge challenge in itself. I believe it is likely that the government made the regulations complex on purpose: this way they can claim the schemes are voluntary, while in practice they are not.

The advisers’ authority is also worth questioning. In all these cases an adviser has the power to force someone to work, even when, as with Cait Reilly, the work spoils their future prospects. The MWA regulations tell us where this authority comes from: the power to force someone to work “may be exercised by, or by employees of, such person (if any) as may be authorised by the Secretary of State.” Up until now, I had believed that the advisers were employed by the state as civil servants: I was wrong.

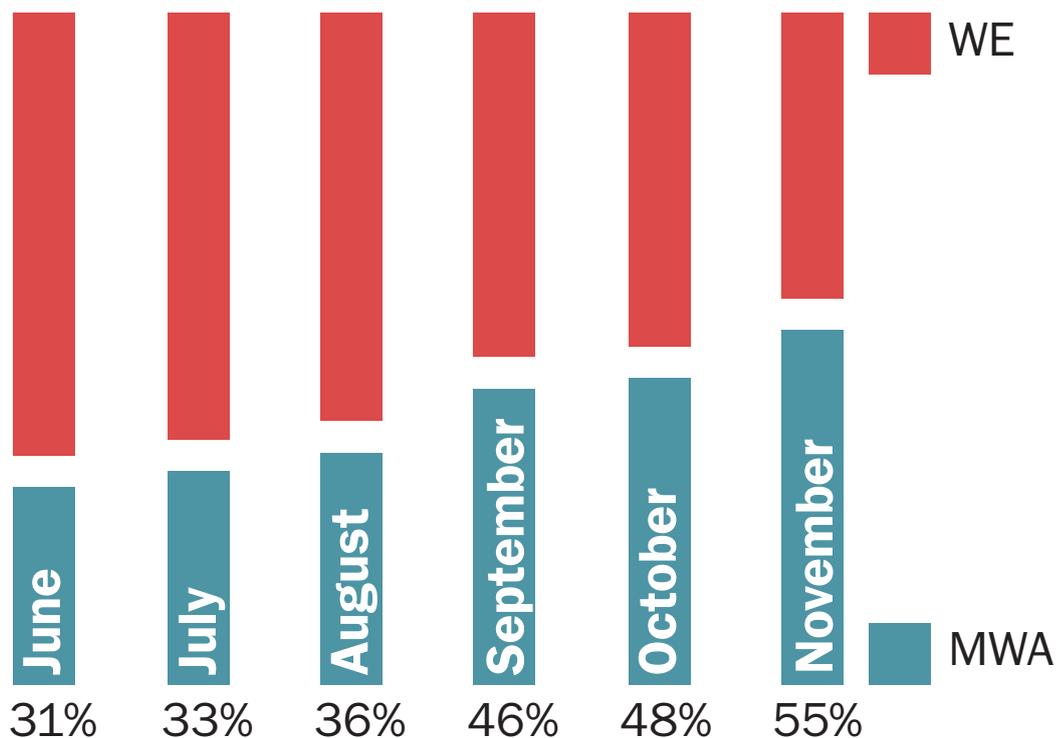
The Job Centre Myth

In the popular imagination, Jobcentre Plus is a government agency and its careers advisers work for the govern-

Out “Work for your Benefits”

ed labour? Who is benefitting from it? And what is our government doing in our name?

Graphic by Veronika McQuade



Graph showing Mandatory Work Activity (MWA) referrals as a percentage of the total, compared with Work Experience (WE). A sharp increase in September 2011 coincides with the privatisation of Jobcentre Plus

ment. For example, Jim Murphy, a lawyer who has been very critical of the Get Britain Working scheme, said that it “amounts to exploitation, decided at the whim of a Jobcentre Plus adviser.” None of this is true. In fact, as of last year, Jobcentre Plus doesn’t even exist at all. It is now merely the public face of the DWP.

In its place are a series of private employment consultancy firms. In London, for instance, the MWA is provided by a company called Seetec, in the South East by A4e. A4e has a particularly bad reputation. On Monday, the Mail published an article stating “Labour MPs claim A4e’s record on finding people jobs is ‘abysmal’” and demanding that Emma Harrison, the head of A4e, should stand down. It seems that while Harrison was in charge of A4e, she was also advising the government on its Get Britain Working programme. Presumably not just an innocent coincidence.

Nor is Seetec scandal-free. According to the unemployment rights blog Intensive Activity, Seetec do not provide refunds for travel expenses, though they are obliged to do so in their contract. MWA participants in London, then, are forced to choose between losing all their JSA, or spending it on transport to and from their compulsory work. A weekly London bus pass for a JSA recipient is £9.40; for an unemployed young person, this reduces total

weekly income to around £44. MWA therefore makes life extremely uncomfortable for a jobless young Londoner.

It is worth remembering that the careers advisers mentioned above are employees of these companies. They have the authority to make someone take up Mandatory Work Activity, and therefore the power to cause serious suffering to an individual whenever they so desire. Being private contractors, they are accountable to no one but their managers, and there is no formal means of complaint except, of course, through the courts. It is impossible, then, for even the Secretary of State to sack a bad adviser.

The MWA contract between the government and Seetec is available online, and it includes a clause stating that Seetec (and presumably also the other companies) are paid according to how many people they get onto MWA. Perhaps advisers would force job seekers into MWA in more situations than necessary, just to make more money. After all, making money is what private companies do.

Government statistics released this month (see above graph) show that the ratio of MWA to Work Experience participants – a ratio we would expect to stay roughly constant – sharply increased in September and again in November; funnily enough, September was the month in which Jobcentre Plus started being replaced by private

employment consultants. The joys of privatisation...

Given all the above, I think it is fair to say that the switch from Jobcentre Plus to private consultants was a bad idea. There is the corruption at A4e, the illegal behaviour at Seetec, the very high possibility of unnecessary forced labour, and the unaccountability of the advisers, and all of this just since September 2011. Conservatives... What will they do next, privatise the NHS?

Who benefits?

All premeditated crimes have motives, and the same can be said for the Get Britain Working programme. Who benefits? There are at least five parties to consider: the job seekers, the government, the taxpayers, the employment consultants, and the corporations. All could lose or gain from the work experience schemes; looking at who gets what might enlighten us to the truth.

First, the job seekers. The scheme is intended to help them, as the Department for Work and Pensions says, they mean to “fight poverty, support the most vulnerable and help people break the cycle of benefit dependency.” But the latest unemployment figures reveal 8.4% unemployment, which rises to 22.2% among 16 to 24-year-olds, and unemployment is rising all the time: so

the work experience scheme will not have an appreciable effect on youth unemployment. It is arguable that the jobless are gaining skills for their CVs for when the recession is over; but this argument must be set against the fact that job seekers are being forced to work for under £2 per hour. I think we can confidently say that, except in perhaps a few circumstances, job seekers do not benefit from the scheme.

The media and (to an extent) public hysteria about “benefit scroungers” was fairly ubiquitous in 2011; the *Daily Mail*’s infamous Jan Moir, for example, said of Cait Reilly, “nobody owes this girl a living. Least of all those who work.” Then, Get Britain Working probably seemed like it was working for the government. Now, however, the same *Daily Mail* has criticised the government’s handling of the scheme, and on top of this there are public protests and suggestions that the government wants to return us to Victorian Britain. As yet there are no reliable polls on the matter so it is hard to tell, but I would guess that the weight public opinion is against the government in this case: they thought they would benefit from the scheme but they haven’t.

If taxpayers benefit from the scheme it can only be because fewer people are accepting Jobseeker’s Allowance, either because they have returned to work, or because they have had their allowance removed as punishment. Unemployment is rising, and has been for some time, so the former cannot be true. As for the latter, it is impossible to tell how many people have been punished, since the published statistics are so minimal they could hardly be called statistics at all.

We do know, however, that 24,010 people were referred to MWA between May and November 2011. If we assume that 10% of these were punished and lost their benefits for 13 weeks, the government will have saved about £2 million, a negligible quantity. Since MWA is the most punitive and the most used of the three work experience schemes, we can guess a total of about £6 million gained from the work programme in 6 months. The taxpayer, then, can hardly be said to benefit.

Comparatively, employment consultancy firms must adore Get Britain Working. Not only does the privatisation of Jobcentre Plus provide companies like Seetec and A4e with very lucrative contracts, but the government is a customer which can (hopefully) never run out of money. There is no doubt that these companies benefit greatly from the programme.

With corporations it is a much more

complex story. Let us take Tesco, for example. At first, they benefited slightly from the scheme: for each MWA placement, they got 120 hours of labour for free. That’s £730 saved per person, at minimum wage. But Tesco is a vast corporation, so the amount of money which they saved in this way is negligible.

Recently, however, Tesco has suffered from serious public anger. After an advert was placed on the Jobcentre Plus website advertising work at Tesco in return for Jobseeker’s Allowance, thousands of angry consumers attacked Tesco’s Facebook wall threatening to boycott the company until they stopped employing MWA participants. Soon afterwards, angry campaigners staged a protest at a Tesco store in Westminster, forcing it to close.

Over all, Tesco has not benefited from Get Britain Working, and the same can be said, though to a lesser extent, of the other participating corporations.

Stupid or evil?

We are left, then, with a government scheme in which the only beneficiaries are private employment consultants. Although, were it not for the unanticipated public anger, the government and some corporations would have benefited also. Job seekers, for whom the scheme is allegedly designed, come out worse off over all.

Which leaves one question: is Get Britain Working a very poorly designed scheme or a cynical attack on the unemployed? I know which side I come down on: government advisers are surely not stupid enough to unintentionally create such a dreadful programme.

What we have here is a nasty scheme which punishes the unemployed and benefits only a few companies; which puts power into the hands of unaccountable advisers, and pays them to abuse it; which has the ability to totally ruin the lives of those it is explicitly intended to help. But it is a scheme which many of us may soon have to face.

As graduation day approaches, and youth unemployment rises, the Jobseeker’s Allowance looks like an increasingly likely possibility. But we must be wary: this is a programme designed to trick the jobless, not help them. From the moment we graduate, we could all be Cait Reilly.

A fully referenced version of this article can be found at rustylight.blogspot.com

In brief

New research into Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's Disease affects almost 30 million people around the world but it remains a poorly understood condition with no cure and few effective treatments. However, recent studies by scientists at Columbia and Harvard universities provide tantalising evidence of how the disease spreads through the brain and even offer hope of way to stop it in its tracks.

Tau proteins have a vital function inside neurons in stabilising microtubules, which transport vital chemicals around these brain cells. In Alzheimer's patients, however, these proteins become distorted and begin to clump together – causing the tubules to collapse and the cells to die. This is known as tauopathy. Tangles of tau protein, along with plaques consisting of the beta amyloid peptide, are main biochemical indicators of Alzheimer's.

Previously scientists had been divided on whether this tauopathy spread from one area of the brain to neighbouring regions or whether it developed in different areas independently, with some regions being affected first since they were more vulnerable.

Studies on humans had proved inconclusive. Research on mice genetically engineered to produce the distorted human tau was suggested, but was initially abandoned since scientists previously were only able to create mice that produced the faulty protein across their entire brain at the same time, making it impossible to map how it spread with time.

However, in a paper published in PLoS One, the Columbia team describe how they managed to engineer mice which initially only produced the protein in the entorhinal cortex, an area of the brain responsible for memory production that is one of the first to be affected by Alzheimer's in humans.

Examining the brains of mice of different ages showed clear evidence that tauopathy spread slowly outwards from the entorhinal cortex with time. While scientists are as yet unsure of the exact mechanism that causes this spread they believe that their findings may apply to humans as the dissected mice brains showed striking similarities to those of deceased Alzheimer's sufferers.

Better knowledge of how Alzheimer's works may lead to people being able to be diagnosed earlier. More importantly, since these findings seem to prove the theory that the disease originates in one part of the brain, it may be possible to protect neighbouring areas from 'infection' – thereby preventing further progression of the disease.

Further research with the genetically modified mice may help to identify specific treatments that accomplish this. Scientists also suspect that other degenerative brain diseases, such as Parkinson's, might spread through the brain in a similar manner, meaning that it is possible that treatments for them will also be found.

Marie-Laure Hicks

Fast neutrinos foiled by wiring

Last year's announcement by the OPERA particle physics collaboration that they had seen neutrinos travel faster than light may have been down to nothing more than dodgy wiring, it was announced yesterday. One of two possible causes was a faulty optical fibre, and the other concerns an oscillator used in GPS clock synchronisation. OPERA is still studying the extent of these two effects. New measurements are planned for May.

Kelly Oakes

Black holes: cosmic creators

Pavitar Singh Devgon

In the 1930s, soon after Einstein came up with his equations on general relativity, Karl Schwarzschild developed a solution that predicted what became known as a black hole. Essentially a mass compressed into such a small volume that its gravitational pull is literally irresistible; not even light is fast enough to escape. But then you already knew that.

Since then, black holes have been thought to exist at the centre of just about every galaxy and acts as a cosmic plug hole, pulling matter in and cutting it off from the rest of the world. Small wonder then that they have such a reputation as destroyers of stars and planets. However, one international team of astronomers is studying an opposing side effect – black holes may help stars to form.

Stanislav Shabala of the University of Tasmania, Mark Crockett of University of Oxford and Sugata Kaviraj of Imperial College led a team to investigate this phenomenon within the nearby Centaurus A galaxy (a cool 15 million light years away). Their results were published in Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Since most black holes are not static but spinning, they can distort the space around them into spiral patterns. This means that the stars and stellar dust around the black hole are constantly in motion, being compressed, stretched, rapidly heated and quickly cooled. When enough of this dust comes together in a small enough area, gravity acts and clusters form, eventually growing into the bright stars of the sky.

Using one of the Hubble Space Telescope's cameras, Wide Field Camera 3, the astronomical team studied what is known in the business as NGC 5128, more easily recognised as the Centaurus A galaxy, near (in an astronomical sense) the Centaurus constellation. Scientists observed a belt of dust running across the galaxy in the



Artist's impression of a black hole

visible light spectrum. But inspecting the ultraviolet and X-ray frequencies, they saw that the belt extends almost a million light years from the black hole in the centre. Analysis of this data provided the astronomers with an exceptionally accurate map of the history of the stars forming in this area.

It appears that the distance from the black hole and the age of the stars has a correlation; the stars at the very extremes of the cosmic outflow are younger, increasing in age as you get closer to the black hole. This supports the theory that the denser regions of dust near the black hole are able to compress into stars, forming at earlier times.

So why do astronomers look up into the sky and take pictures of the stars? Well, one of the largest areas of research in 21st century physics focuses on the conditions of the early universe and what was going on then that led up to what we see today. As Dr Shabala comments, "This enhancement of star formation by outflows would have been even more important in a younger universe, where dense clumps of gas were much more common. Our study highlights the need to consider the role of 'positive' feedback from outflows in our current paradigm of galaxy formation. It adds an exciting new piece to a great puzzle – that of understanding how galaxies came to be the way they are today."

New autism diagnosis in infants

Marie-Laure Hicks

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects approximately 1% of the population. The main characteristics of ASD are difficulties in social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviours. It is a difficult condition to diagnose, especially in young children, but researchers at Birkbeck College have just published some promising findings that open a new path to early diagnosis.

At the moment, ASD can be diagnosed from the age of two by doctors and psychiatrists with the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) which observes social interaction between the patient and the examiner. Mayada El-sabbagh, from Birkbeck College at the University of London, and her colleagues, have published a study in Current Biology measuring the brain's response to viewing faces gazing directly toward or away from infants aged between 6 and 10 months, from a sample of 104 infants (54 with familial risk for ASD and 50 control infants).

Event Related Potentials (ERPs) were measured by electroencephalography as the children were shown faces gazing toward or away from them. At 36 months, the infants were clinically tested for ASD.

The results showed differences between the control group, the risk but no ASD group and the risk ASD group. More specifically, the amplitude for gaze shifts away versus toward was higher for the infants not diagnosed with ASD. More research has to be done, but by developing this method, a diagnosis for children as young as 6 months old could be possible.

Most symptoms of ASD are not observed before the child is one, but this study has shown a clear difference between infants with and without the disorder. The starting point of the study was the observation that autistic people often find it difficult to look at others in the eye. Describing this difference in sensitivity to eye gaze at such a young age could provide an explanation of the other symptoms of autism. Sensitivity to eye gaze is linked to social and communication skills. This

insensitivity in infants affects the development of the brain and could provide an explanation for the social – communication difficulties that define ASD.

ASD is still a very misunderstood disorder. It is thought to be caused by genetic and environmental factors and some researchers are working on diagnosing from the genome of patients. This is a difficult and complex task as each patient is different and many combinations of genetic variations have been known to lead to some form of ASD. Early diagnosis however is crucial. It provides parents with the information necessary to explain their child's behaviour and take care of them. More importantly, the earlier ASD is diagnosed, the earlier it is possible to 'treat' the child and put in place the necessary care and support structure. There is no cure for ASD, but some methods exist and offer the tools to encourage the development of the child and his/her social integration. One of these methods, Applied Behaviour Analysis, uses systematic teaching and behavioural learning theory which is, amid some controversy, successful.

Exploring the God Particle

Michele Tonutti explores the Large Hadron Collider's main experiment

If the God Particle is real, 2012 will be the year of its discovery. Scientists at CERN have been searching for proof of the existence of the Higgs boson since 2008, when the construction of the Large Hadron Collider finally came to an end. Now, after four years, the LHC – a 27-kilometre ring of superconducting magnets located in Geneva, Switzerland – is ready to take up a new challenge. On 13 February, CERN announced that in the next year the Collider will fire proton rays at an energy of 4 TeV. Until now, the LHC has run at a beam energy of ‘only’ 1.18 TeV (Physics fun fact: 1TeV is about the kinetic energy of a flying mosquito). Up until 2009, the highest energy used for this kind of experiment was less than 1 TeV; this record was held by the Tevatron accelerator at the Fermi Laboratory in Illinois, USA.

So far, researchers have been hesitant to boost up the working energy of the LHC, even though the system is meant to sustain collisions of protons up to 14 TeV. The major quench incident that occurred in 2008, just a few months after the inauguration, showed that extreme care is needed when dealing with such highly energetic particles. In that case, faulty connection between magnets caused six tons of liquid helium to be dispersed in the tunnel. This caused heavy damage to the instrumentation, forcing CERN to stop the experiment for several weeks. Money and time were wasted, and people's safety threatened.

Moreover, in March 2010, the new research program officially started with a 7 TeV proton collision (3.5 TeV per beam), causing mass panic around the world and rumors of a possible catastrophe. Despite the general fear, the LHC has been functioning as smoothly as ever. However, the potential risks of these experiments are not to be ignored.

In the press release following the announcement, CERN's Director for Accelerators and Technology Steve Myers said: “When we started operating the LHC for physics in 2010, we chose the lowest safe beam energy consistent with the physics we wanted to do. Two good years of operational experience with beam and many additional measurements made during 2011 give us the confidence to safely move up a notch, and thereby extend the physics reach of the experiments.”

Myers also mentioned that the LHC will undergo a long shutdown at the end of the year. During this 20-months break, new technology and improvements will be implemented, so that in 2015 the collider will be able to work at the maximum energy of 7 TeV per beam. However, Research Director Ser-

Physical Sciences Laboratory, University of Wisconsin-Madison



Are we on a collision course with the Higgs boson?

gio Bertolucci believes that it is likely that major results will already be seen by the end of the year. “By the time the LHC goes into its first long stop at the end of this year, we will either know that a Higgs particle exists or have ruled out the existence of a Standard Model Higgs,” he claims in the press release. “Either would be a major advance in our exploration of nature, bringing us closer to understanding how the fundamental particles acquire their mass, and marking the beginning of a new chapter in particle physics.”

The Higgs boson is often referred to as the “God Particle” because of its central importance in modern particle physics.

According to the Standard Model – the currently most accepted theory on interactions between particles and forces – its existence is necessary to explain why all the other particles have most of their mass. Its discovery would therefore constitute a major step forward towards a better understanding of how the laws governing our Universe work.

The LHC is the main contributor of data regarding the Higgs boson, and the announcement strengthened the already widely held feeling that we are now closer to finding this particle than we have ever been before. The results produced by ATLAS and CMS, the two main experiments looking for the Higgs

at CERN in the past few years, allowed physicists to narrow down the hypothetical mass of the Higgs to a window of merely 16 GeV. This mass is now thought to be around 124-126 GeV.

However, for the results to be considered a real discovery a year's worth of consistent observations are needed. Statistically speaking, particle physics has a well defined definition of ‘discovery’: data must have a five-sigma (or five standard deviations) level of certainty. This is simply a scale of how unlikely it is that the results are only a product of chance rather than an actual effect of a physical phenomenon. In a nutshell, a three-sigma level would represent the

same likelihood as tossing a coin eight times and getting eight heads; five-sigma would correspond to getting 20 heads in a row.

This step up in energy is great news for the scientific community. It is in everyone's interest that the LHC continues to fulfill its task and help us unravel the beautiful mathematics that regulates our Universe. In the eventuality that the Higgs boson is not discovered, our current theories will have to be completely revised and researchers would have to face whole new challenges.

<http://press.web.cern.ch/press/PressReleases/Releases2012/PR01.12E.html>

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COMMENT

FELIX

Still Summer Ballin'

This year's Summer Ball is set to see all the fun of the fair, figuratively and financially, following the wise and not entirely unexpected decision to revert to a more traditional event than last year.

Deputy President (Finance & Services) Michael Foster announced the latest plans (to bring back a black tie dress code and the option of a sit down formal dinner) at a meeting of Imperial College Union Council on Monday 13 February. The event is set to be held on Saturday 23 June. A preliminary budget has been approved, the current plan will be taken to the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee of the Union's Trustee Board, and any changes will be reviewed by the Union's Executive Committee. Steps are clearly being taken to ensure that the event is less susceptible to financial risk and loss.

The paper suggested that students should be involved "at all levels". The aim of this appears to be to gain the attention, and raise the expectations, of the student body, in addition with increasing the transparency of the event itself. Currently, it appears to be working. Other than speculation over budget changes and an increase to proposed ticket prices (between £25 and £30 for entertainments only and between £5 and £7 for the after party) immediate feedback to the plans has been positive.

This is sensible, and in ways inevitable. Taking a risk on this year's Summer Ball would have been wholly illogical. The debate and conversation that emerged after the controversial decision to have last year's Summer Ball take the format of a festival with no compulsory formal-wear was widespread. Any risk of fostering further discontent is something that ideally must be quashed.

At this moment in time, and with no fully concrete plans in place, it is hard to argue about what potential improvements could be made. That is to say, shy of an open bar (it has, after all, been a long time since the heady days of a £1 pint). Some have suggested one main headliner to cut down on the cost of various artists across stages, though two main acts on two stages with support is also a decent choice. The decision to take a more reserved standpoint on the running of this year's event is for all intents and purposes, following last year, far wiser than persisting with something that breaks drastically from tradition.

Crowdpleasing is the name of the game all around. There is still some time until the main event, but the signs look promising. Tentative, but promising.

A weak Republican field



Tim Arbabzadah

The US elections are coming faster than a randy teenager whose left his bedroom door open when his parents are downstairs. Much like the aforementioned situation, they are always exhilarating and dangerous. At the moment, it's the Republican nominations that are taking up valuable headline space. They are not too dissimilar to an arrogant, terrible, and loud punk-rock band: they shout incoherently about how great they are when all the evidence seems to suggest the opposite. If I'm honest, I think that the Republican field is incredibly weak this time around. Even John McCain maybe thinks so: he accidentally endorsed Obama and not Romney in what I can only imagine was a Freudian slip. I want to waste your time by immaturely discussing the potential (and real) candidates.

This year, some wild cards have been throwing their hats into the ring. There was the brief period when Donald Trump looked like he was going to run. I can't imagine him being the people's candidate, given that he is possibly the least humble and relatable man in America. In fact, he's made some statements that are so incredibly douchey that I almost started assuming irony. Until, with a sigh, I realised whom I was thinking of. Prime example of this is when he uttered the phrase: "Part of the beauty of me is that I'm very rich". Replace "beauty" with "fundamental characteristics" and "very rich" with "a massive dickhead" and then the sentence becomes accurate. Sarah Palin threatened to run, but, if you ask me, and I guess

Donald Trump... made some statements that are so incredibly douchey that I almost started assuming irony



Nah dude I swear it's THIIIS big. As if your policy is that all encompassing

you sort of unwillingly are if you're reading this, she prefers campaigning and celebrity status; she doesn't seem to actually want to do the job, she'd rather just complain about how others are. Then there was Michelle Bachmann – whose husband allegedly tried to cure people of homosexuality. Unfortunately, he couldn't cure himself of stupidity, or his wife for that matter. If you want to donate to the "buy a Bachmann a brain cell" campaign, please do so by buying me a drink in the Union.

The two front-runners, it seems, are Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich. So far, it hasn't been a friendly rivalry. The gloves are so far removed from their hands that only the Hubble telescope is capable of picturing them. Of course the attack ad is the embodiment of this. It's now somewhat of a tradition. One ad that particularly caught my eye was Newt Gingrich's attack against Mitt Romney that built up to the shocking truth: "and just like John Kerry... he speaks French". First of all, this is confusing an ability that could only improve foreign relations with something that is a hindrance. Secondly, and importantly, the footage of Mitt Romney 'speaking French' consists of Romney saying: "Bonjour, je m'appelle Mitt Romney". He's not exactly discussing philosophy at the Sorbonne now is he? With my extremely limited capability at French (my family will fully back me up on this) I think I could possibly manage that – and this is coming from a person who got a B in GCSE French and still thinks the only explanation is that they wrote "U" incorrectly on the certificate.

Romney is not exactly innocent in this mud slinging match. On his website there is a whole section of videos titled "unreliable leader". At first, I thought that this was the first incidence of someone making attack ads against

themselves. It turns out they are all referencing Gingrich.

This is just the foreplay though; the main event is still to come. The big race to the White House isn't in full swing yet (we would all definitely know if it had as it would be impossible to miss). There's one issue that continues to bug me about the US electoral system, besides some of the candidates. It's the small point of how the votes are counted and how the election result is decided. I can understand why you would have a Senate and a House in which each state locally elects someone to go and sit for them. (Although, I should hasten to note, there is still the argument that it shouldn't be this way and that proportional representation is a better system, but that's a different debate.) However, I cannot understand why, when electing the President, they have the points system whereby each state has different points and everything's muddled and weird. It basically ends up meaning someone in one state will have a more important say than someone in another state. Why not have it just as whoever gets the most votes wins? That's simple and democratic. When I think of the system they have in place, I feel like I'm in a lecture where some maths is involved: I understand the how, but the why is still a bit of a mystery. In fact, that's sometimes the feeling I get when I think about how any politicians got into their positions of power.

Have Newt and Mitt unfairly made an attack ad about your hidden talent? Tell us about it: felixonline.co.uk

Too much burgundy? Email address spanning two lines annoying? Email: comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

COMMENT

A French love affair



Caroline Wood

Anyone that knows me well will know that over the past few months I have fallen hopelessly in love. Forgive me for using such a tired cliché, but it really was love at first sight. Yes, since the moment I first clasped my eyes on a Chanel handbag, I was infatuated.

I have a friend who is a designer handbag junkie, Yves Saint Laurent, Chanel, Balenciaga... the list goes on. They are all beautiful bags, but I never used to understand her obsession. Then, one day, I saw her classic Chanel Flap Bag and I suddenly understood. There was something about the thick, textured, quilted leather – sumptuously soft, yet firm. There was something about the intertwined gold chain and leather strap that hugs one's shoulder like an old, comforting friend. And don't even get me started on the exquisite finishings – perfectly crafted inside pockets, the gold hallmark on the inside flap, and of course the trademark Chanel clasp. I would drool over this bag like a lovesick teenager whenever she had it on her. Then, in December, my fairy godmother friend offered to loan it to me for a few months and made my Chanel dreams come true.

It took a short while for us to get comfortable with each other. But after a few awkward outings we became best friends and lovers. My pet name for the bag was simply 'The Chanel'. Over the Christmas holidays The Chanel came home with me to meet my parents, my sister, my friends, and my extended family. Everyone (apart from, unsurprisingly, my Dad) fell in love with The Chanel, just as I had. This year, we even spent Valentine's Day together. But this is no Hollywood movie. Very soon, The Chanel will have to be reunited with its rightful owner, and our love affair must end. As I mourn the loss of a great love, I can't help but reflect upon what it was

that I really loved about The Chanel...

In our society, material goods provide a vital language through which we communicate with each other about the things that really matter – family, friendship, community, and purpose in life. We use the language of goods to communicate status, social identity, affiliation, and even our feelings. Our society is constructed so that material goods facilitate our participation in the life of society. As marketing guru Ernest Ditcher poetically puts it: "hollow hands clasp ludicrous possessions because they are links in the chain of life". Material goods have always possessed some kind of intrinsic, symbolic value for humans. But in modernity, and this age of wealth, goods are becoming more novel, less meaningful, and more rapidly replaced. We buy novel goods, get bored, buy more goods, get bored, all the while keeping society locked into consumption growth. Our relationships with material possessions have become more like fleeting summer romances, rather than great, life-long loves.

Psychologist Tim Kasser highlights what he calls the 'high price of materialism' arguing that values such as popularity, image, and financial success, 'external factors', are psychologically opposed to 'intrinsic values' such as self-acceptance, affiliation and a sense of belonging in the community. Our society is obviously more heavily fabricated on external factors. This is particularly problematic since it is actually intrinsic values that contribute most to our sense of happiness and well-being, not external factors such as, say, a Chanel bag.

In fact, "voluntary simplicity" has become an entire philosophy for life, drawing on Mahatma Gandhi's teachings such as "live simply, that others might simply live". There is even a scientific basis behind the philosophy that our lives become more satisfying when we



Oh Coco, smoking isn't cool, it just sort of looks it. Damn

engage in activities that are purposeful and materially light. This all makes complete sense, and I find myself agreeing with this notion. Outwardly simple, inwardly rich. I totally get it. However, er, now how can I best put this? I'm sorry Mahatma Gandhi, but I am still in love with Coco Chanel...

So what exactly is it about The Chanel? Mademoiselle Coco Chanel was born into humble beginnings in Saumur, France in 1983. She grew up in an orphanage, became a seamstress, and then went on to redesign the way women dressed during the 20th Century. She liberated women from their common stereotypical uniform, turned clothes into works of art, and then turned the fashion industry upside down. In short, she had a dream, made that dream a reality, and changed the world for the better. The reason that a Chanel bag is worth more than other bags is because it celebrates Coco Chanel.

I think that owning luxury goods can be about more than just portraying an image to society about who you are. Owning luxury goods can also send a

message to others about what human characteristics you value or admire. Material goods have, and will, always have an important place in our lives. However, it is time for our relationship with them to change. Rather than just blindly chasing novelty goods, (which are more familiar to us 90's babies than anyone else – Tamagotchis, Yo-Yos, micro scooters, Furbies... the list is endless) we should make more selective choices about what we buy. Our possessions should be less about following novel trends, and more about championing great design or expressing our individuality. Some companies have already cottoned onto this – the NikeiD label is one example of how consumer goods are becoming more personalised. But there is still a long, long way to go.

The Western world, at least, needs more quality goods, and less of this mass-produced crap. We can all do our bit to help advocate quality over quantity. As Coco Chanel said herself: "Some people think luxury is the opposite of poverty. It's not. It is the opposite of vulgarity."

The reason that a Chanel bag is worth more than other bags is because it celebrates Coco Chanel

Library doors: a refutation



Ned Yoxall

In training for long distance things, you have to train for quite a long time. Whether I'm in the pool, on the bike, or on a run I usually get some 'quality' time with my own thoughts. What follows is the result of this time alone...

Recently in Felix, Laurence de Lussy Kubisa wrote a remarkable article in praise of the new library doors. In typically electrifying prose, he has prostituted your loyalties. Your faith and trust should rest forever more with the old doors, not these young pretenders.

In calling the old 'face-on' style of door 'outrageous', he confuses as much as he

outrages. The old had dignity, a certain majesty. You knew where you were with these faithful beasts. These new contraptions, by contrast, are a menace. By introducing a highly dangerous 90 degree swerve to the entrance procedure, the new doors are an HSE nightmare. To anyone who has not tried the new geometry, heed my warning – your inner ear can only take a limited amount of abuse.

To those who make it inside, a gladiatorial spectacle is your prize. Turn back and you'll see carnage: freshers who can't hit that magic 90 degree bend, some pulling 135 degrees and hitting the wall, the lucky ones managing a 180 degree in-out

shimmy; medics forgetting to turn at all and continuing straight on out; institutionalised PhD students walking, mystified, at the glass where the old doors used to be.

How Mr de Lussy Kubisa can claim that there are "clear benefits to students' comfort and safety" is frankly scandalous. What management have managed to produce with this new vestibule is Nascar in human form without the banked edges and without the onsite paramedic team.

In the words of Mr. Fernandez Garcia, a 3rd year PhD student in physics, "I can't go back in there. It was terrible". A glazed look came over his eyes before he softly added, "you weren't there man, you

weren't there."

In the light of this debacle, I seriously think that Felix should have a closer look at their employment policies. One can only imagine that Mr. de Lussy Kubisa is someone who disagrees with labels on fruit, among other things. Everyone knows that individual blackberries, raspberries and dried apricots should be stickered – allowing someone to express their opinions who thinks otherwise is ill-informed at best.

Ned is also doing Ironman Wales to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. You can sponsor him online by visiting www.justgiving.com/NedIronman.

Comment Editors: **Tim Arbabzadah**
Sam Horti

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COMMENT

Everyone deserves to be happy here



Nicolas Massie
Deputy President (Welfare)

“If students do not feel comfortable expressing feminist (or any) perspectives, something has gone very wrong”

Are women unhappy at Imperial? Some, it seems, are. Some men are too. Whether these are vocal fractions of a silent majority, or simply a vocal minority remains to be seen, but it doesn't really matter. Every student at Imperial deserves freedom to be him/herself and to thrive to his/her full potential, minority or not – and women at Imperial are a minority. Within the central Union we do a lot of work for many of the recognised minorities but have done little recently for women.

Historically we have had a women's officer, women's society, and a women only social space, but as time wore on and gender parity drew ever nearer, work on women's rights fell by the wayside, replaced by newer, fresher campaigns. Perhaps we stopped fighting for gender equality because we thought the battle was won, or perhaps members of the Union became convinced that the stereotypical burning-bra-brandishing brand of feminism could gain little traction at Imperial and thus discarded it, failing to replace it with an equally passionate but different coloured effort through oversight. Either way, the Union slowly let the feminist narrative slip further and further down the agenda. I imagine it is easy to become complacent and to believe that women are represented and catered for when Women in Science Engineer-

ing and Technology (WSET), winners of President's Award in 2010, are so blazingly successful in their every endeavour, forgetting that WSET in fact has defined a very narrow if extremely valid scope of operation for itself and never endeavoured to address many of the issues that affect many women daily. As a result we now have no feminine voice on campus. Traditionally this voice would have found itself through, first the Women's Officer and then the Gender Equalities officer. For whatever reason, this mechanism is not currently effective, as recent articles in Felix have brought to blinding light.

We recently gained access to the data from the Student Experience Survey carried out in October. On first glance it appears that 10.2% (382/3763) of undergrads, 3.5% (28/792) of PG-Taught and 7.9% (21/267) of PG-Research students answered 'Yes' to 'Do you feel [your gender has] affected the quality of your experience at Imperial negatively?'. There are many ways this could be interpreted as we do not yet know whether it was women or men who felt their experience had been compromised; but for now, all we can say (and rest assured the breakdowns will be shared as soon as we have them) is that 10% of undergraduate students feel their experience has been negatively affected by their gender – and this is unacceptable. The College is taking this very seriously.



Is it called Welfare coz he iz well fair innit?

The Union has a duty to ensure all students it represents have freedom of speech and freedom from harm. If students do not feel comfortable expressing feminist (or any) perspectives, something has gone very wrong. If women do not feel represented and supported in our current system, something has gone very wrong. It is difficult for a student who does not feel empowered to develop into everything he/she can be, and that is what the Union is here to help achieve.

I'm not sure what direction this debate is going to take; indeed as an elected representative it isn't my place to make executive decisions but to col-

lect views and act upon them. We may end up with a feminist society, a gender equality society, a women's officer, a regular forum facilitated by the Gender Equalities Officer, who is here to be the mouthpiece on these issues, or something entirely new. To work out where to go next we will be co-hosting a forum with those who have recently voiced opinions for all those interested in gender issues two weeks from now – please attend if you have any views you would like to be considered.

In the meantime if anyone would like to share any thoughts on this issue please feel free to comment or email me on dpwelfare@imperial.ac.uk.

I have a smartphone: progress at last



Rhys Davies

“Egyptian constellations were the ancient equivalent of a Flickr album”

I recently joined the twenty-first century and got a new phone.

Actually, that's not quite accurate. As well as servicing my telecommunicative needs, it also has a whole array of shiny doodads and gizmos. It has a camera with the resolution to individually identify the hairs in Karl Marx's beard from across a crowded dinner party. Its GPS is so precise it even knows when I'm standing on one leg in the middle of the Sahara (sadly though, not in Fulham for some reason). It is capable of posting to Facebook and Twitter so I don't have to be near a computer to be vain or inane anymore. On top of this, it has a veritable host of apps, each more pointless than the last. I can even phone people with it... though I haven't quite worked out how yet.

I am amazed that what would have been a supercomputer thirty years ago can now nestle down in my trousers. Although it makes for a rather dubious chat-up line, I had resisted the electro-

magnetic pull of new technology up until this point. Admittedly, this new device throws off enough energy to give me leg cancer even when it's in my other trousers, but my main reason to coyly refuse previous techno-advances was my belief that a phone should be a phone and just that.

This fear of the future, of change, of the unfamiliar, is only so cliché because it is so ancient. Scrape away all the gadgets and pretty colours and the scene hasn't changed much since pre-history, when a prognathic ancestor of Steve Jobs brought tablets back to the cave. His friends must have looked at him as if he'd been at the red berries.

“Look, friends! The age of the tablet has arrived.”

“But what does it do?” (Thousands of years on, and this conversation proves that history does indeed repeat itself)

“Before you could only etch your pre-expressionist imaginings on the cave wall but this is a piece of wall you can take with you. You can show all your

friends!”

“But all my friends are in the cave!”

“This is for when they're not!”

Impressed awe all around as people came around to the idea of mobile communications. Words came later, much more gradually, as people got worse at drawing and their scribbles looked less and less like what they were supposed to. Compare Egyptian hieroglyphs with Greek lettering, and look at what passes for the Greek constellations – Egyptian constellations were the ancient equivalent of a Flickr album.

Although impressionism waned, innovation soared as the scroll was introduced. Thus, the ancient world learned that things didn't have to weigh four tonnes and need a wheelbarrow to move – aesthetics, ergonomics, and compactness – a lesson we only remembered in the nineties. A few hundred years later and the book appeared, shortly followed by the bookmark, a quantum leap in user interface.

At the turn of the last century, or

thereabouts, we got ourselves in a slight muddle. The inventions of the telephone, the radio, and the television all rolled back the frontiers of speed, reach, and media of our communication, but we simultaneously forgot that things could be small as well as cool. We've spent most of the past hundred years getting back to the comfortable customer experience the book offered, before spending the last ten trying to cram as many different devices onto a single block of silicon.

This brings us right up to now, with burn-marks on my trousers and childish delight in my eyes. Who knows where we'll go from here? Since Steve Jobs has declared that the age of the tablet PC is here – and received the reply, what does it do? – I think the march of technology is cyclical, or at least a bell-shaped curve.

Which means we'll soon be able to watch videos, read books, take photos, preen our ego, and even make calls on the iPad – coming to a wall near you!

COMMENT

Imperial Memes: a post mortem



Veli Akiner

Late on a Tuesday night, a monster was born. One that would increase exponentially with size; prove that Imperial students, for all their academic brilliance, follow the same behavioural patterns in a crowd as anyone else; and leave many of us sleep-deprived during our 9 o'clock lectures the following day.

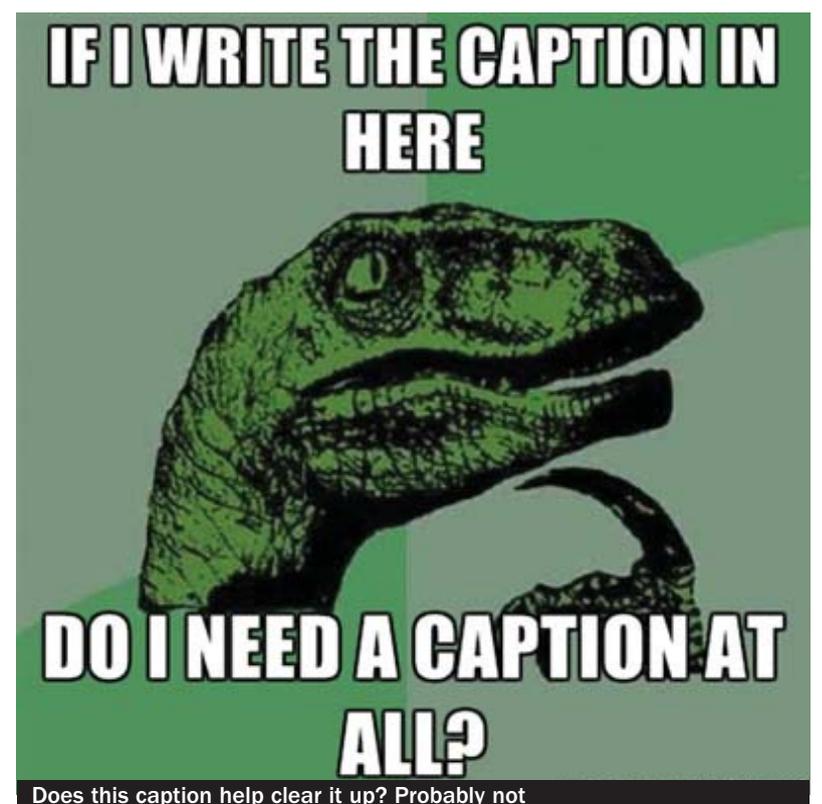
The phenomenon fizzled out as soon as it exploded onto our screens: most of the activity was within the first 24 hours; another 24 hours later and the group's activity had mostly ceased. I know a few people have looked upon it and wondered how something like this hasn't happened before: there are a huge number of jokes to be made from the relatively mundane gripes about everything from Imperial's email system to the shortcomings of various campus eateries. Nothing remotely insightful, but things that people can relate to. Indeed, upon the afternoon/evening when everyone was done with lectures, serendipitously on a Wednesday when everyone is free after 12, the "memes" came thick and fast, rapidly expending any joke that is vaguely Imperial-related or funny. I put the salient word in quotation marks because technically these templates with text aren't a meme – a meme is only formed if it becomes popular and spreads. You can't just "create" one.

By Thursday, the Facebook page was dominated by increasingly wordy pictures, reposts and somewhat nonsensical contributions – signs that the low-hanging fruit such as the sex ratio or Imperial's workload have long since been eaten. It takes insight, effort, or considerable luck that you've stumbled upon an observation nobody else has in order to be funny. Once all the easy jokes have been made, you quickly find yourself scraping the

barrel since there's no new input material. Jokes are not a renewable resource. On a positive note, among the convoluted additions there were several genuinely witty ones that were borne from an earnest attempt to be original. A lot of people simply don't care enough to spend a good hour thinking up something clever, so they fart out the first thing that comes to mind so they can be part of this fad. Fair enough, it's not something to be taken seriously, and if this annoys you then you need to chill out: being unfunny is asymptomatic of any remotely pathological behaviour.

Two weeks on from the page's inception, and activity has slowed to a trickle. You still get the odd Slowpoke who completely neglects that someone else might have actually taken the mickey out of Huxley building's labyrinthine layout already, but now most of the posts seem to be made by those who make a genuine effort to make a new joke, since it's no longer a bandwagon to jump upon as quickly as possible any more – which encouraged people to slam on their keyboards and crack out a "meme" as quickly as possible.

One of the real "memes" in the Imperial Memes page turned out to be making jokes about the eastern Asians at Imperial, which progressively ventured into the realms of outright racism. In theory, there is no problem with making a joke about a stereotype as long as it ends with that. However, issues can arise with the very existence of a mild "racist" joke that might well be quite clever and innocuous within the right context: there is the danger that without any sort of criticism or way of keeping things in check then increasingly more offensive comments become acceptable. I suspect this is how time after time you see once-hilarious



comedians fall from grace: their material slowly adopts a tinge of blue, slowly enough for their audiences to get used to it, until one day someone who's never watched any of their shows complains to Ofcom and highlights what's now become Klansman-level racism. There's no danger of this slippery slope if you're taking a stab at faulty College facilities – despite my sincerest hope that the new Library doors can feel it every time they're cursed at, their marginalisation will never be a problem. Even the inter-departmental snobbery that as a physicist I dabble in is fine: there is nowhere for "engineering

is just applied physics" to develop into anything more sinister than light-hearted banter. You don't need to resort to racial stereotypes to be humorous; and considering their potential for corruption it scarcely seems worth it for a hundred or so likes on Facebook.

Imperial Memes were good, harmless fun for about a day: there were definitely a lot of laughs to be had, before "ME RIVE IN RIBRARY" set the standard for humour and jokes being recycled. Like most things on the internet, the whole thing mercifully burnt out just as quickly as it came to life.

Two weeks on from the page's inception, and activity has slowed to a trickle

The great Executive Committee blunder



Henry Abbot

The Union's Executive Committee is charged with deciding how the Union is run on a day-to-day basis. It approves things like the Summer Ball, and the whole Union's, budget to make sure things are progressing how the student body wants them to. Three weeks ago the Executive Committee chose to reallocate nearly £35,000 away from Clubs and Societies funding. The rationale given by Michael Foster (Deputy President for Finance and Services) for this 10% cut was that "the total grant underspend [by clubs and societies] last year was greater than the changes to funding." Grant

money left unspent at the end of the year by a club is reabsorbed by the Union and generally deemed as unnecessary funding. Foster then went on to say "the reallocated money will be much more effective invested in support mechanisms."

It has since emerged that this figure of 10% is incorrect and that an accounting mistake led to the Executive Committee being misinformed as to the magnitude of the underspend. The true figure is now understood to be 3.9% yet the reallocated amount still stands at 10%, leaving clubs without money which in the past has been put to good use. This cut is going to have a much greater effect than previously

thought by club officers – and indeed the Executive Committee who made the decision. Club budgets will be decided by the Clubs and Societies' Board (CSB) on the 27th February, leaving the Executive Committee no time to reconsider the cut undertaken with erroneous information. The CSB therefore has no choice but to cut 10% of last year's pot from needy clubs and suggest that the members of these clubs will have to make up the difference themselves.

The Executive Committee clearly has a big impact on how Union societies and bars are run but many of these decisions, including the one over club funding, are made behind closed

doors. The student body therefore has no capacity to review financial or commercial decisions made by the Sabbatical Officers. These Executive meetings offer a means for personal views to be approved by an often ill-informed committee. Clearly an overhaul of the commercial decision making process is required – either the membership of the Executive needs to be opened up in order to break the Sabbatical's strangle hold on it, or the Union Council needs the capacity to review these closed-door decisions. Until then, we'll still be burdened by the risk of our elected officers making poor commercial and financial decisions.

ARTS

The Poet's Column

Probably the Secret Police By Nick Eisen

– But Britain isn't like Russia –
It hasn't got a secret police force.

– On the contrary.
It's probably got a more efficient secret police
force than Russia.
The British secret police are probably so secret
that the people don't even know they exist.

– They're probably so secret that the government
don't even know they exist.

– I prefer it that way.

– So do I.

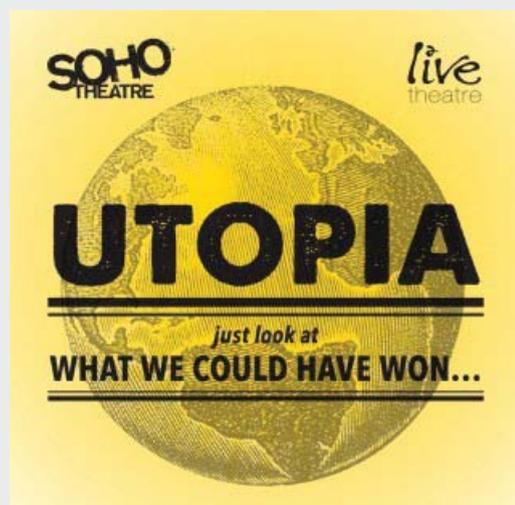
– Ignorance is bliss as they say.

– Maybe you're one of the secret police.

– Maybe you are.

– Maybe we both are.

Utopia Competition



This summer, **Soho Theatre** presents a brand new selection of short plays from a mixture of emerging and established writers, around the theme of Utopia. To accompany this exciting collection of plays, **Soho Theatre** are looking for 6 young artists to join the project with accompanying visual art works around the same theme.

Any artists, under the age of 26, should send a hires image of the artwork they'd like to enter, 100 words about the piece along with a short biography of themselves, and contact details to utopia@sohotheatre.com by 16 April 2012.

Twisted exhibiton gets us all strung up

Photos by Yilei Wu

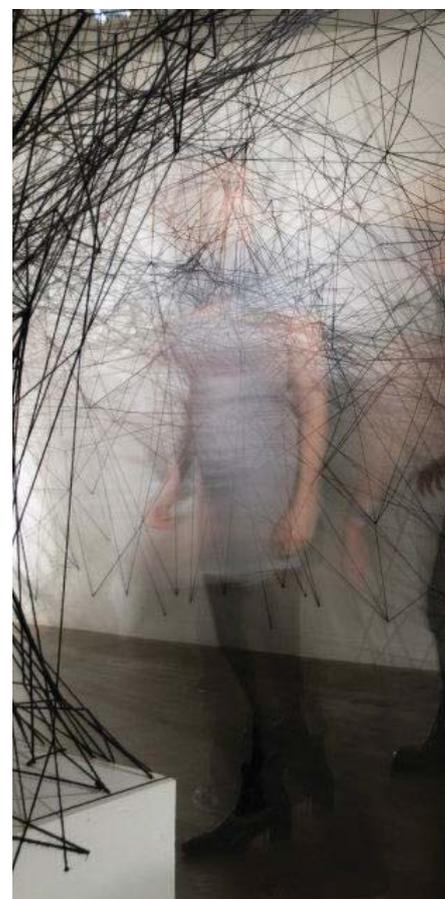


Tim Arbabzadah

If you go down to the woods tonight you'll be in for a surprise, as there will be a teddy bear's picnic. Alternatively, if you go to the Blyth Gallery (fourth floor of Sherfield) you will find another surprise. It's a shocking day for you, isn't it.

Twisted is a collaborative effort between LeoSoc and PhotoSoc. It consists of multiple pieces of string forming a maze. This represents the mind, and walking through it is a journey through the disorder of thoughts, or at least that's what I got from it. Moving down the corridor had the aim of feeling claustrophobic; immersed in the overbearing activity of the mind. Unfortunately for me, due to the fact that my stature is roughly that of Tom Cruise, it wasn't quite as claustrophobic for me.

The creative process was very much organic. The concept was conceived and developed at



house parties. Luckily, everyone remembered what happened and what was decided on, so the project could go ahead.

The final finished article really is impressive. The straight pieces of string form a corridor with curves that don't seem possible. When looking at it from the inside, the way the string bunches together is very reminiscent of scientific, textbook, diagrams of neurones. It will be there until Monday, so make sure you go and check it out.

MTSoc serve up some matrimony cheese

Emily Pennington

Arriving on the tenth floor of the Blackett Building to watch **Musical Theatre Society's** (MTSoc) newest performance, their big spring show *The Wedding Singer*, I get the feeling that either the powers of my imagination will have to be used to their fullest extent or I should keep my expectations pretty low. I have to admit, I was rather happily surprised by the end.

I'm sure most of you know (and love) the Adam Sandler classic comedy that goes by the same name. Those of you who do will probably hear the words "musical adaptation" and cringe – give it a second thought! For those of you who live in a box, *The Wedding Singer* was a 1998 Rom-Com set in the 80s, starring Adam Sandler (Robbie, a lowly wedding singer) and Drew Barrymore (Julia, a loved-up cater-waitress). The story itself winds around the 'Will they? Won't they?' scenario with plenty of hilarity to drag it away from the romance and into the comedy.

Having originally been an American film, brimming with typical All-American characters, the dreaded American accent, without fail, came into play in the MTSoc adaptation. However, what was noticeably uncomfortable in the first half hour slowly died down to the point where the audience would barely notice it at all; the numerous other distractions onstage outshine the minor bother of the US drawl.

One of the highlights of the evening was the energy-filled 'Saturday Night in the City' where you will get your fill of group dancing and 80s pop culture. George and Rosie's – typical best friend character and the protagonists' grandmother (played to great effect by Conrad Godfrey) respectively – humorous duet 'Move That Thang' will undoubtedly bring a smile to your face and put a spring in your step. The choreography, devised by MTSoc's James Perry, was executed sharply, tightly and with vigour; the majority of songs were eagerly belted out with a pleasant lack of bum notes. Nigel Fullerton as Robbie and Lucy Forman as Julia promise to bring real integrity to the protagonists, putting their all into the songs, dances and acting in general.

This is a great offering from MTSoc, and once tech, props and costumes are in place (they hadn't gotten round to it yet on Monday evening – hence the lack of information on design in this review!) I have great hope that this musical will be as popular with the audience today as the film was in '98.

The Wedding Singer at the **Union Concert Hall**. From 29 February – 3 March. Tickets are on sale now: £6 students, £8.50 non-students.

Books Editor: **Maciej Matuszewski**books.felix@imperial.ac.uk

BOOKS

Never let Ishiguro go

Kazuo Ishiguro applies his unique writing style to the realm of science fiction

Annina Sartor

Sure, this book involves a parallel society, human cloning, and organ farming, narrated through the eyes of an independent and vaguely rebellious protagonist, but still: *Never Let Me Go* isn't what you would expect from a work of science fiction. With little futuristic technology and absolutely no extra-terrestrial life forms to be seen, Kazuo Ishiguro's most recent novel captures the reader's attention not with ray guns and worm holes but with characterisation and imagery.

Before I go on, I have a confession to make: I watched the movie first. I know, I know; I'm doomed to picture the characters as the actors that portray them, I couldn't possibly approach the novel in quite the same way, everything's horrible, why would I ever do that, et cetera. And while I certainly suggest you read the book before seeing the movie (which may or may not have something to do with Keira Knightley), the latter doesn't ruin the former. Don't let having seen the film put you off. (Just as long as you remember that Robbie is, in fact, not the newest incarnation of Spider-Man.)

Set in England during the late twentieth century, the novel's premise is an alternate history in which medical technology has already advanced to the point of human cloning. Seeing this as a possibility for the improvement of medicine as a whole, society has established clones as a source of spare parts: they are raised like cattle (except with more instruction in the arts) in institutions eerily reminiscent of boarding schools until they reach adulthood, at which point they begin 'donating' non-vital organs one by one until they 'com-

plete'. As a result, human lifespans have been expanded – and collective conceptions of ethics eliminated.

The protagonists are three such clones who have grown up together at Hailsham, one of the 'schools'. Narrated by Kathy, one of the three friends, the story is a series of recollections from her past. It is split into three parts – representative of three stages of their lives – with less than ten pages taking place in the present tense. This structure opens itself up to a lack of plot focus: more time is spent layering flashbacks within flashbacks, their context often ruled by Kathy's thought processes, than retelling key events.

“Movement through the novel is guided not by actions or events but by memories and realisations.”

The book is narrated in the first person and so the reader's only window into this parallel world is through Kathy's mind. Her passively observant personality colours this window with a strange sense of detachment. It is not until the reader puts the book down and again begins to look at things through his own eyes that certain absurdities of their society reveal the full extent of their strangeness. Kathy, like all the other clones, is, for most of the novel, so complacent with what is done to her that the reader initially struggles to find

the events as revolting as they truly are. The novel is thus an exercise in self-exploration for the reader as much as the characters; I, for one, thought it shocking how non-immediate my moral response to the story was.

'Completion', the euphemism for death used by all characters throughout the book, is one example of the way characters confront the world they were born into: they don't. Even though they are (mistakenly) informed about their fate at a young age, the trio of protagonists rarely questions its nature and, if they do, it is in the form of throwaway comments rather than fundamental considerations of the value of their existence. While each character is aware of the truth, they seem to refuse to admit it to each other, allowing each individual to continue life in their own bubble of fictitious safety.

Having read only one other of Ishiguro's pieces, *The Remains of the Day*, I suppose I'm not really qualified to make sweeping generalisations about his writing voice and stylistic idiosyncrasies. But certain elements are still apparent. Without spending significant amounts of time simply describing the scenery, Ishiguro manages to create strikingly beautiful images to accompany his stories by relying on the reader's own memories and imagination. Also, in both novels, the characters and their relationships are all Very British: emotional restraint and tact underline their interactions. Fellow Eddie Izzard aficionados will remember the comparison: "Oh, I'm... oh. Well, I –" "What is it, Sebastian?" "I thought you... I better go." It is not the kind of drama you eat popcorn to.

The downside of this is that, occasionally, conversations become almost



Kazuo Ishiguro is one of Britain's most celebrated authors

too stilted for comfort. As a whole, however, it works; Ishiguro's style only enhances the impression that the characters are living next to each other instead of together, that many of their relationships (with the exception, perhaps, of Tommy and Kathy's) lack a certain element of depth because they, as a mechanism of self-defense, refuse to open up. The presence of this closedness throughout the novel makes rare moments where it is broken all the more powerful. One scene, in particular (and I shan't spoil it) carries such raw emotion that, in less than two pages, it brings to the reader an explicit understanding of the character's struggles, and a revelation of the author's purpose. This would not be nearly as powerful were it not for the context of the rest of the novel, which gradually builds up the backdrop onto which the truth is painted.

Movement through the novel is guided not by actions or events but by memories and realisations. Don't get me wrong: it's not boring. It's beautiful. (Granted, this is coming from someone who much prefers character-based writing. If, browsing the sci-fi shelf, you are looking for action-packed adventures and heroic acts, you may be disappointed.) Page by page, Kathy comes to terms with her past and, as a consequence, her future. Ultimately – and I say this at the risk of being incredibly cheesy – it is a story of love and the meaning of life. The element of science fiction is used as a foundation for the development of characters and messages that are as applicable to our world as it is to theirs.

Call me cynical, but I find the quality of writing in this genre rather hit and miss. *Never Let Me Go* can safely be filed under 'hit'.

A call to arms in the fight to save our libraries

Maciej Matuszewski

I first found out about *The Library Book* in a small addendum to a piece in the *Guardian* by Lucy Mangan, one of my favourite columnists, announcing that she was one of the contributors. Investigating further, I became even more interested upon finding out that the contributors also included such impressive figures as Stephen Fry, China Miéville and Alan Bennett. Yet, even having known beforehand the amount of talent involved I have to say that the book far exceeded my expectations.

In essence *The Library Book* is

simply twenty five highly skilled journalists, writers, broadcasters and other public figures coming together to each write a short piece, whether a fictional story, essay or deeply personal recollection, focusing on their love of libraries. The book comes in at under 200 pages and yet manages to include a breathtaking degree of variety. From Mangan's hilarious description of the rules she would put in place if she were ever to set up her own library, to Bennett's engrossing and fantastically detailed account of the importance libraries played in his early life and education, to Julie Myerson's story of how libraries

helped her become a writer – which was honestly the most inspirational thing that I have read in the last year.

“This should be required reading for all those ... who are considering closing down libraries.”

Given the situation that many libraries now find themselves its no

surprise that many of the contributions have a political spin. While references to specific politicians may quickly become dated the central message – that libraries are vital resources that can not only help the disadvantaged but also bring communities together – is timeless. In the words of Karin Slaughter – “Kids who read become students who do well in school. Students who do well in school go to college. College students graduate to good jobs and pay higher taxes. Libraries don't service only left-wingers or right. They don't judge by class, race or religion. They service everyone in their commu-

nity, no matter their circumstances.” Indeed *The Library Book* shows how these fantastic institutions influenced successful people from all backgrounds and walks of life. This book should be required reading for all those in government who are considering closing down libraries.

In short, this is both an entertaining and stimulating read that should appeal to anyone who loves books. The skill of the contributors is visible from the outset and the short length only serves to make its laudable message all the clearer and means that the book is accessible even to those who don't have much free time.

MUSIC

Music Editors: **Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto** **Mark England**
Alex Ramadan **Simon Hunter**

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Kadhim's totally hot album of the week



Sleigh Bells
Reign of Terror
Mom & Pop
2012

On Monday, **Azealia Banks** will play at Heaven. Sadly, I will not be there. Those damned academic commitments trumped my desire to go see the hottest female rapper since **Missy Elliott** said she wanted to search around in my trousers for Lord knows what (well, I assume she was talking to me, but one can never be quite sure when it comes to mass-distributed music).

Missing the gig is a bit depressing for two reasons: 1) It's probably the best opportunity I'm going to get to throw myself at Azealia Banks' feet and propose to her, thus beginning what I term, 'My Incredible Awesome Life as Mr B.'; and 2) I haven't been to Heaven for a loooooong time and I'm beginning to miss it.

The last time I was at Heaven (a gay club which moonlights as one of London's best music venues) was Valentine's Day 2011 – I assure you, it was moonlighting as a music venue on that date. Sleigh Bells were playing that night and my friend Jamie and I had gone to see them. It was a great night of delightfully unnecessary guitar riffs, pummelling rapid-fire drums, and gratuitous crowd-surfing by vocalist Alexis Krauss. Admittedly there was also a bit of moshing with 16-year-olds but hey, kids, if you're going to get rowdy at a gig, be prepared to get owned by a skinny Imperial sociopath on a power-binge.

Sleigh Bells are a band who are on a sort of a power binge. They know they've got big musical guns, and they know that if they point them in our general direction things are going to get freaky. Like their debut album *Treats*, *Reign of Terror* is full of clashes, thumps, and bangs that are designed to make you go a bit mental and try to break your neck. They suffuse this unashamed brashness with Alexis Krauss' caramelised peach voice in a way that makes you want to piss off your neighbours by turning the volume up to 'Bro, that's quite loud' at 4am in the morning.

My good friend, and doppelganger, Matt Allinson recently posted on Facebook that the "jury is still out" on this album. I'm planning on breaking into his flat in the middle of the night, sneaking into his room while he's sleeping, and jumping onto his bed with a boombox blaring 'Comeback Kid', screaming "THE JURY'S DEAD FROM ALL THE AWESOME!!!"

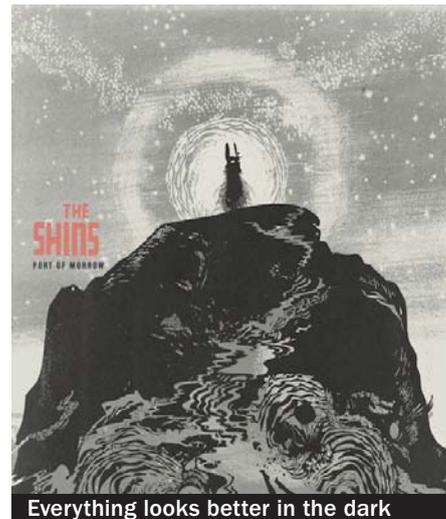
If you have experience in breaking into people's homes in the small hours of the night, tweet me @kadhimshubber and lend your expertise. If you think things are getting a bit out of hand and illegal, tweet @sleighbells and say, "Look at what your music has done!" Better still, tweet @AzealiaBanks and tell her what great husband material @kadhimshubber is...

The Shins are back, but should I care?

Mark England ponders the question on everybody's lips

I would like to be honest and say that I had little hope for **The Shins** in 2012. Their Grammy nominated delight, *Winning the Night Away*, shoved lead singer/songwriter into the limelight but nearly five years have passed and the musical landscape has changed significantly. When I heard the announcement that The Shins were going to release a new album, *Port of Morrer*, in March, on frontman James Mercer's own label *Aural Apothecary*, I pondered as to where the poetic indie pop which I used to so enjoy would fit; guitar music has dropped entirely out of the charts and the young dreamers who would once have been exposed to jangly alternative rock through watching the OC are now transfixed on the overproduced pomp that is Glee. Let us say that it is not 2007 anymore. I am pleasantly surprised to report then, that after listening to *Port of Morrer*, none of these issues matter. Mercer has returned with a mature and elegant album, and the wait has certainly done him and the band no harm.

The album kicks off with the energetic 'Rifle's Spiral' which is certainly one of the standout tracks for the album. The next track, 'Simple Song', was released as a taster to the album and so the keen-eared among you may have heard it already. It is thoroughly enjoyable with a catchy chorus that nearly verges on epic (but thankfully manages to contain itself



Everything looks better in the dark

before reaching Coldplay levels). There is an underlying message of hope throughout the album which I never garnered from the three previous albums which all had quite dark undercurrents. The Shins' new found maturity brings with it a more expansive sound including string sections and a glockenspiel, with some tracks even verging on funk.

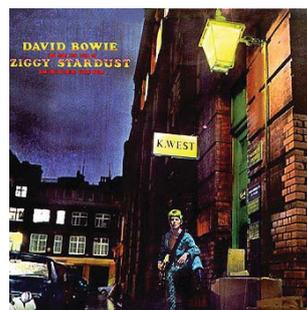
There are certain times, however, when the songs fail to hit the mark, including 'It's Only Life', which was not as heartfelt and moving

as it thought it was and had a rather grating chorus. These annoying patches are only fleeting and the album has enough beautiful moments to be deemed a successful return to action for the band. The end track, with the same title as the album, is a shimmering joy which leaves the listener in no doubt that The Shins are back.

Subpop, which the band used to be on, are one of my favourite ever labels. The Seattle record label which has had everything from **Nirvana** to **Fleet Foxes** on is normally a sure-thing for me if I am ever in need of some bands to get me through the day. I was therefore disappointed to hear that The Shins would not be releasing on *Subpop*, as it seemed to me to be a marriage made in heaven. It strikes me now though, after listening to the album as a whole, that by self-releasing, The Shins have been able to produce a more mature and polished album. It may not reach the heights of *Winning the Night Away* but *Port of Morrer* does bring a freshness which was sorely missing in 2012. The lolloping indie pop that was once plastered wall to wall at the beginning of the new millennium is now only done well by a few bands and this album shows that Mercer and co deserve to be considered contenders.

The latest album from The Shins, Port of Morrer is released on March 19.

Reviewed in 60 Seconds



David Bowie
The Rise And Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars



Having been released 40 years ago, this review is probably a bit late. For those of you who are less than familiar with the work of **David Bowie** this album is a great place to start.

The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars is about the human-like alien, Ziggy Stardust, sent to earth to bring humanity hope in the last five years of its existence. This is one of the shortest and most accessible of David Bowie's albums, and in my opinion his best. It is full of cracking pop/glam-rock songs, some of which you will be more than familiar with, all of which will leave you keen to press repeat.

Alex Ramadan

VEINE IAIN SINAIKES
CUBIST REGGAE



Venetian Snares
Cubist Reggae



Usually, listening to **Snares** would be a great way to burn calories through hearing. This time around, Aaron Funk stretches time out into a groove, letting shine through all the intricacies so deeply ingrained in his work. The result gives the sensation of atmospheric electrocution in slow motion.

The title sums it up: a kaleidoscopic take on an otherwise somewhat monotonously upbeat genre. Less expected are the orchestral samples interspersed between percussive jabs akin to sticking a knife in a toaster.

The aural equivalent of realising that the paracetamol you took to help you sleep contained a significant amount of caffeine.

Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto



Hollie Cook
Hollie Cook



Last June saw the release of **Hollie Cook**'s self-titled debut album. Unfortunately it passed me by at the time – the wonderful lilting reggae rhythms would have been the perfect accompaniment to summer.

Many parallels can be drawn with **Lily Allen**; both are London-based daughters of famous musicians (even if Keith Allen is better known for his acting) and both make their own, individual brand of pop music. Despite this, there are large differences in their output; Cook's vocals more dreamy, floating effortlessly over catchy reggae hooks. It may still be gray outside but this album is one sure to convince you that summer is only just around the corner.

Simon Hunter

MUSIC

A very print unfriendly band

Matt Allinson mourns the loss of a beloved eccentric

I was exceptionally upset to hear about the death last June of Seth Putnam, lead singer of **Anal Cunt** (or **AxCx**). For some reason, his death wasn't reported that widely in the mainstream media, and in my post-teenage years my involvement in the metal scene has been dramatically diminished, so his passing passed me by. I loved his band more than can possibly be explained in anything approaching logical terms, but I hope to make you want to listen to them anyway.

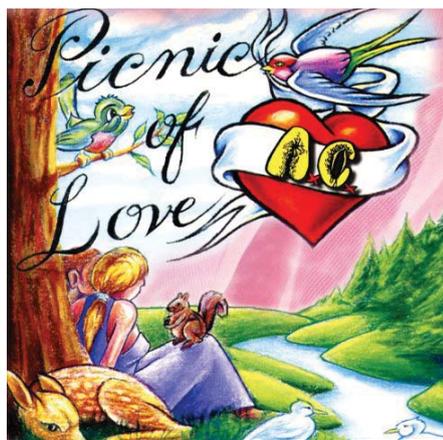
I rarely make it through an entire AxCx album, and never in polite company. I generally dip in and out for about 5 minutes or so before having to not listen to anything else for a couple of hours. To call this band challenging is similar to calling World War II bad: undeniably true, but so wildly understated as to make the description seem fatuously incorrect. Simply reading the track listing of an AxCx album is an uncomfortable experience, and most of the song titles are un-printable. For the full horror experience, I recommended going to the Wikipedia page for their 1999 opus, *It Just Gets Worse*.

If you manage to do that without contacting *The Daily Telegraph*, I would recommend popping the album on. The songs are the logical-extreme of what can be considered music, and that is exceptionally dependent on how loosely one is willing to define "music". Their sound consists of a completely distorted guitar being played semi-randomly with blast-beat drums

and incomprehensibly screeched lyrics. The songs have little to no structure and barely last more than 40 seconds. They are undeniably the most difficult band to listen to ever. It is impossible to take them seriously and herein lies their beauty and the root of their enduring success. AxCx were, for their entire 23-year existence, a joke, and the joke itself is the key to their survival.

It's not to say that Seth Putnam and the various others that joined him in the band's line up over the two decades hated extreme metal and were maliciously attacking it, rather they realised that by making music that was so offensive it could only be justified by having horrific lyrics and song titles, and vice-versa. That the joke itself was never explicitly stated made it all the better, with a notable moment being the release in 1998 of *Picnic of Love*, an album of acoustic guitar, falsetto vocals and song titles such as 'I Respect Your Feelings as a Woman and a Human'.

It's not entirely clear who the joke was on. Perhaps on the people who don't get the joke, or it's actually on the people who do get the joke but listen anyway. If you think about it too hard however, you realise that you're trying to derive some profound definition of satire from a 47-second long segment of white noise and screaming entitled 'I Pushed Your Wife in Front of the Subway' by a band called Anal Cunt and get the sneaking suspicion that the joke is in fact



Featuring the ballad, 'I Respect Your Feelings as a Woman and a Human'

on you.

In conclusion, the band isn't actually very good. But to be honest, being good isn't really the point of them. One doesn't listen to an AxCx album for the music in the same way one doesn't buy a Bugatti Veyron to use as a car, or an Apple Mac to use as a computer. It's about the concept behind the product as opposed to the product itself. Anal Cunt are just about being monstrously offensive in every possible way, and by fully committing to the cause, become so much greater than their sum of their parts.

George Jeffery's A beginner's guide to post-hardcore

Lesson 7: Meet Me In St. Louis



A few of you may remember an article which appeared in Felix Music last term about a trampy man who played an acoustic gig on a boat. Well this man is about to have his Imperial fame replenished as this week I acquaint you with UK post-hardcore masterminds **Meet Me In St. Louis**.

The band, fronted by aforementioned trampy man, Tobias Hayes, are once again from Surrey, and after forming in 2005 only had a very short lifespan of 3 years. Despite their massively premature demise, Meet Me In St. Louis are loved so dearly within the UK independent music scene that they even have a day dedicated to them (24th September, the day their debut album was released) so everyone can remember how amazing they were. This widespread affection for the band is completely justified and I can quite proudly say that they are possibly the best band I've ever laid ears on (not literally, don't be trying any funny business).

As you may have noticed, their name has been stolen from an old American musical and this theme continues with every one of their tracks being titled after lines from films (10 points if you know which films they're all from). But moving on to the more important matter: their music. Meet Me In St. Louis have an absolutely unique sound and it truly is incredible to witness. They get the mixture of sliding mathy riffs and intense breakdowns absolutely perfect and then incorporate continually changing time signatures to keep you on your toes. As musicians, the members of this band will not fail to amaze you. It's very rare to listen to a track that the bass part catches you doing some air-bass but bassist Lewis Reynolds has well and truly made a slapper out of me (not like that, I meant as in slapper of the bass – the guitar, not the fish).

I don't mean to undermine the other members of the band; believe me, after listening to MMISL you will be a master of the air-everything. Their debut (and only) album *Variations On Swing* is essential to your life and is by far one of the best pieces of post-hardcore I've heard. So go get your filthy hands on it, check out the recommendation and see you all next week!

Writer's Recommendation

Listen to 'All We Need is a Little Energon and a Lot of Luck' (that's a quote from the old Transformers, by the way).



I want to sack your Courvoisier

Rama's Hip-Hop Tune of the Week

Dunson 'Count On It'

In a week where there have been many tracks surfacing from artists of whom I am a big fan, picking one in particular has been tough. Ultimately though there can only be one 'Rama's

Hip Hop Tune of the Week' and it comes from someone I only came across for the first time this week whilst bored and surfing the internet.

As his tumblr helpfully informs me **Dunson**, formerly known as **Kenton Dunson**, is an investment advisor turned rapper from Maryland. 'Count On It', the first release from his up-coming mixtape *The Investment* features a sample of the song 'Pinball Number Count' which many will recognise from *The Count* in *Sesame Street*. As a fan of the children's TV show I would have been sold on the song based on the sample alone however **Dunson's** delivery and lyrics on this track are impressive and with tight production from **Phatboiz** this song is a definite winner.

Be sure not to miss... Dilated Peoples

02 Academy, Islington
Monday 27 February

At a loose end on Monday night? If 'Worst comes to Worst' go see the old school hip-hop legends **Dilated Peoples**. I can't, so please do it for me.
Alex Ramadan



Tyler the Creator, showcasing this season's 'wiggid Centaur' look

SWAGG?

LOVE IS WH



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WHAT WE DO!



FILM

Film Editors: **John Park**
Lucy Wiles

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Time to place your bets and

Felix Film gazes into the future and predicts the winners for this year's Oscars – read at



Best Picture: *The Artist*

Who knew a black and white silent film could be this charming, crowd-pleasing and moving? In this advanced day and age of sound, colour and computer graphics, Michel Hazanavicius (director) grasped the hearts of audiences worldwide by taking cinema back to its roots. It's a love story between the two leads, but also a loving tribute to Hollywood. Scooping up pretty much every single Best Picture award there is in America, it's hard to see such a revolutionary film not walking away with the top prize. The only real potential competition this faces is from another critics' favourite, Alexander Payne's *The Descendants*, but the buzz around *The Artist* is far too strong to topple at this point.



Best Actor: Jean Dujardin – *The Artist*

Without any audible spoken dialogue, the little-known French actor managed to make everyone fall in love with his handsome and likable George Valentine. The range of his facial expression is astonishing, and the same can be said for his tap-dancing skills. With Cannes, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild Award, BAFTA and numerous critics' circle award wins already under his belt, it would be a safe bet to assume that he is a shoo-in for Oscar glory. George Clooney (*The Descendants*), the next best in the category and the potential upset for the night, needn't be too disheartened. He's already won an acting Oscar back in 2006 for *Syriana*; and the Academy isn't a fan of repeat-winners.



Best Actress: Viola Davis – *The Help*

A tough one to guess, since she faces such a strong competition from the always amazing Meryl Streep, who gives yet another superb performance in *The Iron Lady* (the other nominees, I'm afraid, can all forget it). But the tides seem to be turning in support for Davis. Having won over her peers as evidenced by her Screen Actors Guild Award win, the much underrated actress who has always impressed in dozens of supporting roles, it only seems right for her to be credited for her tremendous performance here. It's a shame to say that Streep's third Oscar win will just have to wait another couple of years. There is also huge support for Davis' film, whereas very little exists for Streep's Thatcher biopic.

ACADEMY AWARDS SPECIAL

and win big at the Oscars

at your own risk



Best Supporting Actor: Christopher Plummer – *Beginners*

It's great to see so many veterans (i.e. old and have been in the industry for a long, long time) in running for this category and if/when Plummer wins on Sunday, he will be the oldest Oscar winner (82) for acting. After decades in the business and several major films, this is only Plummer's second nomination, but it will be wise to start polishing up on his acceptance speech. His restrained yet absorbing performance as a gay father and recent widower who comes out of the closet in the last few years of his life has won the critics over, having already scored more than a dozen prestigious awards for this role. It's never too late to win an Oscar, and Plummer certainly proves that.



Best Supporting Actress: Octavia Spencer – *The Help*

Not much room for debate here. Spencer is hands-down the most memorable performer of the lot as the straight-talking, strong-spirited Minny Jackson. The fact that there is much critical acclaim around the film is also a strong pushing point, a key factor a couple of her competitors seem to lack (Melissa McCarthy – *Bridesmaids*, Janet McTeer – *Albert Nobbs*). The only real visible threat is Bérénice Bejo who, if *The Artist* decides to clean house on Sunday can cause an upset with a surprise win in her category, but Bejo herself hasn't been the subject of much attention when it came to actual winning. Spencer is a relative unknown, but this awards season will do wonders for her career.



Best Director: Michel Hazanavicius – *The Artist*

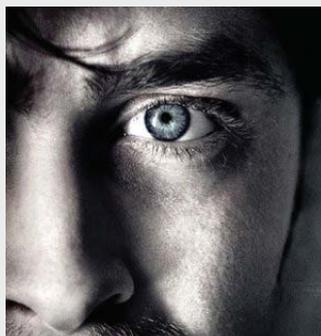
It takes guts to make a silent, black and white film, but Hazanavicius (above, with the canine star of *The Artist*, Uggie) managed to create something truly enchanting and extraordinary. It has been years since the Academy paid attention to a black and white film, let alone a silent one, but *The Artist* has been the talk of the town and Hazanavicius is the man responsible for this miracle. Hopefully he has paved the way for filmmakers to take more bold, unusual steps, but only time will tell on the legacy he will leave behind with his latest work. But for the time being, he should enjoy and soak up all the applause and acclaim he and his film are currently receiving. He deserves it.

FILM

Film Editors: **John Park**
Lucy Wiles

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Top 10 Box Office films in the UK this week



1) The Woman in Black
- 12A - Daniel Radcliffe, Janet McTeer

2) The Muppets - U - Jason Segel, Amy Adams

3) Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance - 12A - Nicolas Cage, Idris Elba

4) Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace
- U - Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman

5) Journey 2: The Mysterious Island - PG - Josh Hutcherson, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Michael Caine

6) The Vow - 12A - Channing Tatum, Rachel McAdams

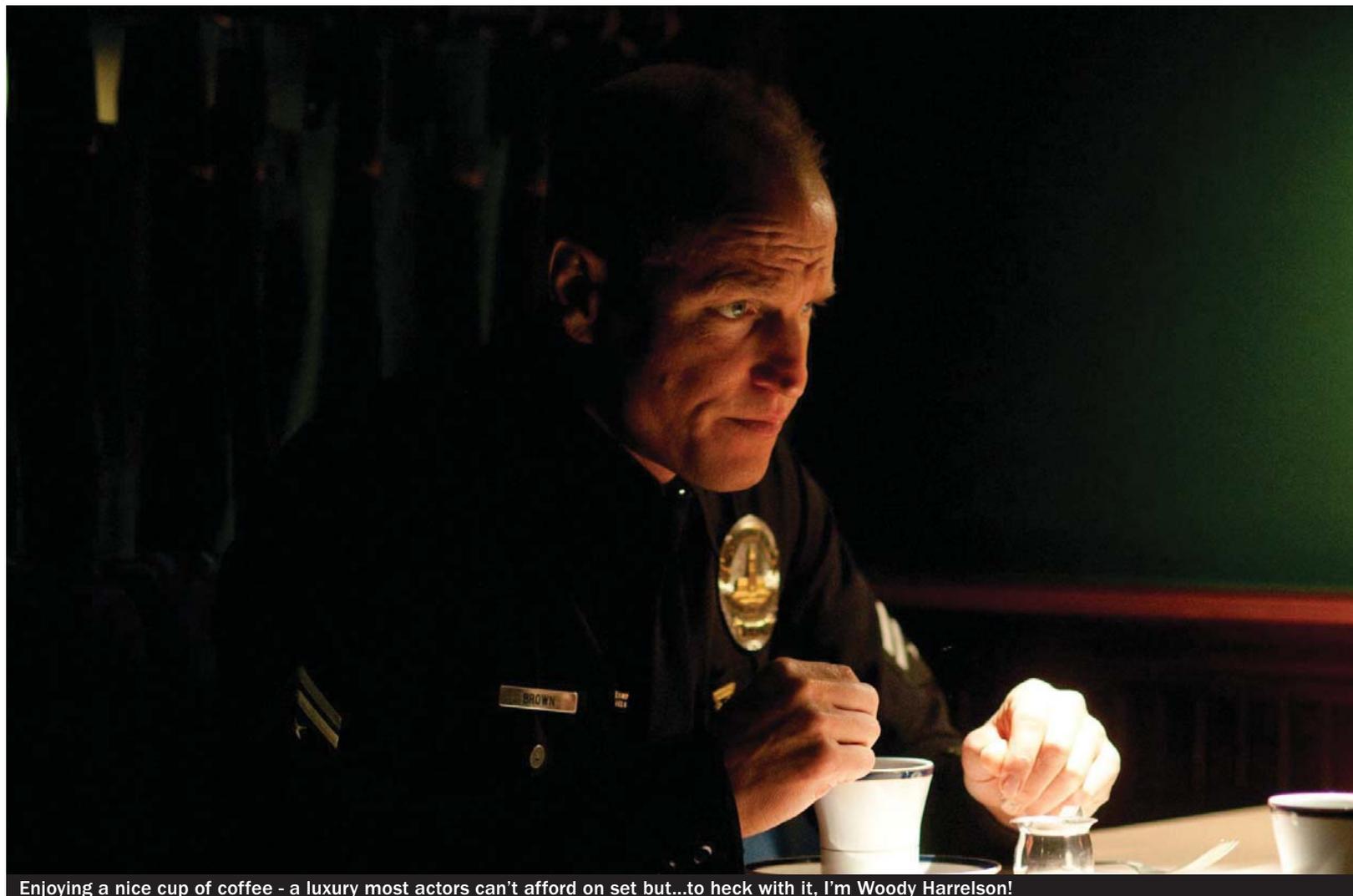
7) Chronicle - 12A - Dane DeHaan, Alex Russell, Michael B. Jordan

8) The Descendants - 15 - George Clooney, Shailene Woodley, Amara Miller

9) The Artist - PG - Jean Dujardin, Bérénice Bejo

10) War Horse - 12A - Jeremy Irvine, Emily Watson, Tom Hiddleston

Corrupt cop going ballistic



Enjoying a nice cup of coffee - a luxury most actors can't afford on set but...to heck with it, I'm Woody Harrelson!

Rampart

Director Oren Moverman
Screenwriters James Ellroy, Oren Moverman
Cast Woody Harrelson, Sigourney Weaver, Robin Wright, Steve Buscemi

John Park

A cop with the nickname "Date Rape" (Harrelson) is not going to be a mild-tempered, even-minded, fair cop; although it probably wouldn't be fair to say that he is a bad person. He believes in the justice system, he has respect for the police force and the work they do, he is passionate about arresting the scums of L.A., and he appears to be a family man with two children he is dedicated in taking care of. For him, slightly bending and sometimes outright breaking the law is absolutely fine, as long as he has a justifiable goal. He is the kind of cop who would beat someone half to death to get some vital information. Cops could get away with this kind of mindset but in the 1990's, the infamous Rampart scandal was shaking up the L.A. police department, with corrupt cops being discharged and attracting a lot of embarrassment and negative press attention to the police force.

Caught in the middle of this chaos is the equally chaotic and volatile Brown, whose stubborn, crime-fighting nature refuses to tone down despite the scrutiny his occupation is under. One day he chases and beats up a man who accidentally crashed into his car and tried to flee, and his rampage with his police baton ends up getting caught on a civilian camera. The video and his name are all across the evening news later that day, and attracts even more protest, something his powerful bosses, trying their absolute best to survive the aftermath of the Rampart scandal, are furious about. His professional life is therefore in jeopardy, with Internal Affairs (Weaver, Buscemi) wanting to bury this case from the public by getting rid of Brown as swiftly as possible.

Things at home aren't much better. The two women (Heche, Nixon), who happen to be sisters, who Brown each fathered a daughter with, have kicked him out of their house and he is not a welcome member at their dinner table, despite his desire to bond with this daughters (who are incidentally, both cousins and sisters). His domestic life consists of lazing around his couch, watching television, drinking beer and endlessly smoking. He needs his job more than ever to remain sane

and have some sort of purpose in life. Being targeted as a sacrificial lamb by his employees at this point in his life is even less welcoming, and Brown is not willing to go down without a fight. A legal battle ensues in which he tries to not only clear his name, but also keep his job.

But luck is most certainly not on his side. Even when he is trying to lay low and correct some of the mistakes he has made, he somehow ends up making his situation worse, with his life further spiraling out of control. Brown may not be a likable character at first, due to his shockingly impulsive and violent behaviour, and the fact that very little is told about him prior to a lot of these hectic events also don't help the audience trying to understand this man. But the superb Harrelson is able to do wonders with his surprisingly underwritten main character. A highly underrated actor who sails through different genres with competence and ease, the versatile Harrelson is a tour-de-force in capturing Brown's hardships and his daily intimate struggle to please everyone around him.

Despite the fiery nature of its plot, *Rampart* chooses to linger in many long takes and carefully observe Brown's every single thought and movement. This,

combined with Harrelson's intense performance, is an exceptional character study that truly draws you in to this fascinating tale of someone hitting rock-bottom. Just as you thought it could not get any worse for Brown, it does, in the most unfortunate way imaginable, and we start to wonder whether his life will ever turn around. Although it would be fair to assume that he himself played a part in this mess, given all the tough hoops he is required to jump through, we begin to wonder if the punishment fits the crime.

It doesn't have much else to tell outside the central character's plot which in itself is also greatly restrained, and because of this, the talented range of supporting actors are merely treated as nothing but slightly long cameo roles. Weaver and Buscemi shine in their brief scene they share with Harrelson, Heche and Nixon are both suitably cranky and dissatisfied with their children's father's irresponsible string of actions. Robin Wright has an interesting role as a mysterious lawyer who might or might not be after Brown. But the real star here is Harrelson, playing a conflicted man in a complicated movie, in a raw, brave performance with a touch of priceless dark comedy here and there that shows Harrelson yet again on top form.

Extremely long and incredibly clumsy



Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close

Director Stephen Daldry
Screenwriters Eric Roth, Jonathan Safran Foer (novel)
Cast Tom Hanks, Sandra Bullock, Thomas Horn

John Park

A lot of negative hype surrounds the latest film from Academy Award nominated director Stephen Daldry. As the overly sentimental, manipulative film that stole the much-coveted Best Picture slot from *Drive*, the lowest rated film on Rotten Tomatoes that made it to the nominations list in this year's Oscars, it looks as though Daldry's most recent work won't be receiving similar attention his previous films such as *Billy Elliot* and *The Hours* enjoyed.

9/11 is a delicate subject that cannot be taken lightly in fictitious work. Set a foot wrong and you will most likely offend those who were involved in the incident. It remains a fresh wound, and therefore the subject needs careful direction. But with *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Daldry is too careful – and is so worried of doing anything ever so slightly wrong that he struggles to aim higher. The story centres on a young, intelligent boy, Oskar (Horn), who may or may not have Asperger's Syndrome (“the tests were inconclusive”), who loses his father (Hanks) in one of the Towers. He and his father were close, and the many expeditions his father sent him on, a set of elaborate treasure hunts riddled with fascinating clues and investigations, are no more.

A year goes by, and finally working

up the courage to enter his father's room which has been left untouched by his mother (Bullock), he finds an envelope with the name “Black” written on it, and inside, a key. Interpreting this as his deceased father's one last expedition set out for Oskar to embark on, he makes it his mission to find out what this key opens and why his father left it hidden for him. His hunt takes him all over New York, as he slowly works his way through visiting every single person in the city named Black, asking about his father. He meets a variety of characters, none of whom can help him regarding the key.

Every encounter he has with a different stranger is somehow a new lesson learned. A long list of fantastic supporting actors surround Oskar in his journey: Viola Davis and Jeffrey Wright play a couple going through a divorce, John Goodman is the sympathetic doorman, Zoe Caldwell is the caring and concerned grandmother, Bullock as the mother he doesn't quite appreciate, and most memorably, Max von Sydow as an old renter in Oskar's grandmother's house who he befriends. He doesn't speak, and communicates by writing notes, and with the words ‘yes’ and ‘no’ written on the palms of his hands. With absolutely no dialogue, von Sydow enters the film with warmth, immediately befriend Oskar, becoming the only person the young boy can vent his anger to.

The problem with Daldry's film is this: it only makes a lasting emotional impact using its supporting characters. Nothing substantial ever materialises from the boy alone, and his quest to finding the right lock for his key loses steam very quickly, because something

this far-fetched will not have a meaningful answer – and surprise, surprise, the mystery behind the key is nothing more than a simple misunderstanding, almost rendering the long build-up useless. Oskar is furious when he finds out, and chances are, you will be, too.

Horn, a new discovery in his remarkable screen debut, doesn't have the luck of playing a likable part – often the boy's naive yet relentless obsession is irritating to watch – as he lashes out at those trying to help him. The constant flashback that shows Oskar's painful reaction to his father's death is often too forced for its own good, and it's far from a pleasant experience being repeatedly bombarded with heavy-handed scenes. Oskar is a unique child but the film fails to explore any deeper into the boy's upbringing or surroundings that attempt to explain his character.

Much like this year's string of disappointing films (*J. Edgar*, *The Iron Lady*), Daldry puts together a wonderful ensemble of actors, but doesn't know quite what to do with all the talented individuals in the cast. There are unquestionably moving moments, thanks largely to Bullock (watch as she steals the final few moments of the film) and Davis, but even all of these do not add up to much, leaving the central protagonist with a lame little adventure with hardly any sense of fulfillment. The final scene is an even bigger disappointment, brutally trivialising the rest of the film. We spent two hours watching the trials and struggles of an immature little boy with far too much to handle at his age. But what does this all mean and come down to? Shockingly, not a lot.

The return of the Muppet puppets

The Muppets

Director James Bobin
Screenwriters Jason Segel, Nicholas Stoller, Jim Henson
Cast Jason Segel, Amy Adams, Chris Cooper

Lucy Wiles

They're back! YES! The fantastic Muppets gang are back on the big screen with a whole new feature length movie for the first time in some years. Yes the story is ridiculous, yes the jokes are cheesy, yes the whole thing is mental but come on – you've got to admit you've missed them.

In this latest tale of hilarity, the Muppets' greatest fan Walter (Peter Linz), who is himself a muppet from Smalltown, USA, is on holiday in Hollywood

with his ridiculously dense brother, Gary (Segel) and Gary's also pretty dim fiancée Mary (Adams) – both of whom are human, by the way – when he learns that the old Muppets' Theatre is closed and about to be razed by an evil Texas tycoon, the imaginatively named Tex Richman (Cooper), who wants to drill in the area for oil. Horrified, Walter and Gary search out Kermit (Steve Whitmire), who is depressed from his dull post-theatre life, and together they round up the old Muppets Gang.

They find Fozzie Bear (Eric Jacobson) playing with a tribute group called the Moopets in Reno, Gonzo (Dave Goelz) running a firm selling toilet bowls and Miss Piggy (Jacobson again) editing *Paris Vogue*. Among the guest stars is Emily Blunt, amusingly reprising her role from

The Devil Wears Prada as Miss Piggy's secretary. Can the old gang pull together for one last show and raise the \$10m needed to buy back the old studio from Tex Richman?

The film is actually cleverly done. Using the Muppets' long absence from the television as a premise, this film neatly taps into us old nostalgic former fans, who still feel for these anarchic and loveable characters, whilst also winning over new followers. And even though it's very silly, it's still hugely enjoyable. The film's humour and big-heartedness are refreshingly disingenuous, the self-referential jokes very well-handled.

As it always has been, the beauty of the Muppet is the insincerity; in fact the only sincere thing about it is the affection emanating from the audience.



Clearly you're never too old to love The Muppets – he's 32 and she's 37

Television Editors: **George Barnett**
James Simpson

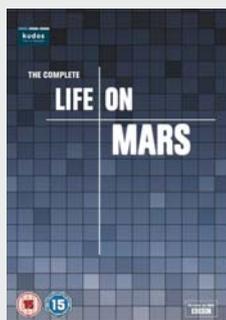
tv.felix@imperial.ac.uk

TELEVISION

Box sets you really, really should own

Life on Mars – Series 1 and 2

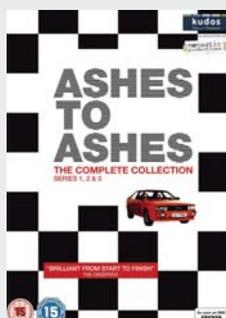
£15.97 from Amazon



BBC science fiction police drama set in the 1970s, featuring Philip Glenister as our favourite bad-ass cop; Gene Hunt.

Ashes to Ashes – Series 1-3

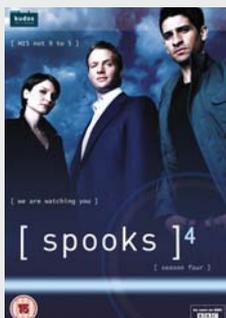
£36.99 from Amazon



Follow up series to *Life on Mars* set in the early 80s. Featuring Keeley Hawes (worth every penny just for that) and Philip Glenister.

Spooks – Series 4

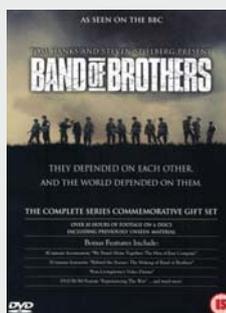
£9.49 from Amazon



The BBC follow MI5 stopping countless people being blown up during every one hour episode with only seconds to spare each time.

Band of Brothers

£14.99 from Amazon



Epic ten-part World War II drama following US 101st Airborne Division from initial training through to D-Day and beyond. Co-produced by Spielberg and Hanks.

A return to form for *Top Gear*?

George Barnett

Ever since its rebirth in 2002, *Top Gear* has provided me with Sunday night entertainment and it's always been brilliant. Well actually that isn't entirely true. You see, *Top Gear*'s entertainment value has decreased hugely in recent years – the 'humour' has become entirely predictable and largely infantile, whilst fewer and fewer cars are actually being reviewed and much like I expect Hangman to be offensive, I expect a car show to be about cars.

In the last two or three years the balance has been completely wrong – it's been three idiots larking about doing pointless challenges and occasionally reviewing a car if the mood takes them. My primary reason for tuning in to *Top Gear* each week is to see the car reviews and tests, I don't think to myself 'oh I want to watch some comedy – I'll watch *Top Gear*!'

“Episode three was what you'd describe as terrible”

You can imagine then that it was to my delight that the first episode of the current series (number 18 if you were wondering) was fantastic (excepting **will.i.am** as the guest; he was a bit boring). The three lads went on a road trip through Italy in a Lamborghini, a McLaren and a Noble – what more could you want. This was – as the case usually is with *Top Gear* – beautifully filmed and produced. Fantastic. *Top Gear* is back.

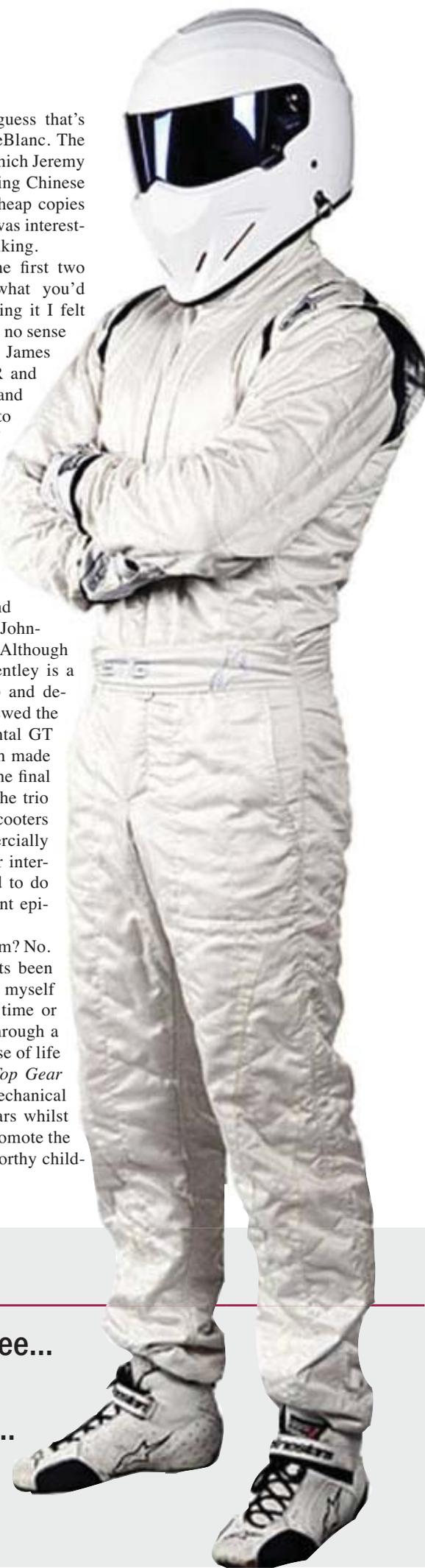
I was even happier when the second episode was also up to (if not exceeding) scratch. It saw a genuinely interesting feature in which Richard Hammond explored the world of NASCAR, a sport which is rarely mentioned here in Blighty followed by Jeremy reviewing the new Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster. Even what I usually find the most tedious part of the show, the Star in a Reasonably Priced Car, was genuinely amus-

ing and interesting although I guess that's what you'd expect from Matt LeBlanc. The episode ended with a feature in which Jeremy and James investigated the growing Chinese car market, most of which are cheap copies of European marques. Even that was interesting and not too infantile for my liking.

Episode three was not like the first two episodes. Episode three was what you'd describe as terrible. After watching it I felt more annoyed than someone with no sense of humour reading Hangman. James reviewed a Vauxhall Corsa VXR and a Fiat Panda, whilst Clarkson and Hammond wasted time trying to direct a car chase for a remake of *The Sweeney*.

It was a mixed bag with episode four – it started well with James traveling to Florida to review the Fisker Karma – a surprisingly good looking and well made electric car. He did of course end up going off track and meeting AC/DC frontman Brian Johnson to drive his 1928 Bentley. Although that was no bad thing as the Bentley is a beautiful piece of craftsmanship and design. Following this Jeremy reviewed the Ferrari FF and Bentley Continental GT on ice in Northern Sweden which made for surprisingly good viewing. The final feature of the episode involved the trio each making off road mobility scooters and testing them against commercially available versions. It was neither interesting nor funny. All it managed to do was ruin what was a pretty decent episode.

So has *Top Gear* returned to form? No. Not yet. It's certainly the best its been for a few years, but I still find myself debating whether it's worth my time or not. It's almost as if it's going through a mid life crisis. It needs a new lease of life – a breath of fresh air. To me *Top Gear* should be a showcase for the mechanical excellence and beauty of new cars whilst providing an arena in which to promote the joy of driving, not some cringeworthy childish 'entertainment' show.



Stigisms

Some say he heads the New Clubs Committee...

Others say he's running for Union President...

All we know is... he isn't Hangman.

Fashion Editors: **Saskia Verhagen**
Alice Yang

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FASHION

Fashion Week frenzy

London Fashion Week isn't just for the editors and bloggers, **Alice Yang** shows you how to get involved

To Do: London Fashion Weekend 23-26 February, Tickets start at £12.50

Once again Somerset House has opened its doors to the great British public, inviting in all those among us that yearn for the fashion week experience. The hoards of models, photographers and editors that have swarmed London this past week with street style inspirations to last us all season may already be sprinkling their magic on Paris; but for us casual Londoners, London Fashion Weekend is where it all begins.

Taking place in the official LFW show space, LFWeekend offers you the chance to perch on the benches where fashion's elite were sat just

hours before, scribbling away in their Smythson diaries and frantically tapping away at their Stella McCartney cased iPads. After days of sitting at your laptop gasping at next winter's designs, you too can have your turn at being inspired and enlightened from the front row – and by the more relevantly coveted spring summer trends at that.

The pristine tunnels of Somerset House will be lined with rails of traditional British labels from Jaeger London to Pringle of Scotland, as well as the country's most aspiring emerging designers so you can be first to lay your hands on Holly

Fulton's graphic art-deco prints and a piece of Maria Francesca Pepe's conceptual 'jewellery-wear'. Oh and did we mention that everything would be going at a cheeky discounted price?

Once you're done shopping (albeit restocking your entire wardrobe with this summer's pretty pastels), the pampering can begin. With industry experts such as Toni & Guy and Elizabeth Arden on hand to help revamp your look for the upcoming season, you can rest in the safe knowledge that your split ends and under-eye-bags will not be following you out of this event. Such joyous

thoughts makes for the perfect time to head over to the pop-up bars and boutiques to indulge in some of fashion's favourite munchies; from Freya Frozen Yogurt to Chambord, whilst enjoying the tracks being

spun by fashion's favourite DJs.

Whether it's a complete wardrobe overhaul you want or just a chance to feel like a front-row editor, LFWeekend is most definitely one not to miss.



To Visit: International Fashion Showcase 1-29 February, Free

With 19 global embassies and national cultural institutes opening its doors to press, buyers and the public alike, the International Fashion Showcase promises to give an insight onto the global fashion scene like never before.

The first event of its kind in the first ever collaboration between the British Council and British Fashion Council, this exhibition was created to "honour its values of international respect, excellence, equality and friendship", whilst celebrating the Olympic year that will bring to our capital the widest range of cultures and ethnicities yet to land on

our humbled soils. From Australia to China, Italy, Korea, Japan, the US, Nigeria and Romania, to name just a few, each country is exhibiting the talented emerging design-

"The International Fashion Showcase has it all"

ers they feel best encapsulate their country's future of fashion on our doorsteps.

Dotted around various parts of

central London, the handy downloadable 'passport' maps out a trail to follow for fashionistas and cultural-lovers alike, with the added childish element of stamp collecting at each venue and a prize of £250 to spend at next year's LFWeekend for the savviest explorer.

So if you feel that following the various fashion weeks online like the rest of us is just a bit too mainstream, or perhaps you just feel like you should put more of an effort to become culturally educated before the Olympics kick off this summer, the International Fashion Showcase has it all – air miles unnecessary.



To Look Out For: Marni for H&M Marni for H&M: 8 March

A flurry of capsule collections has taken the world by storm recently with Karl Lagerfeld for Net-A-Porter giving us a sharp monochromatic style injection, and Mary Katrantzou for Topshop blowing us away with her bright signature prints and enticing lamp shade dresses. Yet topping these has been H&M's impressive unrelenting storm of designer collaborations, which has yet to be concluded.

With a double blast from Donatella Versace featuring first a selection of loudly patterned and studded pieces inspired by her own Versace SS2012 collection, followed by a

more wearable selection of cute fruit-scattered crop tops and candy coloured dresses, immediately chased up by David Beckham's underwear collection (which was perhaps just an excuse for him to show the world he still had rock hard abs), the Swedish clothing company is now about to launch Marni for H&M.

Marni for H&M promises to be a world of silky printed dreams. The latest campaign pictures show an eclectic yet simultaneously elegant collection, effortlessly working the biggest trends this season. For the girls there are spots and stripes clashing excitedly with colour block-

ing and floral patterns, topped off with chunky bracelets, sweet detachable collars and large petal necklaces. Similarly for the guys, there are some surprisingly wearable pieces in simple slim cuts and luxurious fabrics – what guy doesn't secretly fancy a bit of silk or cashmere?

However, with so much going for it and such a build up to its launch, there is one slightly large downside – this is a collection that may require overnight campouts, but then again, perhaps that's a price worth paying for such a delectably perfect patterned look.



Dessert of the week

Blueberry Cobbler

A super easy dessert with which you can impress! Enough for two ramekins.



Blood-red cobblers with a touch of booze

Ingredients:

The filling:

- 1 cup blueberries
- 2 tsp vodka
- 2 tsp all purpose flour
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice (optional)
- ½ tsp lemon zest (optional)

The biscuit:

- ½ cup all purpose flour
- 90ml cold milk
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 3 tbsp cold butter cut in small squares
- 1 tsp sugar
- A pinch of salt

Preheat your oven at 190°C.

In a mixing bowl, combine all the filling ingredients but be careful not to mash the blueberries. Place the filling in two ramekins. It should be enough to fill 3 quarters of each ramekin.

In a separate mixing bowl, combine the flour with the baking powder, the sugar and the salt. The butter should be cut in small square pieces and it should be very cold. This will ensure that the biscuit will have a good texture.

Mix the butter with the flour mixture but be careful not to overmix. If you overmix then the biscuit will be very hard. The milk should be cold and this helps to achieve the required texture. Add the milk slowly into the mixture. Again be careful not to overmix.

Place the biscuit batter on top of the blueberries and brush with milk. In a tray put some foil and then place the ramekins on top. This will ensure that your tray does not get dirty from the blueberry juices.

Place it in your oven and bake for about 15 minutes or until the biscuit is golden brown.

Note that this recipe could be made with almost any kind of fruit that you have in your fridge. It is great made with apples or bananas or strawberries but my personal favourite is the blueberry cobbler.

A great dessert to share!

Yiango Mavrocostanti

Vegan Diary: Week One

Clare Cheng and Hannah Cox have survived the first five days of their quest in veganism

Hannah and Clare are two real foodies who have become vegan for a month to raise money for the Multiple Sclerosis Trust. They've decided to make the most of this opportunity and are on a quest to find really good vegan food. Follow their progress in their weekly column to see if they really can find vegan food that satisfies the meat-eaters among us.

Hannah's Cheap and Easy Vegan Mediterranean Couscous – serves 1

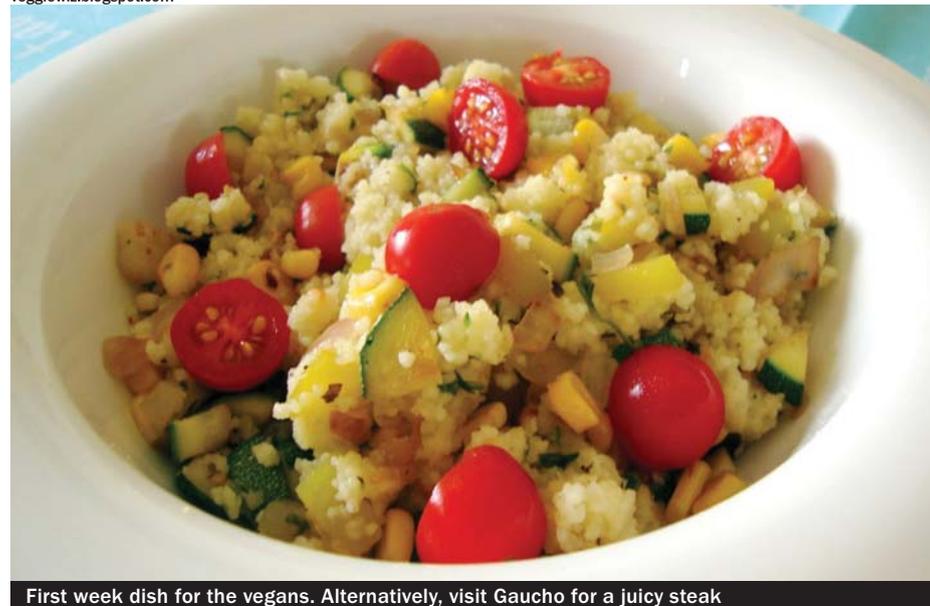
Ingredients

- 70g giant couscous
- Drizzle of olive oil
- 1 crushed clove of garlic
- 1 courgette
- 1 can of chopped tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon of sugar
- 1 medium red onion
- Pinch of salt

1. Fry couscous (2mins) in oil or until golden brown, before covering in water (approx. two times the volume of couscous) and boil until soft.
2. Chop onion into chunks, sweat in oil until soft. Chop courgette into chunks and add to onions along with the crushed garlic.
3. Drain chopped tomatoes and add to vegetables.
4. Add sugar and season before cooking until piping hot.
5. Mix in soft giant couscous and serve.

This was the first week of our vegan chal-

veggiewiz.blogspot.com



First week dish for the vegans. Alternatively, visit Gaucho for a juicy steak

lenge to raise money for the MS Trust. Although we were dreading it, we secretly hoped that this new lifestyle would make us feel healthier, slimmer and happier; so far it's been a bit of an uphill struggle.

Although it's been tough, we have discovered the delicious Bear Granola Nibbles sold in SAF (the tropical crunch flavour is particularly good). They serve as a really good snack to satisfy our food cravings, and on the back of this we thought we'd sample some snacky dessert delights. In Wholefoods we bought a "Banoffee Cream" Tart and a Banana Walnut "Chocolate" Chip iced cupcake. To be honest both would be

topped by a good hobnob, but if we had to pick one it would be the "Banoffee Cream" Tart. It's fresh, creamy and would be satisfying for any sweet tooth. On the down side we don't like that we can't figure out what the "creamy" topping is made from, and to be honest there's an overriding sense that the whole thing is artificial.

For now our quest to find amazing vegan food is still ongoing. Tune in next week! For now we're off to make a cup of tea (with soya milk of course), and remember this is all for the MS Trust so please sponsor us at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/goingvegan.

Get creative in the kitchen after lectures

Anastasia Eleftheriou

You have finished lectures, you have just returned home and you are starving. The worst thing is that you're sick of eating fast food, but you don't have that much experience with cooking.

Relax, this article is dedicated to you! There are a lot of simple recipes, even for those of you who have little time to go to the supermarket and prepare your meals. And the most important thing is that these recipes have a low budget and will save you a significant amount of money if you make them often.

Remember, the secret of success in cooking is to be creative, so let's get our hands dirty and try the following dishes. I call the first one the "Easy Choice". The usual ingredients are some tomato sauce, an onion, a tomato, some parsley, a lemon, pita bread and as much mince as you like. Cheap and common ingre-



Apologies to Clare and Hannah...

dients, nothing too complicated.

The preparation of the meal is quick and very simple. Chop the vegetables, fry them for a few minutes in olive oil, add the mince and any herbs that you like (salt, pepper, paprika, cumin etc) and fry until the meat is cooked.

Then add the tomato sauce and wait until

it is absorbed by the meat. At the end, add some parsley and lemon and enjoy this delicious mixture in a pita bread, as shown in the picture. You may find this recipe very helpful if you have some meat left in the fridge, or if you have small portions of various different meat and vegetables that you don't know how to combine.

The second recipe has as prerequisites a few potatoes, one or two tomatoes and an egg. Cut the potatoes into small pieces and fry them. Remove the oil from the pan, chop the tomatoes into small pieces and add them to the pan with the potatoes.

Finally, add the egg and wait until you get an even mixture (this should take only a few minutes). Add some salt and pepper, and your meal is ready! See? Cooking is easier than you think. Just give it a try, let your creativity shine and remember that practice makes perfect.

Food and the Fairtrade Fortnight

Olivia Tillbert

The celebrations of Fairtrade Fortnight start on 27 February – but what is “Fairtrade” actually?

The Fairtrade Foundation is a non-profit organisation that ensures that any product marked with the Fairtrade Mark conforms to the established standards. These standards are in regards to ethics, for instance, any hired labour producing the consumable must be paid at least the regional average wage. The Fairtrade Foundation also sets a cap on the minimum selling price of the products. This ensures that the farmers’ labours will always bring in enough money to sustain their families and communities. This is not true for non-Fairtrade producers who have to work for zilch in famine or when demand and subsequently selling price drops to nothing, meaning not being able to make ends meet.

Another example is that health and safety must be enforced to ensure that machinery is handled correctly and the dangers are known. Specific hazardous materials are also banned to ensure the safety of workers, while environmentally sustainable and natural methods in farming are promoted.

On top of ensuring that producers are not being ripped off, the Fairtrade Foundation invests into a community fund to be spent democratically by cooperatives in the area on schools, clean water, new roads etc.

Most people nod and agree that Fairtrade is the right way to conduct business, but are worried that being ethical means that your wallet has to suffer. This is an untrue myth: 100g of coffee has the standard price of £2.68 while the average Fairtrade price is £2.50 while a pack of 8 bananas typically costs £1.38, Fairtrade bananas cost £1.15. As stu-

dents it may be hard to think of anything but Sainsbury’s basics, so when you are considering buying your 55p half a kilo of rice, really question: how on earth can it be so cheap? Who is standing behind this product and hence what it would mean to them for you to invest 50p more?

What was that relationship between price and quality again? Oh yes – inversely proportional.

So to help you with taking the step towards more ethical buying, during the Fairtrade Fortnight the Union Newsagent will be selling Ubuntu cola along with the usual Fairtrade products, Catering across the university will be offering prizes for buying Fairtrade via a stamped card system, as well as the ICU Fairtrade society will be hosting a variety of events.

The products will be easy to spot – it’s those marked with the Fairtrade Mark.

The Imperial Fairtrade Food Awards have started!

Cook your favourite dish including as many Fairtrade products as possible and send your recipe and photos to food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Prizes:

- 1st : £30 voucher for EthicalSuperstore.com
- 2nd: Leon: Ingredients and Recipes
- 3rd: Just Desserts: 50 sweet surprises using Fairtrade ingredients



Each participant will receive free entry to a Fairtrade Fortnight event of their choice, including the popular All You Can Eat Ben & Jerry and Cheese & Wine nights! Therefore, the earlier the entry the greater the choice of events!

TAKE A STEP
IN FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

2012

FAIRTRADE

IT'S FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT!

FAIRTRADE.ORG.UK/STEP MORE TICKETING INFORMATION AT ICUFAIRTRADE.ORG.UK

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">27 FEB</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">FAIRTRADE SALE</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">SAF FOYER (11:30 - 1:30) BUY EVENT TICKETS, FAIRTRADE PRODUCE AND COME SEE FOR YOURSELF WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE FAIRTRADE!</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">28 FEB</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">PUB QUIZ</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">UNION BAR (8-10) WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT FAIRTRADE?</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">29 FEB</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">MARKET STALL</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">JCR (11:30 - 1:30) BUY EVENT TICKETS, FAIRTRADE PRODUCE AND FIND OUT ABOUT FAIRTRADE!</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">FAIRTRADE DEBATE</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">BLACKETT LT1 (12:30-2) IS FAIRTRADE THE BEST WAY OF IMPROVING WORKERS' CONDITIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em; text-align: right;">CONTACT DBAT@IC.AC.UK TO GET INVOLVED!</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">1 MAR</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 2em;">£4</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">BEN & JERRY'S ALL YOU CAN EAT ICE CREAM NIGHT!</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">UNION ACTIVITY SPACE 1 (TIME 1: 6PM, TIME 2: 8PM) FEATURING: - CANDYFLOSS MACHINE - ICECREAM RACE!</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">2 MAR</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">TEA & COFFEE TASTING</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">SAF FOYER (5-6) SIT DOWN AND RELAX AFTER A LONG WEEK! FREE TEA, COFFEE AND A VARIETY OF VEGAN MILKS. MS CUPCAKE ETHICAL VEGAN CUPCAKES FOR SALE.</p>
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">5 MAR</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 2em;">£2</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">BODYSHOP BEAUTY NIGHT</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">CHEMISTRY COMMON ROOM (6-8) TREAT YOURSELF TO A WIDE ARRAY OF COSMETICS</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">6 MAR</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSION</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">EEE 508 (1-2) FAIRTRADE AND THE IMPACT OF ETHICAL CONSUMPTION IN IMPROVING PRODUCER'S CONDITIONS. SNACKS PROVIDED!</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">7 MAR</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">FAIRTRADE SALE</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">SHERFIELD (11:30 - 1:30) BUY EVENT TICKETS, FAIRTRADE PRODUCE AND COME SEE FOR YOURSELF WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE FAIRTRADE!</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">8 MAR</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 2em;">£6</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">WINE & CHEESE NIGHT</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">HUXLEY 344 (7-9:30) SAMPLE THE MANY WINES AND CHEESES ENTER THE RAFFLE, WIN THE QUIZ, ENJOY THE AMAZING COMPANY!</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red;">9 MAR</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">MARKET STALL</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">SHERFIELD (11:30 - 1:30) BUY EVENT TICKETS, FAIRTRADE PRODUCE AND COME SEE FOR YOURSELF WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE FAIRTRADE!</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 2em;">SOAPMAKING CLASS £2</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">UNION MR3 (6-8) PAMPER YOUR SKIN, CREATE YOUR OWN SOAP ETHICAL AND DELICIOUS INGREDIENTS!</p>

PRICES DISPLAYED ABOVE ARE FOR ADVANCE, NON-MEMBER TICKETS. DOOR PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO A £1 LATE ENTREE FEE. ICU FAIRTRADE MEMBERS ARE ENTITLED TO A £1 ADVANCED DISCOUNT PER TICKETED EVENT



TRAVEL

Travel Editors: **Chris Richardson**
Dushi Arumuganesan

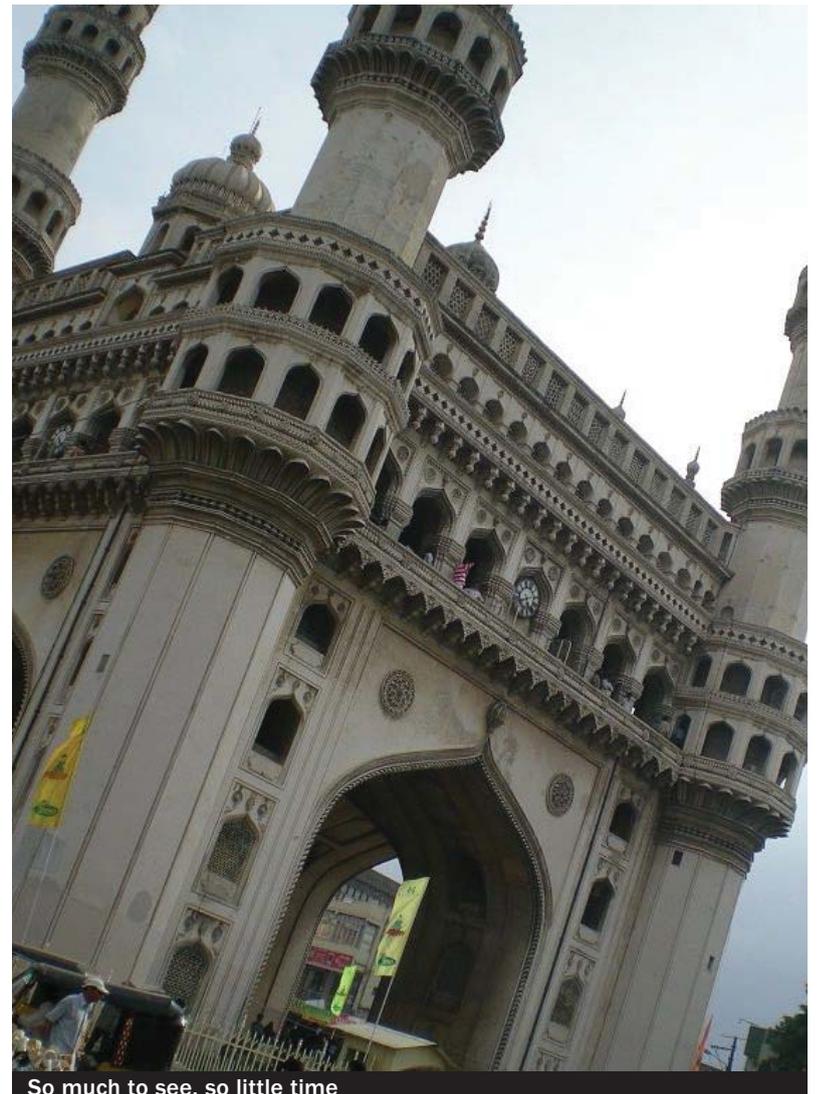
travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The Heart of Hyderabad

A whistle-stop tour through the sights of the famous Indian city



Get shopping...



So much to see, so little time

Vaidehi Konteti

Hyderabad city, India. Capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh, the second largest city in South India, and my hometown for the first few years of my life. Having lived in Hyderabad for almost a decade, and visited the place virtually every year since, you can

“Hyderabad is a perfect mix of historical charm and bustling modern areas”

understand why the city is extremely close to my heart. It would undoubtedly be impossible for me to write about everything Hyderabad offers in a mere few hundred words, and I wouldn't dare attempt it, so I'm going to tell you about a few of my favourite sights.

Hyderabad is a perfect mix of al-

luring historical charm, reflecting the town's heritage, and bustling modern areas: a clear demonstration of the town's progress. Quirky narrow streets, beautiful mosques and packed bazaars are unquestionably the defining features of Old City. Here, you also find Hyderabad's most famous landmark, Charminar. The word Charminar literally means “four towers”, and this is an apt description of the monument. Charminar, which artfully houses a beautiful mosque, is an ornate structure consisting of four minarets connected by arches. Climb up the 150 steps to the top of a minaret, and experience impressive views of the immediate Old City area and beyond.

Just off one of the side roads from Charminar is Laad Bazaar, famous for its bangle stores. The bazaar is a spectacular sight of shimmering stores and throngs of people bartering for the best prices. The shopkeepers have always reminded me of hawks as they wait around the shop entrances, swooping down on us at first sight, and luring us into their stores.

While the Old City does have its attractions, my favourite spot is actually a more modern sight: Birla Mandir. This is a handsomely designed temple, of Sri Venkateshwara (a Hindu deity), built entirely from white marble, which

“The graceful beauty that the edifice radiates never fails to draw me in”

is situated on top of the hill “Naubath Pahad”. The graceful beauty that the edifice radiates never fails to draw me in; and with fine, intricate carvings, the charm is definitely not lost when seen up close. Furthermore, the panoramic views of Hyderabad from the courtyard outside the temple, are simply spectacular; seeing the pinpoints of car lights and hearing the distant noise of busy city life below, a feeling of calm

always envelopes me.

From the vantage point of Birla Mandir another signature sight of Hyderabad is visible. The mammoth Buddha Statue, particularly beautiful when lit up against the evening sky, is located at the centre of Hussain Sagar, a massive artificial lake in the heart of the city.

Surrounding these waters are an array of noteworthy attractions. Firstly, Tank bund. This is a popular promenade, where families go to buy ice-cream and coconut water from the street vendors whilst absorbing the view of the lake and the monument. Necklace Road, where one may come across the famous NTR gardens, is a recognized hangout for Hyderabadis. Here you can also find “Eat Street”; I am not exaggerating when I say that every imaginable type of cuisine can be found here. I tend to stick to the Indian delicacies, but you'll be more than spoilt for choice, whatever your taste. Beware though, during holidays it can feel like the whole city has flocked to this area, so unless you particularly want to battle for seats and devote

hours to queuing up for your food, steer clear of this zone.

Over the years, I have travelled to many parts of India and each place appeals to me in its own way. Hyder-

“Hyderabad's rich history and location is what sets it apart from the rest”

abad's rich Indo-Muslim-British history and its geographically almost-central location within India, has shaped it into a city of many influences and this is what sets it apart from the rest. The city has so much to offer and I could continue to write about Golconda Fort, Faluknama Palace and so on, but I would never be able to do it full justice. Experience it for yourself, and like me, you may just find a spot for Hyderabad in your heart.

STRUGGLING FINANCIALLY?

Experiencing an unexpected cash shortfall and struggling to make ends meet?

Yes?

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CLUBS & SOCIETIES

felix@imperial.ac.uk

Singapore Society's Solemates

Tim Arbabzadah goes to the Great Hall for something that isn't an exam

Last Saturday, I went with my housemate to watch *Solemates*, the event put on by Singapore Society. I had never been to any of their events before and didn't really know what to expect. I found a packed Great Hall, which had been converted into a theatre. The first thing that hit me was the Great Hall could actually be used for things other than exams.

The show started with a couple of videos and then the two hosts came on. They were genuinely funny, got the crowd in a good mood, and really set the tone for the evening.

The main event took the form of a musical complete with a live band behind the sets. The basic story was a re-imagining of the classic Cinderella story. The hero is the quiet, sensitive, and obedient Umber Ella (Bennett Tan). His two loud, obnoxious twin brothers always boss him about and make him do their chores. To add to his woes, his father doesn't let him go to the ball, where he'd hoped to meet the princess. His Fairy Godfather (played by the brilliant Lei Ting Wei) comes to his rescue by helping him and his mop go to the ball. There he loses his shoe, in a comically overdone way. The princess finds him by using the smell of his feet, and they are united.

The script was injected with humour, and managed to pull off the boy gets girl ending without being too cheesy. The comedic aspects of the show were pulled off with ease, certainly no awk-

ward "pause for applause that doesn't come" were in sight. One part I particularly enjoyed was when during a dance sequence something is knocked over. Then, right at the end, the workers are fixing the table – it was a call-back that everyone appreciated and didn't really expect. All of comic relief characters were on point – the audience certainly seemed to think so as well. The twin brothers always got a laugh for their back and forth exchanges. I think that the Fairy Godfather was probably my favourite though. In the words of one person I talked to after: "I've never heard someone talk Singlish so fluently". Luckily for me, there was a guide to Singlish included. That's not to take away from the main character, who successfully portrayed the shy, everyman character that you were rooting for.

The dance routines were all sleek and well-rehearsed, and looked quite complicated. Admittedly, my dancing experience consists of drunkenly waving my hands slightly, but still, it was impressive. The singing was all pretty good as well. I would reserve special praise to Esther Chan, who played Mop and had a great voice.

At the end of the night, when the cast and production team all took a group photo, you really get a sense of how many people are involved in this. Having tried before to organise a group of friends to meet up at a certain time in a certain place, I can appreciate how much of a headache it is to get people together.

Imperial College Singapore Society



I would photoshop a love heart, but that may be hard to justify to my supervisor in terms of time well spent...

The show had two directors, Jaren Soo and Yap Chihua. They seemed to relish the opportunity to be involved in something so large. Yap Chihua said: "The opportunity I was given to freely create a little world in which the story and the characters inhabited was amazing. There was much excitement within the individual teams – dance, chorale, acting, logistics, music, lights and sound – but it was the final synthe-

sis and pulling together that I really enjoyed." He made sure to point out that the show took a lot of effort. "It was almost magical, but there was actually no magic, only hard work and the sheer desire to create everything from nothing." He then went on to say why the show is so important to the society: "the musical – an imperative component of our events calendar – allowed us Singaporeans to come together, to move and

breathe with one aim. It created what our Society holds dear – a home away from home."

At the very end, outside, they gave out some snacks and a free beer. A lot of people remained outside Sherfield to talk, and overall I went home happy and impressed that a group of people doing this in their spare time could come up with something as polished as it was.

Music for Charity

Raincatcher Imperial hosts a night at Metric in the name of charity

Matthew Murchie

Raincatcher Imperial has been working tirelessly for the past months to fundraise for a water harvesting system in Tabora that will give clean, drinkable water for local schoolchildren. Coming up tomorrow (Saturday 25 February) is one of our biggest events of the year, our Metric Night: Let it Rain.

Getting people involved in a charity is never easy, not least because it usually involves asking people to give you money and get nothing in return! This is why it is becoming more and more widespread for charities to mix music and charity. Listen to good music while

helping children in third-world countries – what more could you possibly ask for?

For tomorrow's Metric Night, Raincatcher has invited several notable artists to perform live. Space Heroes of the People, for example, are guaranteed to liven up our event with nothing but a double bass, some random drumming and their charming voices inspired by (quote) modern architecture, medieval history and soviet science fiction!

We'll be having in-house acts as well, by performers from within Imperial College including acoustic performers Carmay Lin and Edward Myung, our rock guitarist and singer Oli Clipsham

and the unmissable psychedelic rock band Neon People.

Of course, we've also catered for those with a slightly softer preference in music with a couple more gentle acts: Youtube singer-songwriter Aniya Das and acoustic musician Danny Adams.

So, whether you're going for the great music, our fantastic raffle prize draw, to support our project in Tanzania or simply for a night out at Metric to have a couple of drinks, don't hesitate to get tickets in advance for £3 or on the door for £5.

Find out more about Raincatcher's projects and events at www.RaincatcherImperial.ac.uk!



Raincatcher Imperial took over Metric last year as well

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Seek knowledge and be the judge

IC Islamic Society presents a week of events inviting you to discover Islam

IC Islamic Society

Falling into a set routine of university life, we can find ourselves sinking into a certain state of mind where nothing really matters much beyond the next deadline or what we are planning for the weekend. When we switch off like this we can sleepwalk through the days and find that life simply passes us by. As we watch time slip past, we seldom take the chance to ask the important questions: Why are we here? What is the meaning of life? We leave these questions unanswered in the back of our minds.

Doesn't university offer us a place where you discover more about the world and search for truth? Imperial

seems to equip us so well at answering questions of how the world works, in all its angles and complexity and yet, despite this diligence, we don't ever seem to consider why the world works the way it does. Questions of what it means to be human and what purpose life serves (if any) should not be limited to lectures in the humanities department or late night ramblings after watching *The Matrix*.

Maybe we can blame Imperial for not putting enough emphasis on humanities or that they give us too much work as excuses for why we never have a chance to stimulate such debates about the soul and purpose of life. Whatever the reason, maybe you could take a moment

and think about it for a second. Whether you are agnostic, atheist or religious, people always think about where we are and where we are going. The idea of a soul is one that everyone has considered and yet not discussed.

"... people always think about where we are and where we are going."

The Islamic Society will be looking to ask some of these questions dur-

ing its 'Discover Islam Week' (DIW) that kicks off on Monday 27 February where we will begin by examining the nature of the soul and exploring ideas of spirituality and asking what it fundamentally means to be human. On Tuesday 6 March, Dr Timothy Winters will be asking what it means to be free and whether ideas of faith and liberty are fundamentally in opposition. What does it mean to be free? Do you have free will? Does being faithful mean you aren't free? Come discuss these questions in the Q&A.

The week will also feature exhibitions on Tuesday 28 and Thursday 1 March in the SAF building on all aspects of Islam. The exhibitions will

consist of both informational posters and decorative Islamic cultural decorations. On the Tuesday there will be live calligraphy and on both days there will be food from parts of the Muslim world, such as food that has been mentioned in the Qur'an. There will be people around to talk to and answer any questions you may have about Islam.

DIW is an opportunity for everyone on campus to take a step back from the work and explore these questions as a collective. It is a chance to ask questions and get answers. So join us for one of our talks or just pop by the exhibitions for a little bite to eat and a wander round, we look forward to seeing you there.

D.I.W
2012
DISCOVER
ISLAM WEEK

NOTE THE DATES

MONDAY
27 FEBRUARY

**In Search Of
The Soul**

A question of purpose
6:30 Blackett LT1

Shaykh
Babikir Ahmed Babikir

TUESDAY
6 MARCH

**Between
Faith & Liberty**

Islam on Freedom
6:30 Blackett LT1

Dr.
Timothy Winter

Exhibition: Islam

A unique opportunity to have your questions answered.
Come and talk to us and explore
the beauty of Islam.

Sir Alexander Fleming Building

TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY
THURSDAY 1 MARCH



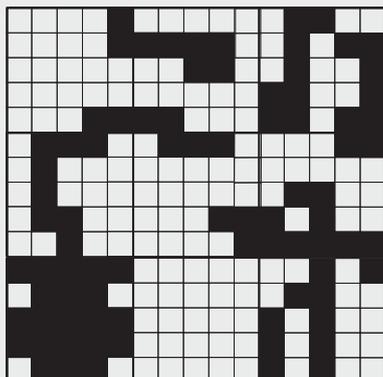
SEEK KNOWLEDGE
AND BE THE JUDGE.

imperial
college
union

PUZZLES

Last week's Solutions

Nonogram



Crosswords

QUICK(ish) - Across 1. Scheme 4. Sergeant 10. Eclipse 11. Dilemma 12. Troy 13. Coat of Arms 15. Lienteric 16. Nitro 18. Mania 19. Annie Hall 21. Lady Godiva 23. Feta 26. Grimier 27. Deliver 28. Telegram 29. Red Sea **Down** 1. Sleet 2. Halloween 3. Mope 5. Eidetic 6. Goldfinger 7. Aimer 8. Toadstool 9. Renoir 14. Strangling 15. Lime-light 17. Tea leaves 19. Andorra 20. Nevada 22. Drill 24. Aorta 25. Blue

CRYPTIC - Across 1. Monster 5. Tempers 9. Serum 10. Radar 11. Ethiopian 12. Enrol 13. Radiant 15. Raiders 16. Twister 18. Nigeria 20. Igloo 22. Osteopath 25. Gamma 26. Raise 27. Reactor 28. Respire **Down** 1. Masseur 2. North 3. Tempo 4. Red Mist 5. Trainer 6. Murdering 7. Elder 8. Surplus 14. Astronaut 16. Trigger 17. Rooster 18. Nuttier 19. Athlete 21. Lemma 23. Ogres 24. Alibi

Chess

1. Nx7+ Bx7 2. Qxc6+ bxc6
3. Ba6+ Rb7 4. Bxb7#

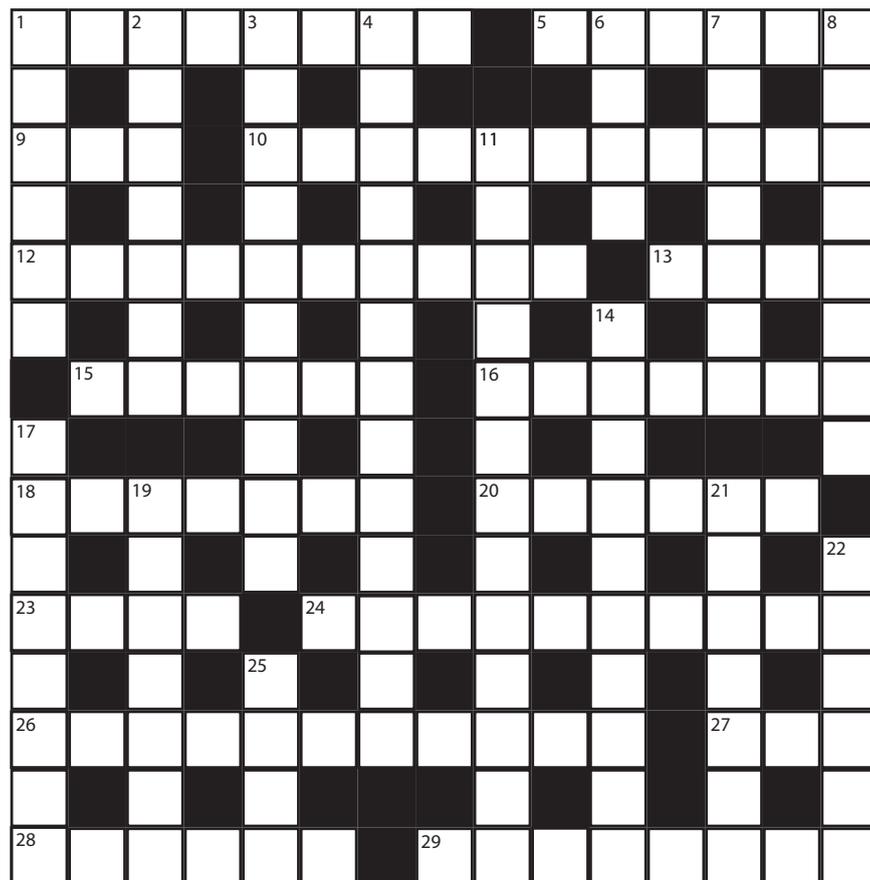
Quick(ish) Crossword

Across

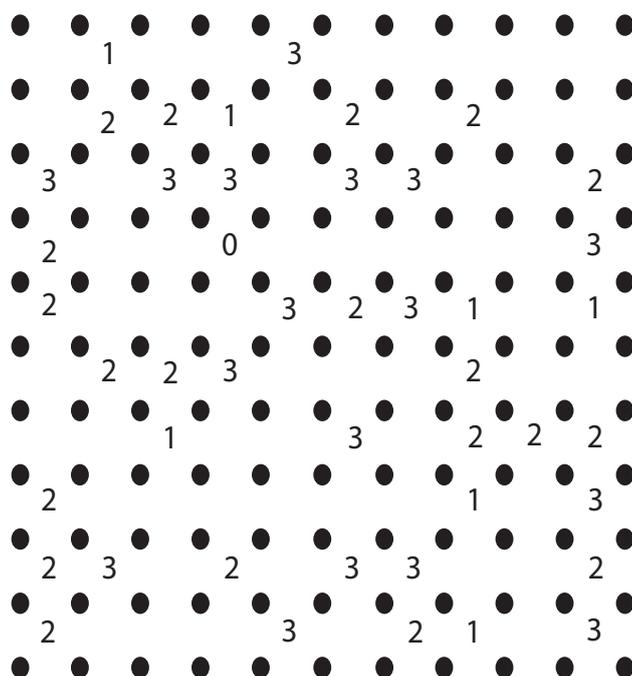
1. Broadcast (8)
5. Public procession (6)
9. Spherical body or globe (3)
10. The finishing touch esp. to kill (4,2,5)
12. Intimate conversation in bed (6,4)
13. Prepare for publication by altering the content in some way (4)
15. Tie down with a rope (6)
16. Had an intense longing for (7)
18. People regarded as uncivilised (7)
20. Head protection (6)
23. Examples of this include Jersey, Sandwich and Lindsey (4)
24. Former stage name of Muslim convert: albums include Catch Bull at Four and Foreigner (3,7)
26. 1979 Abba single (1,4,1,5)
27. Subside (3)
28. Witty language used to convey insults or scorn (6)
29. Unmarried woman (8)

Down

1. Group of touring entertainers (6)
2. _____ Epoque, 19th Century period of prosperity (2,5)
3. Author of Les Miserables and Notre-Dame de Paris (6,4)
4. 2003 Dennis Lehane horror novel (7,6)
6. Ship used by Jason to obtain the golden fleece (4)
7. Arabian folk tale about an impoverished young thief (7)
8. End of the day (poetic) (8)
11. Notable cloned mammal (5,3,5)
14. Actor - films include Cool Hand Luke, The Colour of Money and Road to Perdition (4,6)
17. People practising abstinence of all forms of indulgence (8)
19. Different version of something (7)
21. Component (7)
22. Map line connecting regions of equal pressure (6)
25. Dread (4)



SLITHERLINK



The aim with Slitherlink is to make one continuous closed loop by connecting the dots. The numbers in each square indicate how many edges of the square are part of the loop, so if it contains a "2", you know that two and only two out of four edges have lines. That's all the info you need to get the one logical answer (though waiting a week to see the solution will also do). Answers to puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk, as the puzzles team receives one medium five per correct solution.

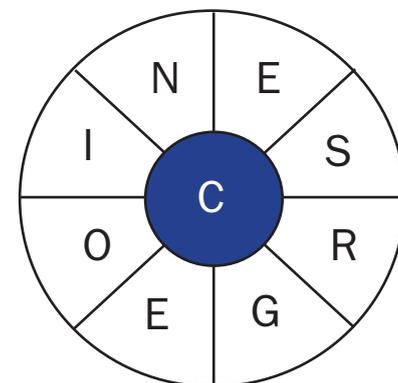
Contributions wanted!

If you'd like to contribute by sending in puzzles, comics or even some editing, e-mail puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk. Be they horrendously complicated things or funky picture puzzles you think readers would like, do get in touch. General suggestions are also welcome.

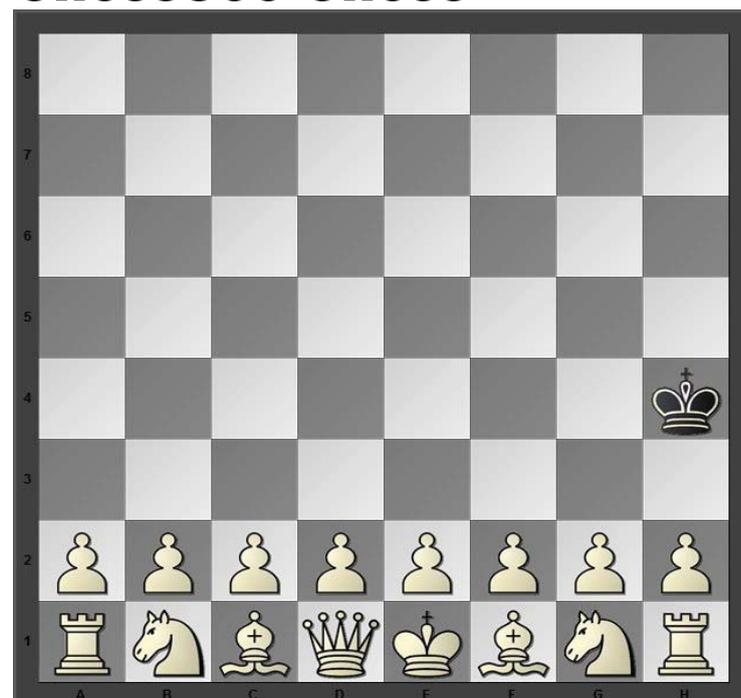
Word Wheel

TARGET: 23

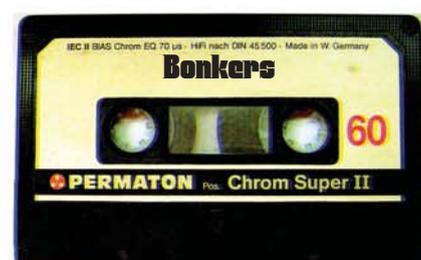
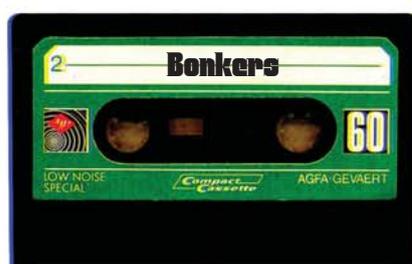
Make as many words of at least 4 letters as you can, always using the central one. **NO** plurals, conjugated verbs, comparatives or superlatives, because I said so.. There is always at least one 9 letter word.



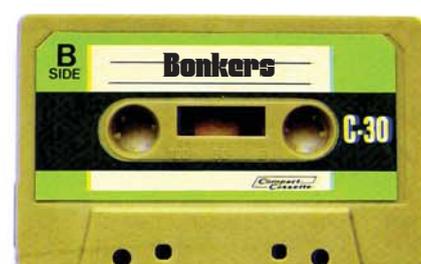
ChessSoc Chess



White to move and mate in 3



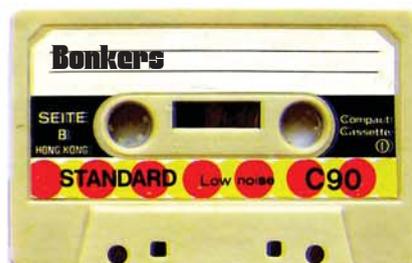
STICK IT ON!



Metric is giving you the chance to be the DJ letting you select the tunes you want to hear.

All you need to do is bring along your favourite tracks on an iPod, Smart Phone or CD. And if our DJ likes it (and we haven't already played it) we will stick it on!

It's a chance to share those tracks with your friends, over a massive Funktion One sound system.



Friday 2 March 20:00 - 02:00



Only **£3.50**

Free entry before 20:00

Drink Offers

from 20:00

in Metric

House spirit

& mixer - £2.20

Vodka Redbull - £3.00

Jägerbomb - £3.30



80s & 90s

Tonight 20:00 - 02:00

Only **£3.50** Free entry before 20:00

Drinks Offers

From 20:00
in Metric

Wednesday nights

Stella 4% £2.00
Boddingtons £2.00

Friday nights

House spirit & mixer £2.20
Vodka Redbull £3.00
Jägerbomb £3.30



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Sport Editor: **Indy Leclercq**

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

SPORT

Ponies, snow and a broken jaw at polo nationals



There's nothing My Little Pony about this

Alex Savell
Polo

It's actually getting pretty tough to remember how many polo nationals I've been to these days. However, this year, with a new venue in the Midlands, we were expecting something a bit different and a bit special. With some stunning new club shirts courtesy of the extremely generous Rydges Hotel Kensington and the attached Polo Bar on Gloucester Road we felt confident that we were going to at least look the part; with marginally more practice as a team this year than on previous occasions we had fingers crossed for a strong finish.

With the expense and the requirement for time off of college it's often pretty tricky to get people to commit to the event, but this year we managed to pull together a lower intermediate team for the third nationals in a row. By combining our weight with Oxford Brookes (who train at the same school as us) we managed to twist a couple of beginners arms enough to make them play in a mixed team as well.

Early on the morning of the 9th of February we converged on Euston station, with Miss Sheena Cowell meeting

me early for what she termed "moral support" as I lugged the club kit across London. My teammate and club chair Mikaela Bryant-Meisner and other newbie Miffy Oliver showed uncharacteristic punctuality and we all managed to collect our tickets and board the 08:45 to Rugby without issue. None of us envied final teammate and polo stalwart Jon Matthews' decision to drive his motorbike up rather than joining us.

In true SUPA style, despite rocking up with hours to spare before our first match everything had changed by the time we arrived. Miffy and Sheena would now be split playing between 2 mixed teams involving themselves, Oxford Brookes and RVC and the ensuing confusion was an excellent source of stress for the 4 or 5 people in charge of various different things for the rest of the weekend. As it turns out the first chukka (match) of the tournament would involve Miffy and two equally confused compatriots from Oxford Brookes. The scratch team, never having played together, did well to hold their own and Miffy managed to score the goal that kept them to a slim defeat at 2-1. Later on, it became apparent that the match had been recorded as

a draw rather than a loss, a mistake we weren't complaining about.

Later that afternoon Sheena and Miffy got the chance to play together for the first time; they had been bumped up a division from the relatively slow Beginner 3 section to the much more viciously contested Beginner 2s and a team of West Country thugs from UWE. The UWE lads had just the testosterone level required to play at what was arguably a dangerous pace for riders of that level and the muscle to bully their way around the pitch. Despite some obvious fouls they clearly had the better of the Brookes/Imperial combo. Regardless of what some might call a whooping the girls both claimed they enjoyed the opportunity to play at the faster pace. That said, they barely had time to take it in as their next chukka, another Beginner 2 match, came up pretty quickly.

Playing with a slightly different team yet again we had to cross our fingers that the girls would manage to gel quickly and come away with a strong result. In a scrappier but less one-sided match we looked on with cheers of encouragement and advice. Sheena, not wanting to be outdone by the younger Myfanwy, looked set to get her goal tally off the mark as well but her consistent hitting and well-timed run left her just wide of the mark to get the equaliser. However, you can never quite rely on your pony to be entirely on your team and an unfortunate ricochet from an opposing pony's leg finished the job Sheena started as the match ended in a draw.

After this the confusion really set in. The snow started coming down and the pony providers and tournament officials started looking at moving chukkas from other days. Hungry, cold and tired it took quite a while for us to figure out that Sheena would have one more chukka that night, the final one of the day. With the addition of Steff from RVC and Sam from Oxford Brookes, the girls made for a strong team and came away with a runaway victory.

With the way the draw worked this year our teams all got Friday off so we settled in for a long night at the pub followed by drinks in our rooms. There was some pretty excellent food at the B&B, a lot of drunken banter with Brookes (which somehow resulted in us owning the Brookes Polo T-Shirts) and more rum, gin, vodka, wine, beer and cider than I care to admit to. After an extremely lazy day, Friday night saw us slightly more sedate at our instructor JJ Spark's 40th birthday party. Needless to say the B&B staff were not polo's biggest fans by the end of the evening, and with our Lower Intermediate team set to play against Brookes first thing in the morning the quest to leave each other in a worse state in the morning provided some additional amusement.

The stress of the morning hit new heights when a lorry breakdown meant our horses arrived late and we took to

the field significantly later than our opponents only to realise that one horse had taken a knock in the lorry and was limping too much to play. A desperate swap to another unknown pony left us ready to play our training partners and Mikaela, Jon and I got stuck in and were surprised to find ourselves 1-0 up early on. Georgie, Charlie and Tess were on form though and a close fought match ensued with Brookes keeping us at bay and with a goal from Jon the buzzer went with the score at 2 all. Needing a result the match went to penalties and taking the first one from 15 yards despite a smoothly hit shot my attempt hit the boards just to the side of the goal and Georgie Haycraft's level head and increased experience sent us into the lower half of the knockout. Our second match saw us pitted against 3 girls from Nottingham. We'd been on a high during the Brookes match, working as a team, lots of good natured yelling at one another and pretty relaxed given we were playing some familiar faces. This didn't last and our communication started to fall apart in a scrappy match ending one apiece. Jon got his chance to make me feel slightly better about missing a penalty during the match and so the resulting sudden death penalty fell to Mikaela... unfortunately, this was the second match we lost on penalties. Very British – well, except Mikaela.

We were all pretty ready to drown our sorrows and fortunately SUPA were well prepared for us with a fancy dress party set to start at 9pm. As a white knight, his faithful steed, an evil dragon and a damsel in distress we were continuing the very British vibe. However, for all you freshers out there, a warning as to the dangers of pre-drinks. If you pass out on the bed in a onsie before the party you are likely to earn yourself the nickname "Drunken Dragon" or something much less forgiving and less printable. Things got pretty messy from that point and our white knight totally failed to protect our

damsel in distress from falling over and managed to lose his faithful steed and roommate (who had the keys) at some point during the evening. After a confusing, and in some cases extremely hungover morning we were just about ready to look at getting on ponies.

Our rematch against Notts did not go great; a strong game plan from the Nottingham girls left us unable to really impact the game as we wanted and one slightly lucky backhand to score was the only consolation in an otherwise very one-sided match. The 2 chukka final of the B3 was hard-fought and fast. Despite Sheena managing to finally get her goal tally off to a proper start and both players saying it was one of their highlights of the weekend the girls had to settle for second place. The LIs, on the other hand, were in the running for the wooden spoon against ULU, one more grudge match to conclude.

Things didn't get off to a great start. Left waiting in the warm up arena, we trotted around, until in a moment of extreme intelligence Bumble decided that 4 legs were too many to keep track of and proceeded to trip over them. I took an unceremonious tumble while a confused looking Bumble clambered back to his feet entirely unaffected. Things didn't get a great deal better on the pitch; us against ULU is always pretty physical and this wasn't any different. Lots of fouls, lots of ride-offs, lots of action – inevitably, injuries happen. A stray elbow connected with Jon's jaw causing an impressively swollen tongue and what turned out to be a fracture. All in all the clearly talented beginners came out of the tournament with hangovers and exhaustion as scars, whereas the club chair Mikaela managed to come out of the LI tournament unscathed and we expect her to proudly carry the wooden spoon home. Still, some silver ash trays, a good time, Jon lost for words and the summer nationals yet to come; I'll take that.



Classy outfits for a classy sport (no, that was not a class-based joke)

SPORT

Felix Sports League

...where do you stand?



Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Index
1 Fencing W1	9	9	0	0	1152	741	36	5.00
2 Rugby W1	2	2	0	0	77	0	-20	5.00
3 Tennis M1	4	4	0	0	38	10	-232	5.00
4 Tennis W1	5	5	0	0	56	4	-18	5.00
5 Ultimate Frisbee 1st	3	3	0	0	45	9	-20	5.00
6 Hockey W1	10	9	1	0	39	3	5	4.70
7 Rugby M1	10	9	0	1	242	149	-103	4.10
8 Fencing M1	9	8	0	1	1075	847	28	4.00
9 Badminton M1	9	7	1	1	59	13	0	3.67
10 ICSM Hockey W2	6	5	0	1	29	5	-2	3.50
11 Table Tennis W1	5	4	0	1	19	6	-124	3.20
12 Badminton W1	10	5	4	1	49	36	0	2.90
13 Fencing W2	8	6	0	2	699	647	93	2.75
14 ICSM Badminton W1	4	3	0	1	18	14	0	2.75
15 Netball W1	8	5	0	1	334	252	-9	2.63
16 Squash W1	5	3	1	1	11	9	-12	2.60
17 Tennis M2	6	3	2	1	40	32	-64	2.50
18 Lacrosse W1	7	5	0	2	101	37	-3	2.43
19 Hockey M2	9	5	2	2	27	22	2	2.33
20 Basketball M1	10	7	0	3	662	583	0	2.30
21 Fencing M2	9	6	0	3	1078	908	52	2.00
22 ICSM Hockey W1	4	2	1	1	23	9	-12	2.00
23 Football M3	8	5	0	3	15	15	24	1.63
24 Lacrosse M1	5	4	0	3	71	36	-9	1.60
25 Football M1	9	4	2	3	15	14	228	1.33
26 ICSM Badminton M2	4	1	2	1	15	17	14	1.25
27 ICSM Football M2	7	4	0	3	15	12	-2	1.14
28 Basketball W1	9	5	0	4	505	404	77	1.00
29 Football M2	8	3	2	3	20	22	46	0.88
30 Badminton M2	8	4	0	4	22	34	0	0.50
31 ICSM Football M1	2	1	0	1	4	6	1	0.50
32 ICSM Netball W1	2	1	0	1	82	72	2	0.50
33 ICSM Netball W2	2	1	0	1	52	50	-3	0.50
34 ICSM Netball W4	2	1	0	1	47	50	-40	0.50
35 ICSM Rugby M3	4	2	0	2	88	90	28	0.50
36 Rugby M2	10	5	0	5	92	132	-6	0.50
37 Squash M3	6	3	0	3	10	19	-77	0.50
38 Table Tennis M2	6	3	0	3	53	49	-37	0.50
39 Hockey W2	8	3	1	4	10	32	79	0.13
40 Netball W3	9	4	0	5	185	157	-52	0.00
41 Futsal M1	7	3	0	4	31	40	13	-0.14
42 Golf Mixed 1st	6	1	1	2	7	10	4	-0.17
43 Table Tennis M1	5	2	0	3	38	47	-12	-0.40
44 Futsal W1	3	1	0	2	2	11	52	-1.00
45 ICSM Badminton M1	3	1	0	2	10	14	170	-1.00
46 ICSM Rugby M1	3	1	0	2	52	104	4	-1.00
47 ICSM Rugby M2	3	1	0	2	32	135	-22	-1.00
48 Lacrosse W2	3	1	0	2	15	21	-9	-1.00
49 Football W1	7	2	0	5	4	43	13	-1.43
50 Rugby M3	10	2	0	8	100	120	-39	-2.20
51 Squash M1	5	1	0	4	3	22	-19	-2.20
52 ICSM Netball W5	4	0	1	3	25	185	-9	-2.50
53 Netball W2	6	1	0	5	123	200	-4	-2.50
54 Squash M2	6	1	0	5	11	18	-160	-2.50
55 Squash M4	6	1	0	5	3	15	-7	-2.50
56 Hockey M3	7	1	0	6	8	20	8	-2.71
57 Hockey M1	10	1	0	9	9	46	82	-3.10
58 Basketball M2	3	0	0	3	142	266	411	-4.00
59 Fencing M3	5	0	0	5	424	656	36	-4.00
60 Hockey M4	9	0	0	9	3	67	64	-4.00
61 ICSM Basketball M1	1	0	0	1	46	64	35	-4.00
62 ICSM Hockey M1	3	0	0	3	6	26	3	-4.00
63 ICSM Hockey M2	3	0	0	3	3	19	101	-4.00
64 ICSM Hockey M3	1	0	0	1	0	3	-2	-4.00

5 points for a win | 2 points for a draw | -4 points for a loss

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Archery at BUCS Championships

IC Archery



Like Legolas, but without the pointy ears

Stephen Wood
Archery

Last weekend Imperial's Archery Club travelled to Telford for the 2011-2012 BUCS indoor championships. This event is the most popular student archery competition on the calendar and this year was no exception with a new record of over 520 entrants descending on the Telford International Centre.

Despite the early start of 8:15am, all 14 members travelling to the competition were in good spirit and looking forward to the day ahead.

Normally, whenever the Archery Club travels we get quizzical looks from passers by because of our large unwieldy bags with long arrow tubes sticking out of them. This year however, after the walk from the station to the International Centre in the pouring rain, the team was greeted by the the MCM Expo happening at the same time in the other hall at the centre.

The first session of the day was running late, so this gave a good distraction for those with cameras, and the entire team was (perhaps too) excited to see at least 7 people in Stormtrooper outfits.

At least we all seemed fairly normal.

The standard indoor round for student archery competitions (termed a Portsmouth) involves shooting 60 arrows towards a 60cm diameter target face at a distance of 20 yards (18m), giving a maximum possible score of 600. At BUCS indoors, each archer is given 2 minutes to shoot the 3 arrows of an end. These are then scored and totalled, the whole process being repeated 20 times.

Hannah Beasley-Suffolk, a first year biochemist, took the gold medal in the ladies senior recurve category, fending off the challenges from archers of Edinburgh, Birmingham and Nottingham universities.

The winning score of 573 with 60 hits and 35 golds was a full 7 points clear of the nearest challengers. Her round was exciting too; there was a nerve racking moment when Hannah didn't realise it was her turn to shoot, resulting in having to shoot 3 arrows in just 40 seconds. Thankfully records officer Adam Holliday realised this, saved the day and Hannah was still able to put in a 10-9-9 end!

There was yet more drama at this year's indoor championships for the Imperial team than ever before.

An unfortunate moment of tiredness for equipments officer Richard Yim meant that he was unable to shoot his third arrow within the time limit, which resulted in a zero scored for that arrow.

Captain Jonathan Hutt also managed a moment of panic when he reached the target and thought he had only shot two arrows in one end. The crisis was averted when he realised that it was just a soft part of the target and his arrow had passed nearly all the way through! Despite the drama that occurred throughout the shoot, both team scores were also good.

The senior team (Hannah Beasley-Suffolk, Richard Yim, Jonathan Hutt and Stephen Wood) came 9th out of 43 with a cumulative score of 2183 and the novice team (Ben Hou, Yun Shi and Cassie Epps) came 20th out of 36 with a score of 1270.

All in all it was a fun and eventful day, and the club is now looking forward to several open competitions in the next few weeks, as well as the British University Team Championships (BUTC) taking place in Coventry on Saturday 10th March.

Later in the year we also have the BUCS outdoor championships; this is always a good weekend spent outdoors camping and shooting and we are again hopeful of good results.

IC Archery



Don't mess with them - those smiling faces hide some deadly marksmanship

SPORT

Fencing: ICFC set to defend titles

Anthony Hennelly



"My lamé is so shiny!" – not for long...

...Continued from Back Page harshly. Final score: 45-9 for Imperial. Mind-boggling.

For those of you astute with numbers (I would say most of you, but I wouldn't like to stereotype) you will have noticed that the match was already won by this point; even if Durham won the epee 45-0 Imperial would still prevail on points (and weapons). The mere suggestion of this was scoffed at by the epeeists, though, with the motivation to win all the more fired up by the victories of their squadmates. The match was a much tighter affair than the two previous weapons, with Durham leading for most of the way. This was not unexpected: the Northerners' strong point was known to be the epee, which was why the team was relieved to have put the match away beforehand. IC were three or four hits down going into the final bout, and some valiant fencing by Gulliver saw the match go down to the wire, with Durham eventually taking it

45-43. It was smiles all around as the men fulfilled the expectations and qualified themselves for the semi-finals, to be held at Sheffield.

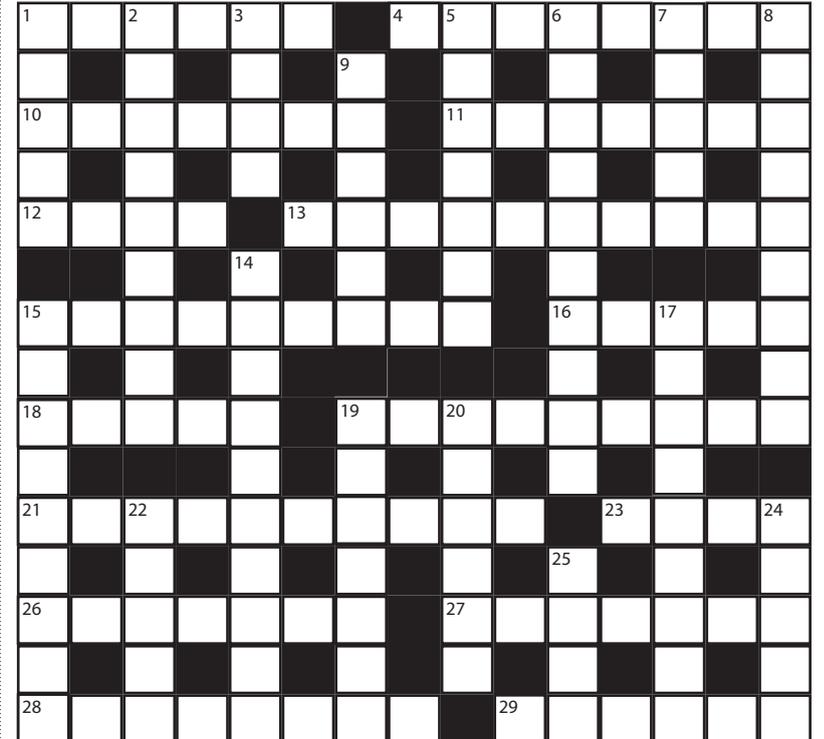
Not long after the guys vacated the piste, it was the Women's turn to don their kit and make sure they were going to be joining the guys in Sheffield. The team of Hannah Bryars, Alice Mitchell, Emily Bottle, Jing Quek. Zoe Robinson and captain Charlotte Levin were ready for a Bristol team currently in a division below them, the Western 1A. Given that the girls were current southern premier-ship champions and undefeated all season, the match promised to be straightforward

Starting with the epee, the girls fought valiantly although the Bristol team proved to be too strong for Mitchell, Bottle and Levin. They posted the respectable score of a 29-45 loss, leaving it to the sabreurs and the foilists to win the match. Up next, indeed, was the sabre – fenced by Jing Quek, Bryars and Rob-

inson. This was an IC-dominated affair, with the girls posting a comfortable win: 45-19. Now 10 points ahead, they were perfectly poised for the win, finishing with their strongest weapon, foil. Led by Sports scholarship athlete Bryars, the foilists went one better on the sabreurs and posted a large victory of 45-13, leaving no chance to the Bristol girls. Tenth match, tenth victory of the season for the seemingly unstoppable Imperial College Fencing Women's first team.

The serious stuff is now to come, in three weeks time. Both teams will be heading up the M1 to the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, where BUCS is holding a huge, multisport event for the finals of various cups and championships. The men are set to face Cambridge in the semi-finals, and the women are up against Durham. If everything goes well, the day continues with the final, and possibly being crowned BUCS champions for the second year running. En Garde!

Cryptic Crossword 1,511



Across

1. Find Francis here lacks time to help one (6)
4. Gore with a vehicle that's environmental at first, priced separately (1,2,5)
10. Stumped as duck initially hastens with sneakiness (7)
11. Foreigner worker chief moves to the back for cornmeal (7)
12. No Eastern river (4)
13. Elephant spoils lookout post guarded from the real world (5,5)
15. Outside river, marine skeleton persuaded to be enclosed (9)
16. Tracks right pains (5)
18. Note draw. Knot again! (5)
19. Accountant arranges women's hair – they go on stage (9)
21. Fat bird meeting with everyone once (5,5)
23. Nearly Gaelic coloured ring (4)
26. Density becoming doom (7)
27. Regretful about church black magic (7)
28. Treasured establishment with ease, I died (8)
29. His expertise concerns philosopher and novelist (6)

Down

1. Announcement that our little boy set fire to things (5)
2. Let's alarm, managed to detect something suspicious (5,1,3)
3. Second drink purchase (4)
5. Reportedly large cat has contagious disease (7)
6. Mediterranean winter produces this in an abrupt manner (4,6)
7. Replace and engineer message to leave off the end (5)
8. Heaths mock up disasters (9)
9. Spade lifted out, buried inside ends of soil (6)
14. Herb commercial transgression results in wise words (4,6)
15. Move on edge, just ink-case! (9)
17. Nearly indemnify fine fellow against rebel (9)
19. Assistant to lace toy plastic (7)
20. Hunger for hat-trick, this man has in final? (6)
22. Lead in tennis match, but discontent (5)
24. Type of surgical probe (5)
25. A freshen up for song (4)

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SPORT

Anthony Hennelly

On target

Imperial fencers win their quarter finals to progress to the BUCS Championship final round to be held in Sheffield



Indy Leclercq Fencing

Men's 1st	133
Durham 1st	68
Women's 1st	119
Bristol 1st	77

Wednesday afternoon saw the latest chapter in Imperial College Fencing Club's stellar season unfold. The men's first team kicked off proceedings in Ethos at 2pm, facing a Durham side who turned up with minutes to spare before the scheduled 2pm start. Confidence was high amongst the guys, having been freshly crowned Southern Premiership champions and only having suffered one defeat all season. Durham, on the other hand, sat at the bottom of the Northern premiership, having lost all their league

matches this season.

The Imperial team had undergone a few changes from the team that won the league in late January; president Ed Collier and top sabreurs Maiyuran Ratneswaran and Henry Gann were unavailable. They were replaced by Camille van Hoffelen and Chris Lawrence. They completed the squad made up of Chris Gilliam, Indy Leclercq and Glen Ostacchini in foil; Jonathan Ashcroft, Tom Powell and Harry Gulliver in the epee and Dider Nohlmans, captain, in

the sabre.

After a bit of a delayed start (due to some excessively long warming up by the opponents) the first bout of the day got underway in the foil. Ostacchini made a fine start, which was then continued somewhat shakily by Leclercq and then confirmed by Gilliam in the third relay. The foilists found their groove, and when the ninth and final bout came around, they were a massive 36 points ahead. Ostacchini dispatched the opposing anchor (an epeeist) in style, to finish

the match with a score of 45-14 and a very encouraging lead for the sabreurs to build on.

Technically, the sabre team fielded against Durham would count as a 'B' team, although this was by no means evident in the cold, calculating demolition of the opposing team. The hits flowed thick and fast, and in a mere twenty minutes or so the match was done and dusted. One could almost pity the Durhmites, having traveled so far to lose so

...Continued on Page 39

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Black holes leave their presence
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