



Felix

Keeping the cat free since 1949

felixonline.co.uk

@felixImperial

/FelixImperial

felix@imperial.ac.uk



issue 1598

February 20th 2015



**Introducing:
the new Felix politics section**

Page 11



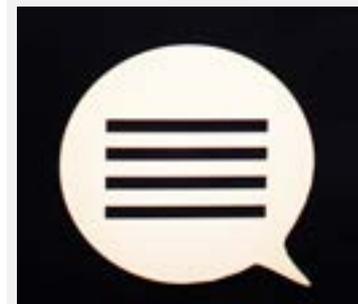
**Weeks
residents'
anger
over hall
closure**

**Students demand
emergency meeting to
reassess decision not
to campaign against
College**

News: pages 4, 5 and 6
Comment: pages 8 and 9
Editorial: page 2

Inside...

**Time to Question
staff and students**



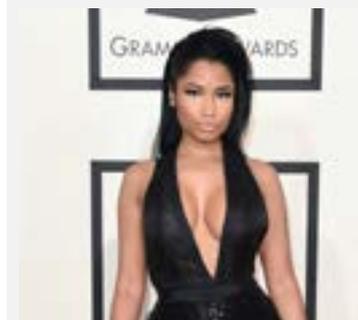
News 3

**Felix gets tied up
reviewing 50 Shades**



Film 14-18

**Outfits that rocked the
Grammy's read carpet**



Fashion 27-28

**The Felix Arts section
reinvents itself**



Arts 29-36

This week's issue...

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Felix Editor || Philippa Skett

CONTENTS

News	3-6
Comment	8-10
Politics	11
Science	12
Music	13
Film	14-18
Television	19
Welfare	21
Fashion	27-28
Arts	29-36
Hangman	37-38
Puzzles	39-40
Clubs & Societies	41-43
Sports	48

What's on this week:

ICSO Concert

Feb 28th, 19:30, Cadogan Hall
With BBC Young Musician,
Martin James Bartlett

Programme includes
Gershwin's American in
Paris, Mozart, Borodin and
Stravinsky.
Tickets: £12 to £20, £5 off for
students.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In last week's issue, we covered the Animal Protection and Education Society debate, entitled "Animal Testing: Vital or Necessary?" In the article, we paraphrased a part of the talk delivered by Maggie Dallman, the head of Animal Welfare and Ethical Review panel of Imperial College. We heard from those who were in attendance what they thought she said, although failed to double check this was the case.

It has now come to light that there is some doubt over what was exactly said, so we apologise for any upset caused, and have retracted the paragraph referring to her portion of the talk, until we determine exactly what she said at a later date.

Week(s) communication between everyone

My mother watched Imperial Question Time (IQT) on Wednesday, and texted me after telling me she had enjoyed it. She did say I looked tense, which was one of the kinder ways people told me I looked pretty angry the entire time.

For those of you who didn't tune in, IQT was a panel show ran by ICTV, and featured myself, Tom Wheeler (Union President), Oliver Benton (student and Athletic Clubs Committee chair), Bridge Duncombe from the Chemistry Department and Debra Humphris, the Vice Provost (Education).

We spoke about a number of issues, such as paying to get into the Union, just who is the "student voice" and also the closure of Weeks hall. This is a topic I have become particularly pissed off about, as I feel like history is literally repeating before my eyes; its yet another example of crappy communication, and College disregarding student views.

I was invited to the Weeks Hall committee meeting on Tuesday evening, and listened intently to their worries and concerns over the closure. They explained how they had heard that their hall was closing purely through someone coming across the *Felix* twitter stream the day after the Union Council meeting that took place. Few of them even knew what Council was; all were unaware that the closure of the hall was being discussed.

A big topic discussed in IQT was communication, and I said that it seriously needed to be improved. The communication between the sabbatical officers, the Union Council and students is incredibly poor: more information about Weeks hall should have been in the paper announcing its closure, and it should not have been embedded in a complex, heavy paper discussing a lot of other topics.

Students need to be informed what issues are up for discussion during these meetings, and make sure those who may want to contribute to the debate know they're welcome. The Union loves to boast about their website and hits a day; maybe use that to advertise papers ahead of



THIS WEEK'S EDITORIAL

the meeting instead of just quietly uploading them to some deep page of that cyan and magenta maelstrom?

The communication between College and the Union needs to be seriously addressed too. I've been bounced between the Union and College this week when trying to work out who should have spoken to Weeks and told them about the plans. No one had any straightforward honest answers to offer up, and both blamed each other. However, I know for certain my twitter ramblings certainly shouldn't have been the channel through which to deliver the blow that these halls are being shut down.

Finally, communication needs to be addressed when it comes to College talking to students. And when I say College, I mean every member of senior staff that sits in their boardrooms, discussing these grand schemes and never thinking to go into the JCR, the Library Café or simply pull in a random passer-by from the walkway and ask them what they think.

Personally? I get the impression these people think students are just naive kids that pass through the system in three or four years, and whatever riles them now won't matter once they leave.

How else can you explain how they happily announce to anyone who will listen that College is all about transparency, but then think it won't register with us that they've also kept all these secrets from us about hall closures, sports ground closures, funding cuts or even Acton?

How else do you explain that they present these "lowered" rent prices for the halls in Acton, but are telling us we have to bear the grunt of increased rent prices as a result for other halls? I'm pretty sure they promised us lower rents in the first place without this catch, but, really, what do I know?

I'll probably be gone next year, and no-one will even remember in five years what it is like to be able to live near campus with enough money left over to pay for entry into the Union.

Finally, how else can you explain how they talk all about change and improvement, but they still are yet to review their piss poor consultation priorities when it comes to listening to students?

You can run all the surveys, reviews and online assessments you like, but you can never understand the true views of the students if you don't take the time to actually speak to them one to one.

It shocked me that no-one had simply gone down to Weeks, sat down with the students living there, and simply asked them what they thought before I did this week. My job is to report on the news, not do the job of those in College or those voted to actually represent students in the Union.

So I got angry during IQT when Debra, one of the people behind the decisions to close the hall, was throwing these usual lines about consultation and transparency. I got angry when all Tom could do was apologise, but spin it that the College should have done something when it came to telling the residents, not him.

Because it was actually myself that listened as they told me how much they love their hall, how much value the property can give to the student experience, and how again and again College seem to just announce these plans without thinking first.

And sadly, I can't do anything about it, except make sure as many people know as possible this time that College and the Union truly screwed up.

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

Printed by Iliffe Print Cambridge, Winship Road, Cambridge.

Registered newspaper ISSN 1040-0711
Copyright © Felix

Front page picture of Weeks Hall courtesy of Jonathan Masters



EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-In-Chief
PHILIPPA SKETT

Deputy Editor
PHILIP KENT

Treasurer
THOMAS LIM

Technical Hero
LUKE GRANGER-BROWN

News Editors
CAROL ANN CHEAH
KUNAL WAGLE

Comment Editor
TESSA DAVEY

Technology Editors
JAMIE DUTTON
OSAMA AWARA

Science Editors
LAUREN RATCLIFFE
JAMES BEZER

Games Editors
MAX EGGL
CALUM SKENE

Arts Editors
FRED FYLES
KAMIL McCLELLAND

Music Editors
GRACE RAHMAN

Television Editors
GIULIA GABRIELLI
JOHN PARK

Film Editors
ELLEN MATHIESON
JACK STEADMAN
JOHN PARK

Web Editor
JUNE GAN

Fashion Editor
CECILE BORKHATARIA

Food Editors
CAROL ANN CHEAH

Coffee Break Editors
TESSA DAVEY
ELLEN MATHIESON

Travel Editor
YUNG NAM CHEAH

Politics Editor
Joshua Renken

Welfare Editors
DIBA ESBATI
CHANON WONGSATAYANONT

Clubs and Societies Editor
BEN HOWITT

Sport Editor
KUNAL WAGLE

COPY EDIT TEAM

Copy Chiefs
STEPHEN BALL
ELLEN MATHIESON

Copy Editors
ANNINA SARTOR
TOM RIVLIN
BEN HOWITT
JUNE GAN
MICHAEL FAGGETTER
MATTIN MIR-TAHMASEBI
JASPER MENKUS
CECILY JOHNSON
ABBY GOLDBLATT

News

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah, Kunal Wagle

Imperial Questions Live looks into the tough subjects

Philip Kent reports on ICTV's exciting new show

Last Wednesday saw the very first broadcast of Imperial Questions Live, a new current affairs debating programme asking the big questions on campus.

The show, broadcast from the brand new Media Centre in the West Basement of Beit Quad, was presented by fourth year EEE student, Thomas Lim. The panel consisted of; Tom Wheeler, ICU President; Debra Humphris, Vice-Provost Education; Oli Benton, ACC Chair; Bridge Duncombe, Chemistry DUG; and Philippa Skett, *Felix* Editor.

Questions were asked by the live studio audience, who were able to submit questions online in advance. A broad range of questions were asked, ranging from the Weeks Hall closure to the legacy of sabbatical officers. Audience members consisted of interested people, including many residents of Weeks Hall.

Over the course of the hour long programme, viewers could watch live on the Imperial College Television (ICTV) website and YouTube, as well as joining in the debate on Twitter using the hashtag #iql. One person who watched the show live, RCSU President Serena Yuen, told *Felix* "I really enjoyed watching IQL last night – I thought it was really well executed and there was a wide variety of questions leading to good discussion on some relevant topics."

The director of the show was Pete Brook, who told *Felix* "It's really exciting to have put on our first live show since the redevelopment of the

"I think it is vital that we can directly ask senior members of the Union and College questions about the issues that are affecting students."



The panel live on air. Photo: ICTV

west basement. It is a culmination of months of hard work by ICTV members to make the studio firstly habitable and then functional. I'm exceptionally proud of everyone's hard graft."

One of the main themes from the debate was over the way the College communicates with students.

Notice was given to the Union's consultation framework, while Debra Humphris made note of wishing to be more transparent with students.

One of the more contentious points aside from Weeks Hall was the Union's entry fees. Tom Wheeler described how the revenue from entry fees (around £25,000) gets reinvested in Union services, although others

questioned why the Union's bars doesn't appear attractive to students.

Philippa Skett, who sat on the panel, told *Felix*, "Being on the panel was a lot of fun, and I really enjoyed the experience. I think it is vital that we can directly ask senior members of the Union and College questions about the issues that are affecting students, as I feel that often these people sit in their offices and forget what it is like talking to actual students once in a while."

ICTV's next broadcast will be the annual production of Meet the Candidates, where viewers can watch candidates for next year's sabbatical officers debate with each other. This will be broadcast live in two weeks.

"There was a wide variety of questions leading to good discussion on some relevant topics."

A taster of what was discussed

Closure of Weeks

Weeks found out about the closure of the Hall from *Felix*'s Twitter feed after the Council meeting.

Tom Wheeler can not recall when he first became aware of the closure of Weeks although minutes suggest he knew about the closure last December.

Not fighting the closure is being pragmatic, it recognises the wide ranging changes happen to College's portfolio of campuses and accommodation.

Tom and Wheeler say there is no chance of a campaign to save Weeks.

Bridge says We need to trust students and build better communication.

What does College do to support teaching?

Changed the promotion criteria - can not be prompted purely on research, and can not excuse poor teaching.

20th Anniversary of President's award, things like supervision – all need student nomination

Why does the Union charge an entry fee?

"Because it is budgeted for and if to remove that there will be less money going on everything else we spend it on."

ACC Bar nights, almost filling the Union to capacity - make only £150. A venue in Fulham can offer cheaper drinks and make money.

"Why can't the Union run a model that incites our own students into the bars to use and creates a market. Suggest you need to review your model fully."

How did IQL happen?

The workload of Imperial students is unashamedly high – are we able to do all the things we want whilst continuing with our degrees? Probably not. Nonetheless, I feel there is a significant deficit in the way the College and Union interacts with students, and makes them aware of the issues they care about. Students don't have the time or patience to attend Union Council or other meetings which may be of interest, perceiving them as boring, drawn out and allowing a few people to talk aimlessly for a long time (something I hope the Union's Democracy Review will work on).

Despite the reputation of apathy at Imperial, I remain convinced that if people are given information in the right format, they are fundamentally still interested in the decisions and topics which affect their (and future cohorts') lives as students. A Question Time format is one viewers are accustomed to, and importantly, allows for a two way exchange and debate. Key to this, the

audience ask the questions and follow up with panellists should they be unhappy with the answers they hear.

Perhaps it was the act of getting our panellists out of their comfort zone and in to a studio with lights trained on them, or the audience of 'non hack' students which changed the dynamic. Judging by the messages received afterwards, we achieved some margin of our goal (or my friends are just really kind to me). Even being a Trustee and having worked with Tom Wheeler (Union President), I felt I understood the pressures he faces better following the show.

I for one, am immensely proud that we managed to produce the show, of the panellists for taking part, the audience & viewers for giving us so many questions and the ICTV tech team for producing a high quality broadcast, despite technical hitches. I hope this will become a termly event now: the only way is up for Imperial Questions Live!



IQL host Thomas Lim. Photo: ICTV/Cem Hurrell

News

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

News Editors ||| Carol Ann Cheah, Kunal Wagle

“Why did no-one tell us College wants to shut our halls?”

Philippa Skett investigates the fallout after the revelation that College wants to shut down Weeks Hall

Residents of Weeks are infuriated by the College decision to close their hall, and have demanded an emergency Union Council meeting to revote on the decision not to campaign against the closure.

To add insult to injury, those who live in Weeks only found out about the potential closure once the paper had already been voted and decided upon by Union Council last Tuesday; no one in the hall had previously been contacted by either the College or Imperial College Union.

The residents of the hall first found out about the proposed closure the day after the meeting, after reading *Felix's* live tweeting during the Union Council meeting.

As a result, no-one from Weeks was present at the meeting, and are frustrated that they did not have the opportunity to contribute to the debate when it was happening. The hall has already commenced recruitment for the next year's hall seniors, although they are uncertain if the hall will even be open next academic year.

Felix tried to find out what the proposed closure date is for the hall, but were told that the College has yet to decide on when they will finally shut the doors of Weeks to students for the last time.

College also told *Felix* that they still haven't decided on a use for the hall.

College's Provost's Board has the power to close Weeks Hall, and email records suggest that the decision has already been made, although there are still further decisions to be made. *Felix* spoke to Debra Humphris, the Vice Provost (Education), who sits on the Provost's board. The Provost's Board is made up entirely of College staff and currently has no student representative present.

It took just under an hour to meet the hundred signature target

needed to call an Emergency Council Meeting, after the petition was launched Tuesday night. An emergency Union Council meeting can be called into action by any student, as long as they have the signatures of one hundred Imperial College Union members.

Union Council members were emailed late Thursday evening by Paul Beaumont, Union Council Chair to confirm plans for the meeting, which will take part next month.

The Weeks Hall committee have yet to submit a formal paper, but Beaumont stated in the email that it will most likely address the process by which Union Council made its decision, and the lack of consultation with the residents and the members effected by the closure.

Weeks residents will also be meeting with Debra Humphris, the Pro Rector (Education), Wheeler and other members of staff who were behind the decision to close the hall in the first place.

The Weeks Hall committee have outlined on their petition that they are concerned that the decision made by Union Council was not truly representative of the opinion of the student body, and that it was done “Without sufficient attention given to the detrimental effect on student experience.”

They also describe how they are concerned no representative of the hall was present at the meeting, and there is a lack of information surrounding the closure.

No one at Council was informed as to when the hall may close and what changes may be done to the internal structure for its new purpose. The new purpose also has yet to be finalised.

Franca Hoffmann, a subwarden of Weeks, told *Felix*: “We have called [for] an emergency Council meeting so there is a specific time allocated to

discuss the topic properly, and also to show that students feel strongly about the closure of the hall.”

Felix spoke to the Hall committee ahead of their petition launch, to hear their thoughts on the closure.

Said one member: “I'm pretty sure if they had come to us before [the Council meeting], and told us they had plans to close Weeks, we would have launched a petition sooner to gather support. We would have gone to the Council if we had known it was happening.”

One stressed that the hall is a valuable asset for students, being so close to campus and also relatively low in cost compared to Southside, Eastside and Beit. “It's only a home to 66 people, but it is still changing 66 people's lives and changing their student experience as they can afford to live in halls so close to campus.”

Currently, all en suite single rooms in Eastside and Southside halls are priced between £186 to £203 a week. Every room in Weeks is priced at £157 a week, and all are single-bed.

Another voiced concern over the lack of communication between the hall and the Union. “For them [the Union] to say they thought college had spoken to us already, its frustrating. They are the Union, they represent students, and they should ask us.

“If you are going to represent the students, you have to ask the students, you don't assume someone else has.”

Another thought that the onus lay on College to tell the hall what was happening, and that this is not the first instance College have made decisions without considering the student's opinions. “It seems problematic that the College is putting the Union Council in this position.

The College didn't ask the students when it came to Garden Halls, and



The Weeks blackboard contains years of history Photo: Katy Sayers

they are doing it again.”

Added another member: “Imperial doesn't do anything against this image of it being a “money-making” machine. They can afford not to care because of its ranking and how its oversubscribed by applications as well.”

The paper presented to Union Council included a number of motions, with one being the proposal to campaign against the closure of Weeks and also Pembridge Hall.

The Union Council voted not to campaign against the decision, with 18 out of 30 agreeing that the space should be used for “academic and non-academic space,” as quoted in the paper.

They did vote in favour of fighting the decision to close Pembridge Hall.

Discussions during the meeting included the potential for Weeks to be turned into a childcare facility, in a bid to make Imperial more attractive to academics with children, both those that are presently employed by the College and those who may be considering applying.

In the Union Council meeting, it was stated by Wheeler that the hall was an “inefficient use of space”, with the rooms being far bigger than those in Eastside, Southside and Beit, and also costing less.

Weeks was donated to the College by the British Engineering firm Vickers back in the late 1950s, and is

News

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah, Kunal Wagle



considered a Grade II listed building due to the glass-encased lift that runs through the centre of the hall.

The minutes of the Community and Welfare Board shows that Wheeler was made aware of the planned closure of Weeks as early as October of last year, but, during the Imperial Question Time discussion on Wednesday, he said that he couldn't remember the exact time it was brought to his attention.

Humphris was also present at Imperial Question Time, and members of the halls committee who were in the studio audience asked her about the decision to close Weeks. She admitted that College could be at fault over the lack of consultation

before the decision was made. "We need to get this right, we have a consultation framework, we had a big decision to make – to be fair, we were talking to Tom [Wheeler] and Joe Cooper [Managing Director of the Union] but clearly we've not got it right, so we need to work at getting it better."

In an email sent to members of the Weeks Hall Committee, Tom sent his heartfelt apologies and stated that they were "under the illusion that College had spoken to its residents and employees about the closure."

However, members of the hall committee remained unimpressed by his response. Said one member: "If you vote for someone to represent

you, you want them to do a good job of it."

When *Felix* asked the Union why they ran a paper to campaign against a decision that they could not change, a spokesperson responded: "In recent weeks it became apparent that the decision to close Weeks Hall had been made with no possibility for a reversal of this decision.

"Union Council had the option of whether to campaign or not on this decision, we reject the notion that campaigning against the closure would have been "pointless". Campaigning is not always about delivering change, but sparking debate, discussion and raising awareness of an issue."

What does College say about all of this?

Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) sits on the Provost's board, the body that has the power to shut the halls.

When *Felix* spoke to Humphris, she was unable to comment on the specifics regarding when the hall will close, or what the proposed changes to the internal structure of the building may be.

Humphris told us that College is in a process of renovating the whole Imperial estate, including the new campus based at Imperial West. College have plans that will come into effect over the next ten to twenty years, but are still assessing what should be rebuilt or what should be refurbished.

Said Humphris: "We need to evolve our portfolio, and change is necessary to do this. However, there are a lot of tough decisions to make."

She referred back to the Student Residential Experience Review, ran back in 2013 that looked to gauge the opinion of student halls.

"We want to increase transparency. One example is the the rent proposals that were agreed on with students at Union Council, which we'll now be implementing.

We know we need to average rent out at Woodward to £120 for example, and we are now making sure the figures work for the various room types to ensure this remains the case.

"I don't know of another university that is as transparent with their consultations with students over their plans, in the way we have worked with students on rental arrangements but there are some decisions where we can't consult broadly in the way we'd

like."

Debra explained how many London university student halls are moving further afield as accommodation within the city is increasing in price. "The London student housing issue is a cause for concern. We should be working with other universities to lobby Boris Johnson over this.

Some students are now expected to live around thirty to forty minutes from their campus, so it is not easy. Accommodation in London is a struggle; it's a struggle for students and for staff too."

She also explained that decisions around Evelyn Gardens are dependent on its owner, the Wellcome Trust. It will close after this academic year. "It's down to the Wellcome Trust [who own the halls] on what they want to do with them, and currently we don't know what they want to do with the buildings."

Humphris said that in the event excess accommodation was retained there could be wider student use: "We know there are more students who would want to live with us if we could give them the chance."

Debra also said there were no definite plans for Garden Halls yet, although stressed that there were areas of the hall that weren't even safe to live in. "It needs to be considered alongside the whole North side of Princes Garden, as part of College masterplanning. And the masterplanning is driven by the fact that we are desperate for more academic space."

She concluded: "We need to look at the entire estate as we grow and evolve, and as part of that we need to make difficult decisions."



Photo: Imperial College

News

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

News Editors ||| Carol Ann Cheah, Kunal Wagle

Just what is Union Council?

Union Council is the second highest decision-making body at the Union. Council is the main way that students can directly influence what happens on a day to day basis, as it contains the highest proportion of directly elected student representatives. Any member of the Union can

attend a Council meeting, speak and, with another person to second them, submit a paper to be discussed. There are, though, a number of people who are expected to attend every Council, as they are the ones who can actually vote. There are two ways that these people are chosen to attend Council.

16 members are directly elected from the student body in October to represent undergraduate and postgraduate students from the various faculties (e.g. Science, Engineering and Medicine). In addition, certain Union volunteers have a vote and are required to attend. These council

members are called ex officio members, and include Academic Affairs Officers and the Chairs of each Management Group. They are mandated to represent the views of the academic rep network and clubs and societies respectively. The Union President and the four Deputy Presidents attend each

meeting too, and also sit on the Trustee Board. Council papers often serve to clarify the Union's official stance on decisions taken by clubs & societies, the College and even the Government. They also act as a forum to manage the accountability of Union officers.

What do members think about the Weeks decision?

"Bluntly I think it's something of a spineless betrayal of our students - it's a perfect example of our union acting as a mouthpiece for college management rather than a voice for our members.

"I think it's also interesting that council isn't questioning the amount college invests in accommodation or its overall rental profit, merely discussing the distribution of rents between halls."

"I voted for accepting the closure of Weeks Hall, not because I hate Weeks Hall, but because I felt the reasoning presented at council was the strongest for that option.

However, I cannot say I made a very informed decision and recalling the discussion now I felt that most of what was said were things like "...assuming Weeks gets closed, what can we do with the space".

"At the time I think I found the benefits of using all that potential

area for more suitable causes appealing, without really settling the debate about the importance of Weeks Halls in the accommodation portfolio.

"I'm glad this is now brought up properly and I see no reason to why we shouldn't listen to what Weeks residents and other students have to say, so a visit from them at the next Council feels suitable.

"If not, I think it is my duty as an ordinary member of council to hear these people out between now and the next meeting in order to make myself more informed.

"I think that I am not the only council representative that would gladly have a chat about Weeks with the people affected, so I strongly encourage everyone behind the petition that's circulating to contact someone on council and make their voices heard.

"That being said, I'm not saying I would change my vote today, but good arguments for me doing so might change my mind."

"I voted to close Weeks because it seemed the pragmatic thing to do given that there is basically no chance of College changing their mind.

"However, I do now regret voting so as I feel we neglected to consult with the members of Weeks Hall and consequently we have let down all of our members.

"I bitterly regret this and feel we have an obligation to consult better than we did.

"In many ways, the fact that a campaign is never going to be successful isn't a good reason not to try."

"It's so absolutely embarrassing, clearly the author of the paper completely screwed up and so did we as council members by not looking into it.

"It's made even more of a mockery of Union Council, now people think rather than not representing students the Council is actually going against what students want."

"I voted against in the first vote and abstained from the second. I think the fact is that I can understand their argument... it's a lot of real estate for 67 beds.

My main trepidation is that college don't have a good track history of making good on their promises.

"Having a bigger nursery for instance, using some of that space for club storage etc could all be good.

"I just don't know whether what will actually happen to it is some sort of campus services outlet or something equally as unnecessary."

"Given the information presented at the meeting, there was a strong argument to close Weeks.

The space could be put to better use to support a greater number of staff and students than it currently does.

"I believe Council assumed that the Wardens had already been consulted, and that putting effort

into lobbying to save other halls was more beneficial for more students.

"If there is extra information that should have been brought to Council, this should definitely be considered at the next meeting, and if in retrospect the view of the students is very different, Council would have a mandate to change its position."

"I abstained from voting, but broadly agree with the decision.

If only 70 students per year can benefit from Weeks' price and location, that's not fair on others.

"Also, Council didn't really have a choice - all of the important decisions had already been made by College.

"We felt it was better for us to lobby College to not close down any other halls, to use the Weeks space in ways most beneficial to the student body, and, in the future, to include us in the decision-making process earlier."

Imperial College scientists to study potential benefits of psilocybin in patients with depression

CECILY JOHNSON
NEWS REPORTER

Researchers from the Department of Medicine will perform the first human trials in nearly half a century into the medical benefits of psilocybin, the active compound in magic mushrooms. The pilot study will focus on the potential of psilocybin to help patients with depression who have failed to respond to conventional treatments.

Professor David Nutt and Dr Robin Carhart-Harris of the Centre for Neuropsychopharmacology have previously carried out research using MRI scans to study the brain activity of 15 healthy volunteers who had been administered psilocybin. The new research builds on recent studies

in the US, which have suggested that people suffering from depression and anxiety respond positively to controlled encounters with the hallucinogen.

The Imperial College scientists were awarded a Medical Research Council grant in 2013 to study the effects of psilocybin on patients suffering with depression. Due to begin in April, the experiment will involve studying the changes in the brains of twelve patients with depression before and after receiving a dose of psilocybin. The scientists then plan to extend the study to a full clinical trial of 60 patients, 30 of whom will only receive a placebo.

Research into the potential health benefits of hallucinogenic drugs has seen a recent revival after more than 40 years of stagnation. Despite

a wealth of scientific work during the 1960s investigating the effects of psychedelic drugs, research had to be abandoned when LSD was banned in the UK in 1966. Still a Schedule 1 Class A drug, academics in the UK require a £3,000 Home Office license - and approval from NHS research ethics committees - in order to study psilocybin.

"The current legislation is stopping the benefits of these drugs being explored and for the last 40 years we have missed really interesting opportunities to help patients", said Professor David Nutt, director of the Neuropsychopharmacology Unit in the Division of Brain Sciences. However the years of waiting and struggling against red tape may prove to be worthwhile, if the research continues to give positive results.

In the last few years studies have suggested that hallucinogenic drugs could not only treat patients with depression but also ease the anxiety experienced by terminally ill cancer patients, helping them come to terms with death, and even aid those with substance abuse problems in recovering from their addictions.



"We have missed really interesting opportunities to help patients."

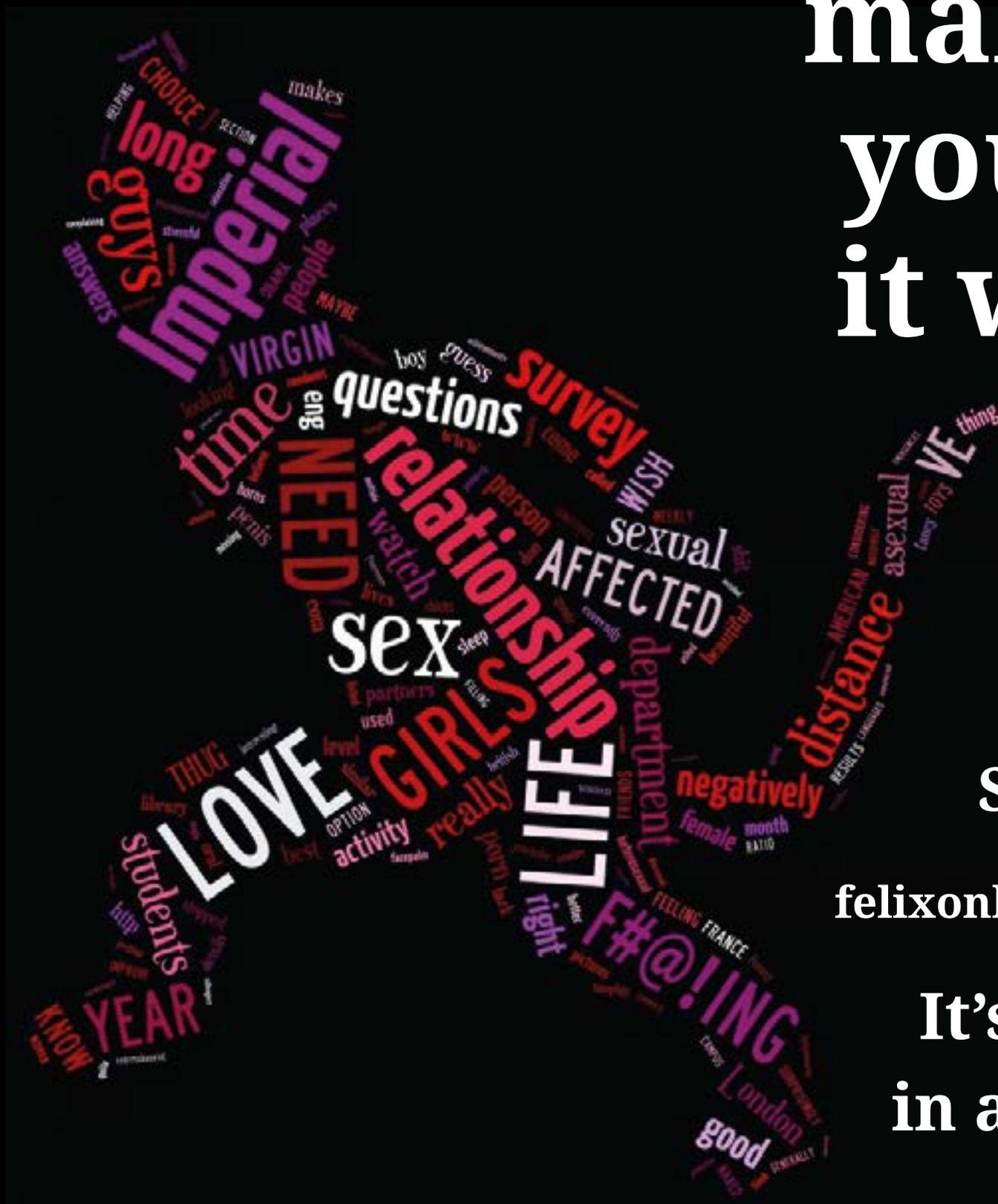
"The first human trials in nearly half a century into the medical benefits of psilocybin."

**Whatever
you like
to give or
receive,
make sure
you share
it with us.**

**The Felix Sex
Survey is back:**

felixonline.co.uk/sexsurvey

**It's time to fill it
in and spill it all.**



Comment

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Comment Editor || Tessa Davey

Why Weeks is worth saving: a h

Katy Sayer discusses why Council need to change their mind about camp

Weeks Hall was kindly donated to Imperial by British engineering firm Vickers in 1959 to be used as affordable undergraduate accommodation. Ungratefully, College have now rejected this generosity and plan to make “more efficient” (i.e. more profitable) use of the space.

Weeks is one of the few remaining halls near campus that are, on average, cheaper for a single room when compared to Eastside, Southside and Beit, but last week, Union Council voted against the idea to lobby College to keep it open.

Apparently, turning the building into academic space or childcare provision will be cheaper than renovating the bedrooms, which I must add, are in perfectly acceptable condition and are a joy to live in. Although saying that, a hall containing the UK’s second ever glass encased lift and is ten stories high is obviously the safest and most suitable place to open a childcare centre...

Regardless, there are endless reasons why Imperial needs reasonably priced undergraduate accommodation on campus and thousands have benefitted from living in Garden, Weeks, and Evelyn Gardens Halls thus far. College is failing to acknowledge there are students from low-income backgrounds who have a right to study here just as much as the wealthy.

A gap in the new, proposed rents of around £95 between those who will be living in Acton and living on campus will create a two-class society. Priced at £170 per week for a standard room, Weeks Hall would still provide the middle ground financially and would allow less wealthy students to enjoy the benefits of living on campus.

This two-class society will also place the rich at an academic and social advantage, since they will be able to stay in the library until late and not have to worry about missing the last tube home, and will have several hours more per week to join the 300+ clubs and societies which Imperial proudly boasts.

Neither the Union Council, nor Tom Wheeler are to blame for this situation. The manner in which the Union Council paper about the hall was worded did not give Weeks the chance to be saved. Council, made up of students from many different communities within college, vote on various topics during these meetings, and will not always have a vast

knowledge of everything they vote on. We feel the paper detailing the closure of Weeks gave no background information that they should have known before deciding on whether to campaign to keep it open or not, and this information could have been sought through involving the community of Weeks.

The motion to close the halls was one of several other points within a long, complex paper, and we feel it was not paid enough attention as a topic, and, as a result, we are calling an emergency council meeting to vote on the topic again.

Clearly information flow within the student and staff body has failed if nobody representing Weeks Hall was informed of the issue, even though it was first raised at a Union Community & Welfare Board meeting last December.

As a resident in Weeks Hall two years ago, I lived through the closure of Garden Hall and recall the outrage amongst the student community. Yes, Garden needed a new lick of paint, but it was clean, functional and had character.

I remember the first time I saw Garden’s wooden lounge and feeling extremely lucky to have access to such a historical and beautiful building. Triple rooms cost just £74 a week, which was truly wonderful, and if it wasn’t for Garden Hall, many of my friends would not have been able to study here.

Upon deciding the time of closure for Garden Hall, apparently it was going to be “renovated” into offices practically immediately. Well, I have been inside, and almost two years later, every bed, every wardrobe, every bedside cabinet is still there. Homemade “SOS” campaign posters are still in the windows. Whoever branded Weeks “an inefficient use of space”, please do visit Garden Hall and inspect the millions of pounds worth of space that you have been wasting for two years.

Now as a Hall Senior in Weeks, I have bitterly told my Freshers the “story” of Garden Hall, while they sit open-eyed and struggle to imagine what lays behind the pretty white façade they walk past every day. College thinks it can get away with such outrageous changes to the accommodation system because in the future, nobody who remembers what there once was will be around to complain.

Next year’s cohort won’t know what they are missing out on. College deals with these unfair decisions



The lovely Wilkinson and Weeks team of hall seniors, subwardens and wardens. Photo: Franca Hoffmann

based on the knowledge that whoever campaigns against them will soon be gone, and whoever will lose out as a result will be unaware of the previous alternatives available.

After the closure of Garden, the warden of Wilkinson Hall kindly agreed to take on the extra responsibility of merging Weeks with Wilkinson, under the assurance that Weeks would remain open for the foreseeable future.

This was clearly not the case, and it is now not just the community of Weeks that will suffer, but also that of Wilkinson and Gabor. Brunches, BBQ’s and parties are held jointly between Wilkinson & Weeks and Gabor on a regular basis, with the two (technically three) halls sharing social spaces. 376 students will be losing one of the best social spaces Imperial has to offer, not just the residents of Weeks.

After the initial Against Acton campaign, College assured us that rent in Woodward Hall would be cheap as a compromise to make up for the fact that students will have to live at least a forty minute commute away from campus, in a not so nice area. At least one year later, with a new student Council, this compromise seems to have been forgotten, with College recently leading the Union Council to vote on apparently “reducing” rent in Woodward Hall to an average of £120 but paid for by extortionate increases in Eastside and Southside rents to £200-215.

That College thinks it is acceptable to force Princes Gardens residents to subsidise the cost of Woodward Hall astounds me.

Teenagers are attracted to historic universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, and if Imperial wants to compete with such institutions,

increasing student satisfaction will involve building up not just a reputation for academic excellence, but also one for tradition, both of which will encourage more donations towards the College endowment will result.

Oxbridge heavily subsidise student accommodation, and in this case the responsibility of subsidising an unpopular hall in Acton should be cast onto the College rather than those who want to live closer to campus.

College and the Union seem to be obsessed with the figure they have managed to achieve through number manipulation of an average rent of £166 per week. As one of the more reasonably priced halls, keeping Weeks open would actually decrease this average and would reduce the need to increase Princes Gardens rent so extortionately.

It is also worth noting that this

Comment

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Comment Editor || Tessa Davey

all senior's view

aigning against closing Weeks



average of £166 a week does not take into account the £20 a week which Woodward residents will have to spend on travel, and it has not been stated explicitly how long the average will remain at this value.

The result of last week's council meeting is not a victory, and the Union Council were essentially pushed into a corner and merely voted for the option that was "less bad". Selfishly, College set these figures based on the very wrong assumption that accommodation at Imperial is already affordable.

At this week's "Imperial Questions Live" Debra Humphris repeatedly mentioned the issue of transparency regarding rent, however the data, which has been released sets the cost of Wardening as an "opportunity cost" of £795,000 annually.

In my opinion, this cost simply does not exist, as Imperial do not pay

a single penny towards Wardening; all they lose is the potential "profit" that could be made from not giving those rooms to students. Ignoring this "opportunity cost", Halls of Residence actually make a profit of £351,597 annually, and what we really want is for this so-called "transparency" to actually reveal the truth, either about the costs of halls or even any plans to close them down in the first place.

Due to licensing rules, from next year onwards under 18's will not be allowed to live in Beit. This will leave them with two options: pay £200 per week to live on campus, or live in Acton, which perhaps may not be the safest place for an underage student to live.

Not only that, some students need to live on or near campus for medical reasons; again they will be forced to live in unmanageable amounts of debt, or compromise their wellbeing

and accessibility through financial pressure to live in Acton.

It is College who should be held accountable for this failure in recognising the needs and feelings of the students, and, quite honestly, Imperial is going to lose out in the future as a result of declining student satisfaction. Endowment is already low, and quite honestly I do not know a single student who would be willing to donate money to Imperial upon graduation.

I had a conversation with Debra Humphris after Imperial Questions Live and all the questions she was unable or unwilling to answer she referenced to "Estates". I don't know who "Estates" are, but if they are deciding the future of hundreds of undergraduates without telling the Union and its students the reasons why, something is very wrong with how this university is run.

Here's what some students had to say online:

"It is very sad that current residents were not informed beforehand and therefore did not have the chance to state their opinion.

Browsing the internet rumors can be easily found that the general student experience at Imperial is poor compared to other universities and this is also because of the housing situation in London. Closing down Weeks with its 66 rooms is therefore a significant loss as not only it further decreases the (affordable) bedspaces in Princes Gardens but also with the common room losing a space which was also used for joint hall events. ...

The Union as a student organization should really think about what they are here for - making the student experience the best it can be or supporting a management strategy which clearly puts making a profit first."

"It occurs to me that having a lower 'headline' rate on a small number of rooms in some halls is all very well, but given that the overall level of income (i.e. the mean rate) had to remain the same, this means that just as many students will be paying more than currently..."

It's all very well to argue that the 'rich' students will simply pick up the slack but this point of view fails to recognise that students don't get to choose which halls they end up in - they only get to make a choice of 5, and are not guaranteed to get any of these ...

Therefore this would seem to create even more of a 'roulette' situation for prospective students in that those who end up paying more won't just be those who choose to because they 'can', but also those who are simply unlucky..."

"Evelyn Garden closing 2015, Garden Hall closed 2013, Pembroke having in the balance and now Weeks on the danger list. Inefficient use of space...have you seen the business school?! Profit first, student experience last. Do the people making these decisions not realise that they can't be reversed?"

Its strange that Eastside prices can't be changed/lowered even though the hall has been in operation for 5+ years - at the same time the process in Acton can be cut before it opens - does this suggest students were being ripped off?"

All other rents increasing, some substantially...and supported by the body elected to represent students."

"So they closed Garden Hall two years ago and the space is barely being used. It is now home to the Chaplaincy, which does not require all the space that used to house nearly 100 students. And if the problem with Weeks is that it is too difficult to refurbish then how is it going to be used for other functions? I can't help but feel like a similar thing would happen with Weeks; what a waste of space when so many students would be desperate to live so close to campus."

With these new prices for halls established, and the closing down of the cheaper halls in recent years, first years are being priced out of South Kensington. It seems this will just create a divide between those from different economic backgrounds. If the college carries on this way then it will definitely deter people from applying to Imperial if they know they cannot afford to live close to campus."

"Again and again and again we see evidence of the corporate mentality that makes students (the people who shouldn't have to pay good money to fight tooth and nail for every little thing) feel like they are being boxed into a corner where the College don't care about them. Imperial operates a very effective policy of not giving a toss (on the presumption that everyone who cares will be gone in 3 years and the new batch won't know the difference).

Acton, Teddington, Princes Gardens, followed by the death of Prof Grimm.....

#classicImperial"

"... something is very wrong with how this university is run"

Comment

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Comment Editor || Tessa Davey

Should we boycott *Fifty Shades of Grey*?

Tessa Davey thinks that it's time to talk about domestic violence



Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey: an example of how not to do BDSM. Photo: Sam Taylor-Johnson/Universal Pictures

Fifty Shades of Grey has opened the door for us to talk about sex candidly and honestly in a way that has never been done before, something that can only be a good thing. People are more open to discussing their desires and fantasies than ever, with millions of people exploring new sensations, and rejuvenating their sex lives. But along with this comes a dark side, and ignoring that could be potentially damaging.

It's fantastic that people are starting to experiment with their sexuality. Certainly among young people, the use of restraints and role-play is completely normal. I've played games of Never Have I Ever where people have been given incredulous looks upon admitting that they've never experimented with being tied up. However, for our parents' generation, who the books are aimed at, it's all very risqué, and something that they've probably never tried.

Sex dominates our society, from the media to advertising to clothing, and beyond. It is so important to be open about it; it makes no sense whatsoever for something that is referred to so constantly to be taboo. I have always said that if you're not mature enough to talk about sex, then you're not mature enough to be having it. For our generation, this is probably a good measure, but for older generations this simply wasn't an

acceptable option. In this way, *Fifty Shades* really has caused a revolution in the sexual liberation of middle aged (and older) women and men.

Unfortunately *Fifty Shades of Grey* isn't just some pure erotica that happens to have gone mainstream. It is a story of a naïve young woman, Anastasia Steele, and her relationship with billionaire Christian Grey, who happens to be really into BDSM.

Ana is timid, insecure and inexperienced. She is relatable to every single woman who thinks that maybe their life is a bit boring; she appeals to the weakest aspects of our personality. In the same way as *Twilight*, *Fifty Shades of Grey* is written in a way that makes you very easily put yourself into her role, and feel the highs and lows with her. You form emotional attachments as she does, and so when reading it through in the whirlwind of an addictive novel, you don't notice that it's not a normal paperback romance.

As far as I'm concerned, there is no question as to whether or not *Fifty Shades of Grey* depicts an abusive relationship. It does. Between stalking her when he first meets her, isolating her, manipulating her, failing to consider her emotional wellbeing, coercing her, and threatening her (even outside of the contract she signs, supposedly giving consent for him to control her), I think it is clear that it is not a shining example of a

healthy relationship.

As with any film or book featuring slightly gritty material, we tend to restrict it to those mature enough to handle the content. With many people calling for the boycott of the franchise, and many saying that it should not have been released as a major film production, the question is raised as to whether the authors, or producers, have a responsibility for their content. Surely adults should be allowed to recognise and decide for themselves whether something is good or bad or safe or healthy? Other books, films, and even video games are released that are harrowing from perspectives that we're more accustomed to (for instance featuring murders), where the person viewing the content is allowed to make the judgement that killing people is wrong. In this case there seems to be a far greater backlash, and I wonder whether that is justified.

The target audience members for this book are uneducated about BDSM lifestyles, and are probably not frequent readers of erotica (or if we're going to be honest, they wouldn't be reading *Fifty Shades of Grey* for anything but a laugh). When they have no experience of such practices, contextualising it only within the framing of being passionate, romantic, and sexy, are people really going to be able to see some of the abusive aspects of the story for what

they are? When you take something that people haven't encountered before and tell them that it's hot, they're more likely to accept that rather than question whether what they're being told is actually even okay. While I absolutely think that people should be given the benefit of the doubt in interpreting what they read and watch, mislabeling an abusive relationship like as this as a whirlwind romance is potentially harmful.

The point at which any activity, be it BDSM or as vanilla as you please, is consensual is at the point of a clear, informed, sober yes. Ana is of a consenting age and is sober, and agrees to Christian Grey's contract. Does this mean that she is giving informed consent? Ana has never had sex, or even masturbated. Her views of sex and relationships are incredibly underdeveloped for someone her age, and she views them in a very naïve way. She is, in my opinion, not emotionally mature enough to agree to this contract with no discussion. Ana is willing, she's into it, but I think simply describing all of the sex as consensual because she timidly nods agreement, or she trembles in anticipation, or says it feels good when he goes down on her, is simply insufficient.

The cast, directors, and producers of the film have stated that *Fifty Shades of Grey* "does not glorify

domestic abuse". This may be true of the film, which has been highly edited and cut to make it suitable for cinematic viewing. The film may not portray the very shaky ground on which the consent stands, but Christian Grey is generally seen to be abusive throughout. The director, Sam Taylor-Johnson, says, "and when he crosses that line it's a very firm no and she has the final word - she has all the power and he's the vulnerable one so I don't think there's any glamorisation of it." This is in jarring contrast to parts of the book, where through her narratives, Ana is seen to feel out of her depth.

The film, while being either laughably terrible, or exactly your cup of tea, is, as expected, not as problematic as the books. As far as EL James is concerned, whether or not the book is depicting abuse is not a topic up for discussion, stating, "Don't get me started. No it's not - OK?" This is dismissive, and displays an attitude that is grossly unhelpful in a society where talking about sex is still somewhat taboo, and domestic violence is stigmatised.

These books started a positive dialogue about sex, reducing the taboo, and have the potential to help start a conversation that could help break the stigma surrounding domestic violence, an important subject that should be open for free discussion.

2015 General Election: it's complicated

Joshua Renken describes the current political landscape with a view to this May's general election.



Journalists, politicians and pollsters all agree that this election is going to be a nail-biter. Watch this space. Photo: Wiki Commons

The upcoming UK general election is set to be the most unpredictable vote in living memory. Labour and the Conservatives are practically neck and neck with only 75 days to go and the odds of a hung parliament have never been shorter. Britain appears to be entering an era of six-party politics, where the Labour-Tory share of the vote is at record lows. This election is the first in recent history where the public will be heading to the polling stations expecting a hung parliament.

For a long time Britain upheld a three party system, composed of the Conservatives and Labour, with the Liberal Democrats traditionally coming in third place in the popular vote.

At the time of writing, Her Majesty's Government holds a 34 seat majority in the House of Commons, with the power being shared between the Conservative Party (303 seats) and the Liberal Democrats (56 seats) in a coalition. The Labour party (257 seats) currently serves as Her Majesty's Opposition with the remaining 34 seats (there are 650 in total, with 533 in England, 59 in Scotland, 40 in Wales, and 18 in Northern Ireland) occupied by nine smaller parties, three independents

and the Speaker of the House, John Bercow. However, in the last five years the political landscape has drastically altered with the rise of UKIP, The Green Party and the Scottish National Party (SNP). These smaller parties have split the vote on both sides of the political spectrum, making Britain's political future look even less clear than it did in 2010.

After May's election the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats are both predicted to see their parliamentary representation shrink significantly, with an increase in the percentage of votes and number of MPs for Labour, UKIP, the SNP and The Green Party. The Liberal Democrats are expected to retain majorities in around half of their parliamentary constituencies and lose their third place position in the popular vote to UKIP. The upshot is that Labour and the Conservatives will end up with a similar number of MPs, and the Lib Dems will suffer severe losses.

The result of these shifts in the public's voting intention is messy. A coalition even more complicated than the status quo looks set to befall our democracy, with the potential requirement of a three-party 'rainbow' coalition to form in order to reach a majority in the House of

Commons. One possible scenario is that no majority coalition can be negotiated, and one of the main parties will have to lead a minority government. This governing party would have to arrange a 'confidence and supply' policy with smaller parties who would support vital actions such as the budget, without holding any ministerial posts.

Labour is expected to receive a hammering up in Scotland, as the SNP takes the majority of constituencies north of the border. Current polling indicates that, if Scottish voting intentions do not change from now to the election, the SNP will win more than 50 constituencies (out of 59), putting virtually all of Labour's 40 Scottish MPs out of a job. This level of parliamentary representation for the SNP would nearly equal the current size of the Liberal Democrats, and may turn out to be the crucial factor that denies Ed Miliband the keys to Downing Street in a Labour majority government.

Over the course of this parliament, The Green Party has been picking up votes from the left and recently polled higher than the Lib Dems. They are, however, unlikely to translate this increased support into more than one MP at the election.

In the last few years, Nigel Farage and UKIP have been amongst the biggest talking points in British politics. UKIP are currently polling at several times what they achieved in the 2010 election and two Tory defectors have provided the party with its first representation in the House of Commons. UKIP enjoyed success in the recent European Parliament elections, winning the most seats of any party, but are not expected to gain any more than four or five MPs after May's election.

Neither the Conservatives nor Labour stand a good chance of winning the 326 seats required for a single-party majority government. Labour are predicted to represent the highest number of constituencies but not enough to command a majority in the House of Commons, as did occur in 2010 with the Conservatives.

Regardless of whether it is in an outright majority, a minority government or a coalition, only two men are realistically in the running to become prime minister: David Cameron and Ed Miliband. If forced to choose between the two, the public favour Mr. Cameron. But in spite of Miliband's individual unpopularity, Labour is ahead in most of the polls. Public opinion suggests that the UK wants David Cameron as

prime minister, but in a Labour government. If the Conservatives manage to stay in power after 2015, many will think it was Ed's poor public image that kept Cameron in Downing Street.

It could be that the eventual administration is not the direct result of public opinion. Instead, the government is more likely to be determined in post-election political negotiations. In other words, the weeks immediately after 7th May could prove to be more important than the weeks running up to the election itself. If there is a hung parliament, party political talks would no doubt consume Westminster, and in all probability last longer than the five days it took for the existing coalition to form back in 2010.

This far out, the election is impossible to call. There is a long time to go and a lot could happen between now and 7th May. Election campaigns are often defined by what goes wrong and public opinion could still shift dramatically. For many of us this will be our first time participating in a general election, and it just so happens to be the most complicated and interesting in almost a century. Whatever your opinion, don't forget to vote.

Science

science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Science Editor || James Bezer & Lauren Ratcliffe

Out of Africa? Fossils shed light on primate origins

Cecily Johnson on the discovery of the oldest New World monkey species

The discovery of three new fossilised monkey specimens in the heart of Amazonian Peru could shed light on the origins and early evolution of primates in South America; one of the most controversial issues in primate palaeontology.

Primatologists have long hypothesised that New World monkeys travelled across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa after the continents were separated by plate tectonics 65 million years ago.

It is not uncommon for unfamiliar animal and plant groups to appear abruptly in the fossil record of South America after their arrival on the island continent; however the earliest phases of the evolutionary history of monkeys in South America have been the subject of extensive debate.

This new discovery, published in *Nature*, may provide the first real evidence for the African ancestry of platyrrhine primates.

Found in the sediment deposits of a river bank in the Santa Rosa fossil site, located in a remote region of eastern Peru, the tiny fossils have been dated to approximately 36

"The discovery... could shed light on the origins and early evolution of primates in South America."

million years ago, during the Late Eocene epoch.

Their discovery extends the fossil record of South American primates back by 10 million years; previously the oldest known New World monkeys dated from 26 million years ago, during the Late Oligocene epoch in Salla, Bolivia.

The fossils were first discovered in 2010, though it took two years for the first to be recognised as a primitive monkey specimen as it was such an unusual find for South America.

"Fossils are scarce and limited to only a few exposed banks along rivers during the dry seasons," said co-author Dr Ken Campbell, a curator at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. "For much of the year high water levels make paleontological exploration impossible".

Under these difficult conditions, and at just a few millimetres across in size, it is unsurprising that the fossilised molars remained unstudied until now.

The initial identification spurred on further efforts to analyse other associated fossils from the Santa Rosa

local fauna.

Researchers have been searching for a number of years in the Amazon Basin of South America, one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world, for clues as to its ancient biological past.

Campbell, working with a team of Argentinian palaeontologists, has recently focused his efforts on eastern Peru in the hopes of understanding the evolutionary origins of the area.

Previously, the gap in the fossil record before the Salla primates led to significantly different hypotheses on the evolutionary history and origins of New World monkeys.

The new specimens contrast with previously known extinct and living South American primate species, instead bearing a striking resemblance to African anthropoids of the Eocene epoch. Phylogenetic analysis suggests a relationship with African taxa.

While the researchers have presented three preliminary hypotheses, they state that more specimens are necessary to narrow down the ancestry of the newly discovered species.



Artists impression of South America's oldest monkey
Photo: Jorge González

Genes responsible for Asthma uncovered

James Bezer on Imperial's research in epigenetics asthma treatments



Asthma affects millions of people. Photo: Zoombaa

Epigenetic factors behind asthma and other allergic diseases have been identified by a group at Imperial College in research that could lead to better targeted and more effective treatments. Their paper, published in *Nature*, identifies 34 genes related to inflammation, inhibited in healthy people, but overexpressed in those with allergies.

Epigenetics has been a bit of a buzzword in biology in the past few years, as it seems to provide an explanation for many complex aspects of life that cannot be explained by a naive interpretation of how our genes work.

Simply having a gene doesn't mean it will be expressed. Environmental factors can turn them on or off by adding methyl groups at specific points on the DNA, which prevent it being read and forming proteins. Levels of methylation have been linked to ageing and the growth of cancers,

and could even provide some explanation for the beneficial effects of exercise, and the lifelong negative effects of childhood traumas.

The researchers analysed the blood of people with asthma and measured the level of methylation of genes that regulate the production of IgE (Immunoglobulin E), an antigen that causes inflammation. They found 36 locations on 34 genes that had very low levels of methylation in those with asthma. There was a strong correlation between the activity of these genes and the levels of IgE in the patient's blood. These findings were backed up by similar results obtained by a group in Canada.

Some of the genes identified encode proteins produced by eosinophils, a type of white blood cell known to cause inflammation in the lungs. Drugs to reduce the activity of eosinophils are sometimes given to asthma sufferers, but this new research could allow genetic testing to identify people who could benefit

from them. It also offers potential targets for new classes of drugs to treat patients whose asthma does not respond well to current treatments.

5 million people in the UK are currently receiving treatment for asthma, which is caused when the airways of the lungs become inflamed and narrowed, restricting the passage of air. It is closely related to eczema and hay fever, the so-called 'atopic triad', which are also caused by high IgE levels.

The research was led by Miriam Moffatt and William Cookson from the National Heart and Lung Institute. Professor Cookson said: "Our pioneering approach, using epigenetics, allowed us to obtain insights that we weren't able to get from traditional genetics. It isn't just the genetic code that can influence disease and DNA sequencing can only take you so far. Our study shows that modifications on top of the DNA that control how genes are read may be even more important."

"Offers potential targets for new classes of drugs to treat patients of Asthma."

Music

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Music Editors || Grace Rahman & Amna Askari

The evolution of Arctic Monkeys

Joshua Renken chronicles the continuing reinvention of one of

Britain's best-loved bands

Born and bred in Sheffield, **Arctic Monkeys** are an English rock band that formed in 2002. Most commonly associated with **The Libertines** and **The Strokes**, Arctic Monkeys consist of front man Alex Turner (lead vocals, rhythm guitar, lead guitar), Jamie Cook (lead guitar, rhythm guitar), Nick O'Malley (bass, backing vocals), and Matt Helders (drums, backing vocals). In the nine years since their debut album release, the Arctic Monkeys have released four more studio albums, won seven Brit awards, performed during the London Olympic Opening Ceremony and headlined Glastonbury. Twice.

As the principal creative force within the band, Alex Turner brings to the group his distinctive northern accent and fiercely intelligent songwriting. His brilliantly knowing observations manage to capture a scene in a remarkably short amount of time. From the beginning he displayed emotional maturity beyond his years and is deservedly hailed by critics as British indie rock's finest lyricist.

Arctic Monkeys burst onto the music scene in 2006 with their first LP *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*. This album explored themes such as relationships, youth culture, prostitution and nightlife in a way that felt freshly witty and to many, beautiful. Alex Turner's pace of delivery varies, but many of the slower tracks sound like the drunken slurs of a horny poet in the early hours.

The final track in this album, 'A Certain Romance', still epitomises what Arctic Monkeys are capable of. With an immaculate bass riff during the verses, a climactic trickling guitar melody and perceptive vocals throughout, this song describes and reconciles chav subculture with astounding eloquence. Rightly considered to be one of the greatest indie rock songs of all time, 'A Certain Romance' is as perfect a pop song as you could ever hope for.

'Favourite Worst Nightmare' (2007) went to No. 1 in the charts and carried along a similar vein to their debut album, albeit with more aggression. The raw beats and rapidly delivered lines on tracks like 'Brianstorm', 'Balaclava' and 'Old Yellow Bricks' made for an exhilarating sound that was balanced out by the melancholy, intimate ballads such as '505' and 'Only Ones Who Know'.

"Many of the slower tracks sound like the drunken slurs of a horny poet in the early hours."



I've a feeling we're not in Sheffield anymore. Photo: Simon Emmett

The band's third album, *Humbug*, is the most hit and miss of the five. Morose and mysterious in equal measure, *Humbug* represented a significant shift in Arctic Monkeys' musical direction. With a much calmer but more challenging sound, this LP separated the band's listeners into fans who loved them all the more and casual followers who preferred the unpretentious and grittily charming tales of love and nightlife that featured in their first two albums. Third albums are notoriously difficult for bands in the limelight but Turner's lyrical flair continued to impress. 'Humbug' featured fewer catchy hooks than many would have wanted but also included some real pearls. Tracks such as 'Cornerstone' and 'Dance Little Liar' reassured fans that Arctic Monkeys were here to stay. Four boys had become men.

With *Suck It and See* (2011), Arctic Monkeys had returned to making more accessible and less moody music than they had with *Humbug*. However, many of Turner's songs were less

"In five short years Alex Turner has swapped jumpers and long hair for leather jackets."

interesting than his usual output and felt hollow by comparison. This small dip in lyrical form was most evident in 'Brick by Brick', which is perhaps the weakest track Arctic Monkeys have ever released despite the strong instrumentals. 'Piledriver Waltz' takes you on a sublime journey of soft psychedelic rock with inventive allegorical lyrics, and 'Love is a Laserquest', 'Suck It and See' and 'That's Where You're Wrong' serve as a strong trifecta to conclude the album. This fourth album showed small changes in the band's sound, but in terms of development *Suck It and See* is Arctic Monkeys' least significant LP of the five.

The band's most recent creation, *AM* (2013), marks the second metamorphosis of Arctic Monkeys. This hip-hop influenced album features an impressive variety of songs ranging from the thunderous 'Do I Wanna Know?' to the gracefully ironic ballad 'No. 1 Party Anthem'. *AM* represents a return to top form for the band, where big riffs and

catchy hooks accompany mindfully crafted, penetrating lyrics. With this LP Arctic Monkeys have also made history as the only independent group whose first five albums have all gone to the top of the charts.

It would be ridiculous for Arctic Monkeys to still be writing the kind of songs that they produced at the beginning of their career, simply because the band's circumstances have changed so much. They no longer live the life of a plucky underground band skulking around Sheffield. Now it's all private jets and courting supermodels in America. In five short years Alex Turner has swapped jumpers and long hair for leather jackets, sunglasses and a slicked back quiff in a transition every bit as seamless as the band's departure from their previous albums. Masters of reinvention, Arctic Monkeys cannot easily be pigeonholed. They are still maturing and refining their sound; who knows what they'll come up with next. Bring on album number six.

Film

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Film Editors

Ellen Mathieson, John Park and Jack Steadman

And the winner is: results

On the 8th February, the Royal Opera House played host to the 68th British Academy Film Awards, or BAFTAs. With all the glitz and glamour of the Oscars, but usually set to British rain, this is one of the biggest awards shows in the season. It was the tenth anniversary of Stephen Fry as host, and he was as delightful and charming as always, from getting Birdman nominees Edward Norton and Michael Keaton to kiss him (rather than his traditional 'blow a kiss to the camera'), to imitating Stephen Hawking.

Hawking himself got one of the biggest laughs of the night, after being announced by Felicity Jones as "the only man on the planet more intelligent than Stephen Fry", he added "yes, and better looking".

Paweł Pawlikowski, winner of the Best Film not in the English Language expressed his confusion at the BAFTAs, having previously won Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer for *Last Resort* in 2001 and Outstanding British Film for *My Summer of Love* in 2005, quipping that "you might as well give me the fellowship award

now and save time".

Due to a timing clash with the Director's Guild of America Awards, which had been the previous night, most of the directors were absent, including Wes Anderson, whose film *The Grand Budapest Hotel* won five out of its eleven nominated awards. When he won the Best Original Screenplay award, he got the star of his film, Ralph Fiennes, to read a speech he has written in the event. This speech was very well received by the audience, featuring such gems as "I was already unhappy to

miss this event but now I'm really angry and resentful that I'm not there, and I'm furious," and a wise-crack about looking forward to very eagerly to "getting ahold of this award physically in my own hands as quickly as Fed-Ex can possibly deliver it to me."

The majority of the awards went to unsurprising (but still comprehensively deserving) winners, from Eddie Redmayne, Julianne Moore, J.K. Simmons and Patricia Arquette in the acting categories to *The LEGO Movie*'s claim of Best Animated Film.

The directing team of Phil Lord and Chris Miller took the chance to use their speech to poke fun at the Oscars (which snubbed their film in the Animated category), declaring the British Academy their "favourite Academy by far."

Of course, you can't have winners without losers, and tonight was no exception: the most notable loser was *The Imitation Game*, which took home none of the awards it was nominated for.

Are this year's BAFTAs just a teaser for how the Oscars will play out? Only one way to find out.

BEST FILM: BOYHOOD – RICHARD LINKLATER AND CATHLEEN SUTHERLAND



BEST DIRECTOR: RICHARD LINKLATER



BEST ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE: EDDIE REDMAYNE



BEST ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE: JULIANNE MOORE



BEST ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE: J. K. SIMMONS



BEST ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE: PATRICIA ARQUETTE



BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL – WES ANDERSON AND HUGO GUINNESS



BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY: THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING – ANTHONY MCCARTEN



BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY: BIRDMAN – EMMANUEL LUBEZKI



Film

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Film Editors || Ellen Mathieson, John Park and Jack Steadman

ts from the 2015 BAFTAs

OUTSTANDING BRITISH DEBUT: STEPHEN BERESFORD AND DAVID LIVINGSTONE



OUTSTANDING BRITISH FILM: THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING



BEST FILM NOT IN THE BRITISH LANGUAGE: IDA – PAWEŁ PAWLKOWSKI



BEST ANIMATED FILM: THE LEGO MOVIE



BEST SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS: INTERSTELLAR



BEST ORIGINAL MUSIC: ALEXANDRE DESPLAT – THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL



BEST EDITING: TOM CROSS – WHIPLASH



BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN: THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL



EE RISING STAR AWARD: JACK O'CONNELL



This Week at Imperial Cinema

Imperial Cinema are bringing a feast of cinematic treats to you this week, from the final entry in the Hobbit trilogy to the Oscar-nominated biopic of Alan Turing.

The Hobbit: The Battle of Five Armies is the final entry in Peter Jackson's series of films set in Middle Earth. Featuring the fiery wrath of the dragon Smaug, enraged by the dwarves at the end of the previous movie, as well as the eponymous Battle of Five Armies, the final trip into Middle Earth promises the scale of the original Lord of the Rings trilogy, as well as a rousing send-off for over a decade of film-making. As an added bonus: Cinema are showing the film in 3D and HFR for one night only!

Meanwhile, to round off the week comes The Imitation Game, the thrilling story of the code-breakers at Bletchley Park during World War II. In particular: Alan Turing, played by Benedict Cumberbatch in yet another career-defining role. One of Britain's greatest minds finally has his story told on the big screen, with a stellar cast.

The Hobbit: The Battle of Five Armies: Monday 23rd (3D HFR screening), Tuesday 24th, Thursday 26th at 1900.

The Imitation Game: Friday 27th at 1900.

Tickets are £3 for members and £4 for non-members. Doors open approximately 15 minutes before the advertised start time.



Film

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Film Editors || Ellen Mathieson, John Park and Jack Steadman

Dornan dominates Dakota

JOHN PARK
SECTION EDITOR

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

Director: Sam Taylor-Johnson
Screenplay: Kelly Marcel, E. L. James (novel)

Cast: Dakota Johnson, Jamie Dornan, Eloise Mumford, Marcia Gay Harden



The worldwide phenomenon that is *Fifty Shades of Grey* finally hit the screens last week and of course, it has made a lot of money. The story of Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) and Anastasia Steele (Dakota Johnson) in the *Fifty Shades* trilogy however has become a laughing stock in the literature world since its publication, with many rightfully criticising the horrendous “inner goddess” narrative voice of Ana, as well as all the other times author E. L. James made the readers laugh unintentionally. But Kelly Marcel’s script attempts to scrape away as much of that as possible, in an attempt to make something at least half-serious out of what initially started off as *Twilight* fan fiction.

And the effort seems to have paid off in certain respect, as the film is not nearly as trashy or cringing as one would expect. Sure there are lines of dialogue here and there that sound a little off, but most importantly, the film remembers to approach the difficult, taboo subject matter with



Photo: Sam Taylor-Johnson, Universal Pictures

a sense of well placed humour. The first half that involves absolutely no BDSM whatsoever is the initial courting phase, one that is not afraid for its characters to let loose and poke fun at each other.

Now, the much-anticipated scenes of BDSM do occur, but director Sam Taylor-Johnson plays them relatively safe and stylish, despite the 18 certificate received here. Perhaps this was a conscious decision to avoid the much dreaded NC-17 classification in the States which automatically turns any film into a virtually unscreenable one, but regardless there is a sense that just a few extended snapshots into the world of BDSM fall short of doing the character of Christian Grey justice. We get the feeling that the Red Room of Pain is not fully explored here for whatever reason, and the surprisingly safe, restrained

(no pun intended) approach comes as a disappointment.

Throughout the film Grey’s troubled past is hinted at, no doubt a teaser for things to come in the two sequels that have already been the go-ahead signal by the studios. But instead of expanding the cold, steely-eyed, and supposedly heartless billionaire’s central role in the story, the film gets stuck in a frustratingly repetitive loop in which the girl starts whining for more commitment, and the guy starts resisting and just wants kinky sex. You get the feeling the film is thirty minutes too long, and numerous ultimately pointless scenes really ought to have been left on the cutting room floor.

Dakota Johnson is without doubt the best aspect of the film. The casting department has found a real talent with Johnson, whose

astonishing performance of innocent naïveté gives the film a convincing female protagonist, as a slightly awkward, inexperienced young woman. Johnson also knows how to get in touch with Ana’s more playful, cheeky side, as she toys with Christian’s needs and emotions. Playing opposite her, Dornan arguably has the more limited, one-dimensional role, but he plays damaged and disturbed well, setting things up nicely for how his role may (or may not to be fair) develop in future films. He is, as he says in the film, “fifty shades of f***ed up”.

Expect an abrupt ending, as the franchise will take at least the next two years to properly finish. The supporting characters we barely get to see here, should feature more, and a bigger delve into Christian’s past will work to the advantage of the sequels.



Photo: Sam Taylor-Johnson, Universal Pictures



Photo: Sam Taylor-Johnson, Universal Pictures



Photo: Sam Taylor-Johnson, Universal Pictures

Aniston does drama

JOHN PARK
SECTION EDITOR

CAKE

Director: Daniel Barnz

Screenplay: Patrick Tobin

Cast: Jennifer Aniston, Adriana Barraza, Sam Worthington



Ten years is a long time to play a character and have that particular role stick to an actress, and ever since *Friends* came off the air, this must be what plagued Jennifer Aniston's film career that happened afterwards. Her popularity in terms of box office numbers has never been in question, but the repetitive roles she took in underwhelming, uninspired romantic comedies were getting tiresome. But here comes *Cake*, the latest Aniston film that is getting positive attention for its lead actress, and for good reason (those Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild nominations for Aniston speak for themselves).

Whilst not exactly a shocking transition for the actress, it is nice to see her shine in a genre we so rarely see her in; a wonderful reminder that she will not be remembered solely for the Rachel role. Aniston is simply outstanding as Claire Bennett, an unpleasant, unhappy woman who is struggling to deal with the various scars in her life. A violent accident is hinted at, given the obvious reminders on her body, whilst the

chronic pain from the trauma she has to live with does not make life any easier. Addicted to painkillers and shutting everyone away from her life, Claire gets oddly fixated on the story of a young woman (Anna Kendrick) from her chronic pain support group, who committed suicide; so much so that she even goes to knock on the widower's (Sam Worthington) door, and also finds the time to visit the actual site of the suicide.

Of all the things the screenplay could have done with this fascinating character, the main plotline is what comes up short. It is a terrible waste of an excellent, understated performance, only to place it in an oddly peculiar narrative that makes very little sense and does next to nothing to explain anything. Claire's mind is all over the place and this particular obsession seems to come out of nowhere and the script is never committed enough to follow up on this main part of the story. The weak link between her and the widower fails to establish chemistry, and the

film only seems to be back on track when focusing on Claire's personal journey to become a better person.

The redemptive quality in the story may sound like the ones we have seen thousands of times before and in essence there is not a huge lot that sets this one apart from the rest. But it is with Aniston's heart-breaking turn that the film truly finds its voice. Claire is someone you are not sure to feel sorry for. Although often the grumpy bitch to her loyal maid Silvana (an equally impressive supporting turn from Adriana Barraza), a disruptive influence at the support group, and someone quite happily numbing her pain with the stash of hidden pills not interested in improving through therapy, there is an unbearable level of sadness and yes, pain, with what she has been through. This is perhaps Aniston like you have never seen her before. And for that alone, it is more than worth the time to sit through Claire's frustrating, but ultimately rewarding journey of coping with tragedy.



Photo: Daniel Burnz, Cinelou Releasing



Photo: Daniel Burnz, Cinelou Releasing

Hawke to the future



Photo: The Spierig Brothers, Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions

JOHN PARK
SECTION EDITOR

PREDESTINATION

Director: Michael Spierig,

Peter Spierig

Screenplay: Michael Spierig,

Peter Spierig

Cast: Ethan Hawke, Sarah

Snook



Prepare to do some serious thinking with this one because if not, this latest time-travelling, gender-bending sci-fi thriller cannot be understood. Even with focus and concentration it is difficult to piece everything together to make one smooth, singular narrative out of the complex little strands that mess with your mind. But there is enormous fun to be had in The Spierig Brothers' *Predestination*, a smart, and often touching mix of genres that carries with it some very nice, shocking twists.

Ethan Hawke is a time-travelling Temporal Agent who is on his final, important assignment to take down a criminal who is set to plant a bomb that will wipe out many innocents. His character initially starts off as a bartender striking up a conversation with a seemingly random woman who is feeling chatty about her life. Said woman is played by Sarah Snook, a relative newcomer whose role is more vast than you could possibly imagine throughout the film. The scenes set in the bar where the two characters essentially just talk for a few minutes may not seem like the most ideal set-up for what the film promises later. But it is definitely worth

sticking around for, and listening to everything that they are saying. Subtle hints in the background, a use of certain words and phrases may give away some clues as to what *Predestination* is all about.

To give away any more than this would be a crime against the film's stunning screenplay that throws in surprises after surprises in the short running time. There is so much packed in here and it does tend to move rather quickly, but with fully developed characters this poses no problem to the overall enjoyment of the film.

Hawke and Snook are excellent (Snook especially is in an extraordinary breakout performance here), and the unexpectedly emotional element that is added to the already busy film only shows of their talent more. There are painful choices to be made and sacrifices that need carrying out for the greater good, and not a single plot strand is wasted in this tightly organised plot. Every single detail you see carries something of importance, and it all somehow comes together to create a fluid narrative.

It is always risky for a film or a television to play with time. There are issues with continuity that may arise, things that do not quite add up, questions about alternate timelines, and the list of problems goes on and on. But *Predestination* tackles this theme head-on, and does not look back as it zaps through different periods to mess with your mind even more.

Perhaps not everything will make complete sense after the first viewing; which is why a repeat screening is recommended, to fully get your head around just what the hell happened with everyone in all the time shifting spots. The more complex this gets, the more the film draws you in to its unique, engaging ride.

From Ex Machina to Blade Runner

Jonathan Masters explores the merits of Science Fiction

Ex Machina was released at the end of January, a film I would recommend to many people. Written and directed by regular Danny Boyle collaborator Alex Garland, it explores the concept of the definition of humanity through the paradigm of artificial intelligence where the plot sets in motion a Turing test (a test devised to test a machine's capacity to exhibit intelligent behaviour akin to that of a human). Watching the film got me thinking about the merits of science fiction as a genre of film. A lot of the time science fiction is heavily degraded due to false assumptions about its maturity as a genre. Opinions which can be attributed to the likes of Star Wars and the various exploits of the Superhero genre of the Marvel production company create this image of the fan base of this genre and therefore our expectations of it. You know what I'm talking about – you see a few around Imperial: Glasses wearing, acne-ridden, slightly overweight, awkward when talking to members of the opposite gender, and possessing a strange penchant for Anime.

Although it has to be said there are people like this, myself fitting some of these descriptions at some point (Being 14 was a dark chapter in my life), it leads to the neglect of one of the most influential and thought provoking genres available. For me, science fiction includes the fantastical elements of Action and Fantasy thereby creating the cinematic spectacle that is demanded by the average cinema goer, which is allowed

to act as a backdrop to tell a more serious message of social realism or philosophy that would otherwise get forgotten about in the wallows of portentous indie drama. For my money, there are a few recurrent themes that are usually explored in intelligent Science Fiction: Society and class; what it means to be human; and human relationships and their transcendence.

Ex Machina, as mentioned before, plays on the theme of what it means to be human through exploring the concept of whether or not artificial intelligence can be possible as well as if emotions, thoughts, and consciousness exist, can a robot be considered human. This is a fundamental work of Descartes, dealing with the concept of self which in any other genre would probably be considered pretentious (see the eye-scratching inane I Heart Huckabees) but since the genre of science fiction allows the creation of worlds and concepts that are fictional but with the proviso of being feasible – Ex Machina prompted Stephen Hawking to express his worries at the dangers of AI. This theme is featured heavily within the 1982 classic Blade Runner where the artificially intelligent replicants of Deckard's world who were created in order to fulfil a subservient role to humans start to break from their programming in order to discover what it means to be alive. Within this theme there also lies a recurrent motif of the desire of freedom, occurring in Kubrick's 2001: a space odyssey with HAL's rebellion or through the leaving of Scarlett

Johansson's AI operating system in the 2013 film Her.

Society and class is an issue usually tackled in some gritty British film, but is more frequently present in Science fiction. Besides the aforementioned Blade Runner, the most commercially and critically successful science fiction work that tackles this issue is that of Neill Blomkamp's District 9. Set in Johannesburg, the immediate parallel is that of the apartheid, but replacing the oppressed race with Alien Refugees that live in shanty towns, segregated from the rest of the population. Although this may not be the most subtle of metaphors, it is still an extremely interesting backdrop for this film to take place. Another interesting case of this, albeit far less alien infested, is that of Never Let Me Go where classes of people are raised to be organ donors for higher social classes, focussing on individuals who reside in this state and their endeavours in trying to escape from their role in society. It touches on the desire for autonomy from the state but at the centre of it resides an emotional core which assists in delivering the warning of overpopulation and the rebellion against reinforcement of class roles.

Despite the humungous budgets of many Sci-Fi films, the most effective stories that they can tell is that of human relationships, forming the main attraction of the film with the interstellar space travel being used as a mere platform to convey this. The obvious example (as you may have guessed) is that of the recent Dylan

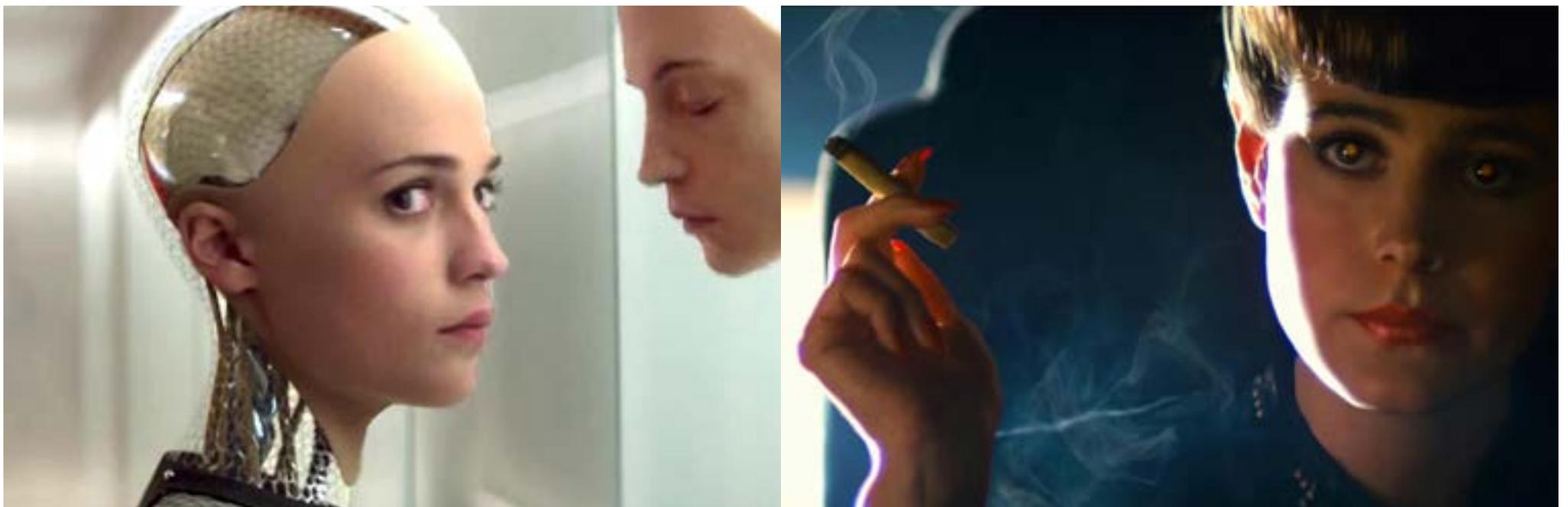


Father and Daughter share a moment, Interstellar. Photo: Christopher Nolan, Paramount Pictures

Thomas enthused Christopher Nolan epic Interstellar – despite it's reported budget of 165 million dollars, and the extensive theoretical physics that Kip Thorne was responsible for devising, the central story is that of the relationship between a father and daughter and the fact that thousands of light years can not break the bond and duty of family. Nolan is an auteur at creating movies with million dollar budgets whose central dogma is far beyond that of any other blockbuster movies, but is frequently neglected from the awards both because of the blockbuster status and the assumptions about the science fiction genre – a Science Fiction film has

never won the best film award.

With this all said, it may sound like the average cinema goer requires some sort of explosion to get them to engage their brain at the moving pictures in front of them; however it is far from it, but it cannot be denied that with the variety of genres that tackle philosophy or ideas of the self, Sci-Fi is the one that permits and allows for the most cinematic spectacle within a genre, whilst manipulating the audience to consider themes that they would perhaps not consider in other circumstances, making it the most exciting and innovative genre in cinema today.



What is human? What gives us the right to decide? Left: Ava, Ex Machina – is she conscious? Right: Rachel, Blade Runner – she thinks she human. Why should we disagree?

Photo: Alex Garland, Universal Pictures. Ridley Scott, Warner Bros.

Television

television.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Television Editors || Guila Gabrielli & John Park

Don't drink and drive – but if you do, call me

Joshua Renken gives his two cents on the new *Breaking Bad* spin-off series, *Better Call Saul*

Uttered by criminal lawyer and opportunist Saul Goodman (Bob Odenkirk) in the final season of *Breaking Bad*, the words “Don't drink and drive – but if you do, call me” give you an idea of the unscrupulous and charismatic character he was throughout the now-classic series. But Saul wasn't always like that.

In *Breaking Bad*, Saul Goodman becomes Walter and Jesse's legal counsel as their meth cooking operation grows. Jesse convinces Walt to meet with Saul by explaining that in this business “you don't want a criminal lawyer... you want a *criminal lawyer*”. It becomes clear that no job is too small, or too depraved, for Goodman, who provides invaluable assistance to the pair from series two onwards.

Whether it's laundering drug money, disposing of incriminating evidence or cleaning up crime scenes, Saul can solve all their problems, for a fee. When asked how he gets these things done, he simply answers, “Let's just say I know a guy... who knows a guy... who knows another guy.” Walt and Jesse soon become his major clients as the drug money rolls in and their situation becomes more complicated.

Saul Goodman provided light relief and gallows humour in the dark storyline that is Walter White's transformation. Walt goes from being a chemistry teacher with a cancer diagnosis to the feared crystal meth cook and millionaire drug kingpin ‘Heisenberg’. When the streak of luck inevitably ends, every character suffers. Goodman's last line in *Breaking Bad* was “It's all over.” Not so. Now Saul Goodman, real name

Jimmy McGill, has a television series of his own. Set in 2002, *Better Call Saul* is a spin-off prequel series written by *Breaking Bad* creators Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould, that follows the small-time Albuquerque lawyer seven years before he becomes Walt and Jesse's attorney.

Jimmy McGill's situation at the start of the series is every bit as dark and depressing as Walter White's. Both series are essentially about intelligent, solitary men who feel financially pressured into breaking the law. *Better Call Saul* will inexorably feature a pivotal moment when Jimmy's idealism completely crashes, and he becomes Saul Goodman. This is going to be a darkly comic, bitter sweet show.

The series cuts between Saul's life before and after meeting Walt, and has already featured a few of the most memorable characters from *Breaking Bad*. The audience is already aware of what happens after Saul first meets with Walt, but what happened in the time leading up to establishing his strip-mall law office in Albuquerque, New Mexico? It is this question that *Breaking Bad* fans want an answer to, and *Better Call Saul* will give them their answer.

It's too early to know whether this series is going to become as popular as its parent drama, but three episodes in and the show is shaping up nicely. By tapping into the huge pre-existing fan base, the opening episode of *Better Call Saul* broke the record for the highest overall viewership of a series premiere in US cable history. The first season consists of ten episodes and the series has already been renewed for a second season of 13 episodes.



Photo: Vince Gilligan, Peter Gould, AMC

"Three episodes in and the show is shaping up nicely."

This series will be judged on the quality of the central performance, and Bob Odenkirk knows this. Luckily, he has had several years to master the ‘slick-talking sleazey lawyer’ role and Odenkirk plays it to perfection. *Better Call Saul* is judiciously humanising the slightly two-dimensional character that viewers enjoyed so much in its parent drama, in a way that feels familiar to any fan of Vince Gilligan's previous work. The series is confidently shot and moves at the pace of a sloth on valium, but somehow the lingering scenes only serve to intensify the emotions of the characters and add gravitas to a given situation. Crucially, *Better Call Saul* never

"Odenkirk plays it to perfection."

feels too slow (Perhaps it would if one hadn't already been exposed to dozens of hours of *Breaking Bad*). The two shows are stylistically identical to each other. Saul's story is a complex one and those involved in making the series understand that they should take their sweet time in telling it.

Better Call Saul is another dark character study that painstakingly details the metamorphosis of its protagonist from a struggling citizen to a professional criminal. If anyone can do it, and do it right, it's Vince Gilligan.

Better Call Saul premiered on February 8th and episodes are uploaded on Netflix UK every Wednesday.



Photo: Vince Gilligan, Peter Gould, AMC



Photo: Vince Gilligan, Peter Gould, AMC

Union Page

What can you gain through volunteering?



Thousands upon thousands of students volunteer at Imperial each and every year, making a huge difference to life on campus.

The students who run your Clubs, Societies and Projects; your Year and Department Academic Reps; the students who run your Constituent Union's; Hall Seniors and #helloicu crew members; the Mums & Dads you were allocated in your first year – all these students are volunteers.

This is your opportunity to let them know the difference they've made to your time at Imperial – send them a short thank you message as part of the Great Volunteer Thank You.

Find out more at:

imperialcollegeunion.org/greatvolunteertankyou

The Big Elections 2015 - Nominations close 1 March



Nominations are now open but be quick to get your nomination in as they are closing in just over a week!

The elections are open to all students, Undergraduates and Postgraduates alike. You can nominate yourself for one or more of the positions available during our Nominations period (2 February - 1 March)

We're running number of information sessions before and during the Nomination period so that you can learn more about how to write your way to election success and how to be a campaign machine.

You really CAN do it. Visit imperialcollegeunion.org/elections to find out how.

Record number of SACAs nominations

More students than ever before have nominated their favourite lecturers, tutors and support staff for a Student Academic Choice Award!

Nominations closed on Friday for the 2015 cycle of the Student Academic Choice Awards, the student-led opportunity to celebrate and reward excellence amongst College staff.

808 nominations were received, from every faculty, department and campus in Imperial College London - including Horizons, Centre for Educational Development, Silwood, and several Medicine teaching & research hospitals.

Now that nominations have closed, panels of Academic Representatives will meet in student-led sessions to decide the shortlist of six people for each category. The SACAs Shortlists will be revealed in the coming weeks - keep an eye out here to see if your nominee has made it to the SACAs Ceremony!

Find out all about SACAs and see who got shortlisted at:

imperialcollegeunion.org/sacas

Student campaigning gains discounts for students

As of 1 March, we will be discounting our range of feminine hygiene products in our shops, a request that was raised at our most recent Union Council meeting.

A student approached Chris Kaye, our Deputy President (Welfare), about the lack of access to, and price of, feminine hygiene products on campus. Following this, he then brought a paper to council to discuss the issue, and consulted with the Union's Management Team about how to bring about change to address this issue. It was suggested that these products were sold at cost price, and after agreement with the Management Team and Council members, this will come into effect next month.

You can turn advocacy into action and evoke change such as this to make the student experience at Imperial even better.

Visit the new Campaigns section on our website for more information or visit our Union Council pages to find out how to submit a paper to Council.

imperialcollegeunion.org/news

Welfare

felix.welfare@imperial.ac.uk

Welfare Editors || Diba Esbati & Chanon Wongsatayanont

Recovering, One Day at a Time

Diba Esbati shares some of her day-to-day coping strategies

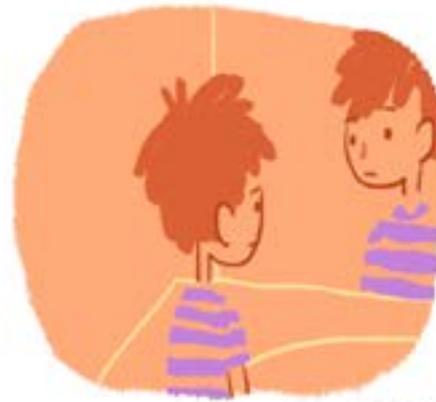
If tonight was a bad night,
It's okay.



When the sun comes out,



get out of bed,
wash your face,
eat something
(anything).



One step at a time, alright?

huysep@twinkl

Taking things one step at a time can be the difference between having a not so crappy day and a complete mental breakdown, so slow down and take things as they come, okay? Credit: Kerry Clark

Depression sucks, there's no getting around that. It's awful and makes you feel like you're not in control of your own emotions, sleep pattern, or motivation. But something that's worth remembering is that it's not unmanageable.

In my years of dealing with depression and anxiety, there have been a few things I've picked up that have helped me cope a little bit better with day to day events, and I'm sharing them with you in the hopes that it might help make recovery just that little bit easier for you.

Get Out of Your Head

The most important step I have found (besides getting professional help of course!) is to learn to recognise obsessive thoughts and stop them before they can go too far. Something that depression, anxiety, and countless other mental illnesses do to us is that when we find something that makes us upset, it makes us dwell on it.

It's not a conscious decision to sink deep into thought and try to overanalyse everything, and it's not your fault, it's just what they do to your brain, and the key is to learn to catch these obsessive thoughts just as they come in and stop them pulling you down into a spiral of obsessive thoughts and sadness.

Distract yourself! Watch your favourite TV show. Call up a friend. Go out for a walk. Drag yourself out of the house, no matter how much you want to just lie on your bedroom floor and cry, I promise you'll feel

better after you get out of the house and more importantly, out of your own head.

Set Small Goals

Set tiny little goals for each day, just something that will get you out of bed in the morning. When I was first put on medication, and every time the dosage is altered or there are other radical changes to my prescription, I take a massive hit to my motivation. Setting goals makes sure that I actually get up and stop thinking about why I'm miserable all the time. It can be something as little as washing the dishes, or reading a chapter of that book you've been dying to read.

When you're depressed, it's so difficult to motivate yourself to do things, because everything seems like a challenge, even small things, so every little win counts. A word of caution though, don't be too harsh on yourself if you're feeling too bad to complete something on your task list. It doesn't mean you're a failure, it just means you're having an off day, just try your hardest to stick to it the next day.

Don't be alone

I'm not saying be with people 100% of the time, we all need alone-time. But don't isolate yourself from the world. I can't talk for everyone, but I know for me, it gets worse when I try and just lock myself in my room all day alone with my thoughts. Try and organise activities during the week

that get you to hang out with other people.

Find Happy Little Things

Do something that makes you happy everyday. For me, this ended up being doodling and painting, but it can be anything, knitting, writing, playing video games, reading, anything.

Depression makes you forget what you used to enjoy before it struck, so maybe take some time and try to rediscover things that used to make you happy. I know it can be frustrating to be unable to get joy from many things, but it's worth giving it a try, especially if you can remember why you liked doing what it was you did that made you relaxed and happy.

New Hobbies are Great

Discover new hobbies and activities. Learning to do something new, even if it's something inconsequential like learning to knit, scrapbook, or draw can be super motivating. It makes you feel accomplished, which in turn makes you feel a little less annoyed and angry with yourself.

These are just little things that have helped me on my road to recovery, and not all of them will be easy changes to make, but it's definitely worth giving them a try. And remember, don't suffer in silence. Talk to someone if you're struggling and think you might need a little help to get through, there is no shame in asking for help!

"Get out of the house and out of your own head."

"Rediscover things that used to make you happy."

Mental health helplines and resources

If you are concerned about your own mental health, or that of a loved one, there are people out there you can talk to who can give you advice, or will be there to listen.

Helplines

If you are distressed and need someone to talk to :

Samaritans (24 hr helpline):

Phone: 08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org.uk

Anxiety Help :

Anxiety UK

Phone: 08444 775 774
(Mon-Fri 09:30 - 17:30)
www.anxietyuk.org.uk

No Panic

Phone: 0808 800 2222
(daily, 10:00 - 22:00)
www.nopanic.org.uk

Eating Disorders:

Beat

Phone: 0845 634 1414
(Mon-Thurs, 13:30 - 16:30)

Addiction:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Phone: 0845 769 7555
(24 hour helpline)
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous

Phone: 0300 999 1212
www.ukna.org

College Resources

Student Counselling Service

Phone: 020 7594 9637
e-mail: counselling@ic.ac.uk

Imperial College Health Centre

Telephone: 020 7584 6301
e-mail: healthcentre@ic.ac.uk

You can also go to your academic or personal tutor regarding pastoral issues, especially if you think your mental health might be affecting your academic performance.

FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY



iPOP

Friday
20 February

20:00-02:00
Metric & FiveSixEight

£1.50
if on Facebook
guestlist

£2.50
entry on
the door



h **Wine**
tasting

27 FEBRUARY
19:30, H-BAR
ACTIVITIES SPACES
£7.50

Join us for a wine tasting from our supplier Matthew Clarke. For just £7.50, you can try eight different wines, some of which will then be sold in the h-bar. Open to Postgraduates and staff, this month's event will be comparing wines from the Americas – it's North vs South! You can register or confirm your place on our website at imperialcollegeunion.org/winetasting.

COMING UP!

Date	Event	Time	Location
Friday 20	iPop	20:00 - 02:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Friday 27	h-bar Wine Tasting, North America vs South America	19:30 - 22:00	h-bar
Friday 27	Impulse	20:00 - 02:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Every Tuesday	Super Quiz	20:00 - 22:00	FiveSixEight
Every Wednesday	CSP Wednesday	19:00 - 01:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Every Wednesday	Sports Night	19:00 - 00:00	Reynolds
Every Friday 20	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds





Imperial Triathlon Club





Join the 2015 Triathlon Season.



COME SEE ICSO BARE SLIGHTLY LESS!
28TH FEBRUARY, CADOGAN HALL, 7:30PM
[HTTP://TINY.CC/ICS0](http://tiny.cc/ics0)

Fashion

fashion.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Editor || Cécile Borkhataria

Music's biggest night: the best and w

Cecile Borkhataria takes a look at some of the best and worst dresses



Beyoncé in Proenza Schouler Photo: Jason Merritt/Getty images

Beyoncé killed it in this all black Proenza Schouler dress at Sunday's Grammy's. She wore an equally beautiful white dress on stage whilst performing 'Take My Hand, Precious Lord', which featured in the popular movie *Selma* about the civil rights movement in the United States. Her performance was controversial since Ledizi, a jazz singer who sang the song in the movie, was not asked to perform it at the Grammy's. Ledizi was also nominated for the 'Best R&B Performance' Grammy, but ironically, lost it to Beyonce. Ledizi even told critics that she was "a little disappointed" that she wasn't asked to perform the song. Despite the controversy, Beyonce's performance was flawless and she looked fabulous at the awards show.



Rihanna in Giambattista Valli Photo: Larry Busacca/Getty images

Rihanna wore this incredible pink Giambattista Valli Haute Couture gown on Sunday night. The dress, which recently featured at Paris Haute Couture week, was the subject of much Internet buzz and memes. The daily mail claimed that she looked like a "giant cupcake", whilst others have memed the dress, portraying family guy character Peter Griffith wearing the dress. Some even compared her dress to a Barbie themed birthday cake, since the skirt was so poofy and ruffly. It was even rumoured that her dress took up three seats at the awards. Others thought her dress looked like a shower loofa, but my personal favourite is an aerial photo of the audience posted by a twitter user, joking that the dress could be seen from space.



Nicki Minaj in Tom Ford Photo: Jason Merritt/Getty images

Nicki Minaj oozed sex appeal on the red carpet in this daring Tom Ford gown. Not one to be body conscious, Nicki looked phenomenal wearing the dress, with the risque deep plunging neckline accentuating her best 'assets', and the fringed peek-a-book skirt giving us a glimpse of her toned legs.

The rapper was nominated for two Grammy's: 'Best Pop Duo/Group Performance' for 'Bang Bang' with Jessie J and Ariana Grande, and 'Best Rap Song' for the popular hit 'Anaconda'.

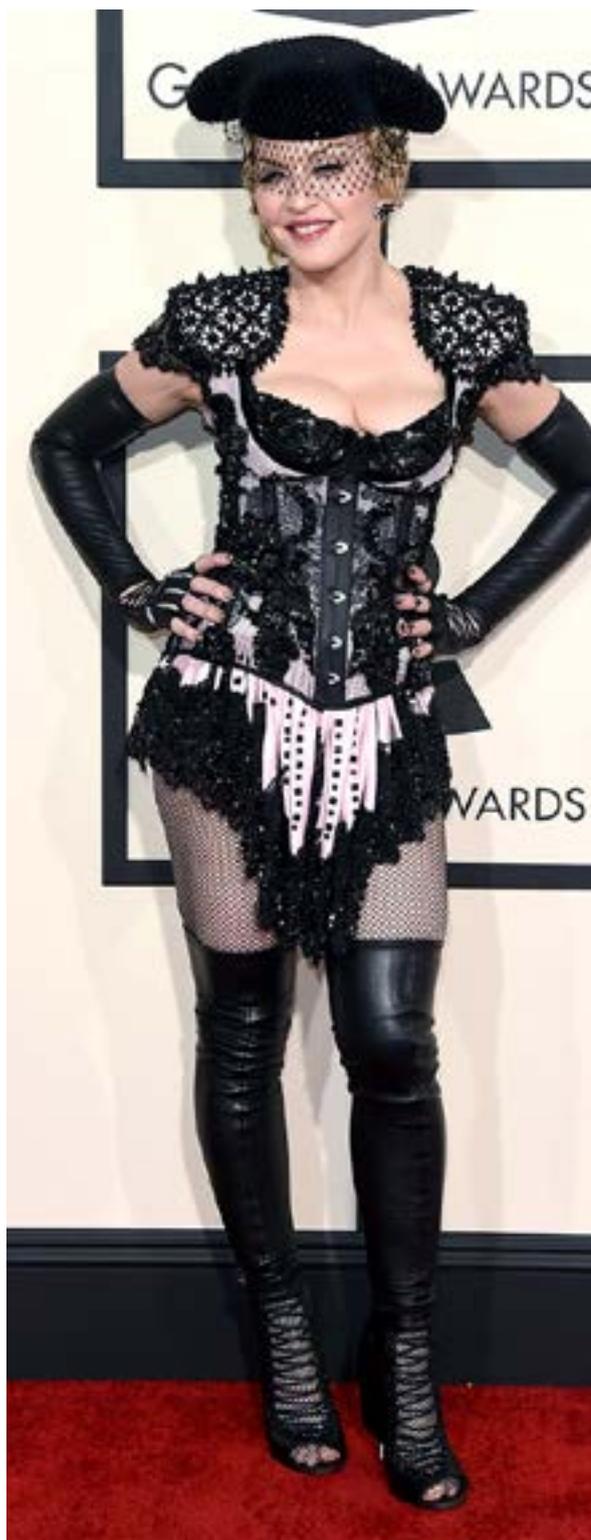
Although she lost both awards to Christina Aguilera's 'Say Something' and Kendrick Lamar's 'I', she arguably looked the sexiest of all the starlets that night.

Fashion

fashion.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Editor || Cécile Borkhataria

Worst outfits of the 2015 Grammy's and celebrities attending the prestigious event in Los Angeles



Madonna in Givenchy Photo: Jason Merritt/Getty images

Moving on to the worst dressed celebrities of the night, we have exhibit A: Madonna in Givenchy. The legendary pop star wore this questionable Spanish matador style ensemble with thigh high boots, which had no place on the red carpet. On top of the already tacky outfit, the fishnet tights and leather gloves she wore made her look like a near-retirement burlesque dancer.

To make matters even worse, the short skirt flashed her bottom to photographers, giving the world a full frontal view of her black thong. Although she wasn't nominated for any awards, she gave an incredible performance of 'Living for Love.' At least she did something right that night...



Kim Kardashian West in Jean Paul Gaultier Photo: Jason Merritt/Getty images

We all know that Kim Kardashian West loves to flaunt her body in revealing outfits, and she usually pulls them off. However, this train wreck of a Jean Paul Gaultier gown did nothing for her figure. Yes, the dress accentuates her cleavage, but the deep plunging neckline with the high slit is far too much skin. In the fashion world, there's a universal rule when it comes to dresses.

If you're going to wear a dress that accentuates your cleavage, then you shouldn't show too much leg, and if you're going to wear a short skirt, then you shouldn't show too much cleavage (if you want to stay classy, that is.) Unfortunately, Kim's dress looks more like a sparkly dressing gown than a red carpet worthy dress.



Charlie XCX in Moschino Photo: Jason Merritt/Getty images

Although Charlie XCX tried to pull off the women's suit look, she looked like more like a chav going to his high school prom. The combination of the shimmery white suit with her ruffled shirt looked like she could have bought the outfit at a thrift shop, not from Moschino. When she hit a Grammy after-party at Hollywood's Chateau Marmont hotel, she made an even bigger fashion mistake by changing into a skin-tight leopard print leotard. One word can summarise her fashion choices: cheap.

Charlie wasn't nominated for a Grammy, but she still managed to perform on stage – at the after party she went to. It sounds like Charlie XCX needs to find a new agent AND stylist.

Arts

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Beauty and Betrayal at the ENO

Jingjie Cheng takes on Verdi's classic *La Traviata*

When it was first performed in 1853, the Venetian opera house **La Fenice** insisted that Verdi's *La Traviata* be staged in the past, around 1700, despite his original intention of a contemporary staging. Perhaps the initial resistance was due to the opera's controversial nature painting the main character of a prostitute as a human and a victim, but it was not until the 1880s that Verdi's intentions were realized. In this modern production with the **English National Opera** however, director Peter Konwitschny is acutely aware of the timeless appeal and relevance of love, death, and the hypocrisy of society. What struck me was the minimalism of the production, with basic, monochromatic costumes and hardly any set – a story that could have happened anywhere, in any period of time.

Verdi's multi-faceted social commentary sees Violetta, a high-class prostitute, falling for the bookish admirer Alfredo, who moves her with his devotion and sincere belief in living true to oneself. She follows him to the countryside, where Alfredo's father Germont eventually finds her and, in order to preserve his family's honour, convinces her to leave his son. Livid at this perceived betrayal, Alfredo publicly denounces Violetta in one of the most gripping scenes of the opera, where the socialites rush back on stage after leaving for dinner to hear his vicious words. With napkins tucked into their fancy clothes and wielding cutlery like weapons, the party-goers are bent over with anticipation, eyes hungry for drama and Violetta's imminent downfall. This is the same bunch that attended her party in the first scene, supposedly celebrating her recovery with her. The hypocrisy is shocking, yet uncomfortably reminiscent of real life.

First performed in 2013, Konwitschny's *La Traviata* is on a revival with most of the cast returning except the role of Violetta; Elizabeth Zharoff is new to the role, yet she captivates from start to end with her delicate yet unyielding delivery. Her singing mirrors her transformation from a confident courtesan to a passionate lover to a victim of social hypocrisy resigned to her tragic fate. Ben Johnson's Alfredo was convincing as a socially awkward bookworm, and although his singing began weakly, he did pick up from his earnest imploring of Violetta to get her to renounce her socialite lifestyle for a life of "real emotions".

Konwitschny feels that Violetta



Elizabeth Zharoff as Vittoria, in ENO's production of Verdi's *La Traviata* Photo: Donald Cooper

is the only human character in the show – even Alfredo, whose sincerity is stirring at the start, turns around to destroy what he fought so hard to achieve. Indeed, the chorus was key to bringing out the main themes of the opera, from their polite but insincere celebration at the start, to their hunting down of Violetta at the end, as well as their presence on stage while she sings of her fate in the darkness. It is her solitary, doomed fight against the duplicity of society that moves us, and which makes her death seem like a final salvation.

Plot progression makes effective use of the very basic set: a sole wooden chair and several red curtains, from which Alfredo enters Violetta's life and through which Germont comes to disrupt their down-to-earth existence in the countryside. As Alfredo's ideals of love and passion take hold in Violetta, the two slowly draw the curtains to the sides, mirroring her revelation. When they meet again in the last scene, in which Alfredo repents but Violetta is too far gone in her illness, the two sing while pushing back imaginary curtains, clinging on to an illusion of what they have lost.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the minimalism, staging is varied and interesting – from the fluid movements of the chorus, to the last scene where Violetta is the only one

left on stage, the placements carried the themes very well. A strange addition that was not in Verdi's original piece was the actual character of Germont's daughter on stage, invoked to guilt-trip Violetta into giving up Alfredo, whose affair with a prostitute has ruined his sister's chances of a respectable marriage. Awkward and equally bookish, the girl was out of place and seemed to me almost a hindrance to the whole scene.

La Traviata was also the first opera I have seen sung in English, which took some adjusting to at the start when characters sung passionately in English libretto. Perhaps it is the romanticism of foreign languages, but at some points the vernacular English phrases were somewhat comical when sung in earnest vibratos. Nevertheless, it was a good translation and it was nice to be able to understand without my eyes having to dart from subtitles to stage.

With the intertwining of a tragic love story with slick social commentary, carried by the voices of the impressive cast, Konwitschny's production pruned the opera to its essence, and the result is sharp, relevant and clever.

La Traviata is on at the London Coliseum until March 13th. Tickets from £12

"Zharoff captivates from start to end with her delicate yet unyielding delivery"

"It is Violetta's solitary doomed fight against the duplicity of society that moves us"

Editorial: The Reinvention Issue

FRED FYLES & KAMIL MCCLELLAND
SECTION EDITORS

When working in the arts, there is little that seems more daunting than taking on a classic. For some productions, things seem set in stone: the costumes, the set, the acting method. All these factors are difficult to alter, especially when the audience has a particular idea in mind. It takes a brave soul to reinvent the wheel, but in this issue of *Felix Arts* we have an amazing range of directors, actors, and artists have taken on this mantle.

We start off with Peter Konwitschny's interpretation of Verdi's *La Traviata*, currently on at the English National Opera. Jingjie Cheng is impressed by the nuanced use of staging, which is surprisingly minimalist for a normally sumptuous opera; luckily, the cast of the opera manage to fill the space, not least of all Elizabeth Zharoff, who fills the role of Violetta with power and verve.

Next, Max Falkenberg interviews director Jon Haynes, one half of the theatre company *Ridiculusmus*, which has succeeded in creating a number of productions that challenge the current nature of the stage, reinventing what we can define as theatre.

There's one difficult thing about reputations: they stick. This is surely the case for John Singer Sargent, the 19th Century artist who has become known as a mere society painter, who only painted the rich and famous. At the **National Portrait Gallery**, Indira Mallik finds that there is much more to the man than meets the eye.

A bit of radical reinvention next, as the **Hayward Gallery** tries to define what it means to be British in the 21st Century. Inviting seven artists into the gallery, they take a look back at the last 70 years of history to try and answer the question: where are we going?

Finally, we end with Max's review of the production of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, an emotional tour-de-force, which challenges our staid idea of a classic.

Here at *Felix Arts* we are always trying to reinvent what the arts can be. With the 1600th issue of *Felix* coming up in a couple of weeks, and *Phoenix* soon after we have never been busier; if you want to get involved, just drop us a line, and reinvent yourself.

Interview: Jon Haynes in Conversation

The co-artistic director of renowned theatre company **Ridiculusmus** speaks to **Max Falkenberg** about schizophrenia, the creative process, the brutality of arts funding and throwing tomatoes at comedians.



Jon Haynes (background), with his partner David Woods (foreground), in **Ridiculusmus'** *The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland* Photo: **Ridiculusmus Theatre Company**

The afternoon I meet Jon Haynes on Bond Street, I really should have better things to be doing. With a lab report due in 24 hours and a rehearsal to plan for later in the day, this interview couldn't come at a much worse time. But this opportunity is too good to miss. With numerous awards and an enviable reputation as the pioneers of "seriously funny theatre", **Ridiculusmus** is at the forefront of British fringe theatre and I'm chatting to the man behind half of their creative vision. Gaunt and serious looking, Jon has something ominous about him. As their website tells us, Jon won awards at school

"Jon Haynes is one of the pioneers of seriously funny theatre"

for speaking Greek verse; and after taking drugs at university and having a nervous breakdown, Jon founded **Ridiculusmus** with his partner David Woods. Somehow I get the feeling that Jon is the serious part of their "seriously funny" dynamic. That said, he strikes me as a pretty good guy.

Founded during their time at **The Poor School** in the 80s, Jon, David and their partner Angus started out busking comic songs from the 20s and 30s. Although little came of it, a free room above a couscous restaurant in Kentish Town saw the trio open *The Tomato Club*. Named after the section where they would invite comedians who "considered themselves bad enough

"The relationship between performers and critics has always been a little odd"

to appear", the audience were armed with overripe tomatoes and the rest you can guess. Although the idea sounds funny, *Time Out* didn't agree saying "the publicity advises "don't come"... sounds like advice worth taking". But it wasn't their comedy that got them kicked out. As Jon tells me, the restaurant asked them to leave after tomato seeds started dropping through the floorboards. I guess the joke had gone too far, but to me it almost feels like that's what **Ridiculusmus'** brand of anti-comedy is all about.

In much the same fashion, their first full show bombed spectacularly. Having by chance been offered to

fill a slot at the **Canal Café Theatre** but with no show to put on, the trio rustled up an adaptation of *Three Men in a Boat*, mainly because it had three men in it – what other reason do you need?! Well I guess many other reasons since, as Ian Shuttleworth put it, "They've seriously underestimated what it takes to whip up some light frothy entertainment". Picking out Jon for some personal praise, Shuttleworth wrote: "When he leaves the stage it seems more full". High praise for the other two I guess.

The relationship between performers and critics has always been a little odd. On one hand, performers are often reliant on critics

Arts

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Arts Editors | Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland



Jon Haynes, in Ridiculusmus' *The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland* Photo: Ridiculusmus Theatre Company

to reach the next level with their art and many are successful as a result. But, as Jon puts it, "you get a 1 star in the *Guardian*, your show is done for". So you wouldn't have blamed the trio for giving up there, but they remained adequately stubborn. With a suggestion to perform *The 3rd Policeman* from an audience member, an absurd, surrealist play almost perfectly suited to the trio, Ridiculusmus as a serious company was born. With an extensive tour and the support of a few more enlightened critics, the company set up as a resident company in Derry, Northern Ireland.

With a small amount of funding and an urge to relieve some boredom, the trio began working on more experimental methods for devising original work and came up with *The Exhibitionists*. Although reasonably successful, the show left them unsatisfied. In an attempt to perform an Indian epic, audiences started walking out, and with Jon's personal life starting to collapse, the company seemed at risk. Having been briefly sectioned during his time at university in Sheffield, Jon

felt alienated in Northern Ireland. Angus left the trio to move into filmmaking, and after a painful stint living in an industrial unit in Belfast, the duo decided to risk everything on two shows at the Edinburgh fringe in 1999. Although the book Jon sends me after the interview paints a rather bleak picture of their time in Northern Ireland, Jon tells me that it was there that Ridiculusmus finally discovered their artistic vision. "Seriously funny theatre" was born.

The Exhibitionists & *YesYesYes* opened to rave reviews with *YesYesYes* garnering a number of top awards including *Time Out* 'Best Off West End production' in 2000 and Total Theatre's award for 'Best British Production'. With a smattering of fresh publicity and an extensive tour across the UK and abroad, *YesYesYes* gave Ridiculusmus their first chance at real funding and linked them with a number of big players.

Over the last 15 years, Ridiculusmus have continued the artistic vision that gave them their first break. Focussing on a number of two-handers, Jon tells me a little about the creative process behind the majority of his work;

starting out on a project, the team usually have very few ideas set in stone. With little more than an idea about the number characters, a week is spent improvising, sometimes with a number of collaborators, sometimes just the two of them. Recording all the material, Jon tells me that they "transcribe everything, no matter how banal and shit, word for word, um for um". A little odd, but Jon swears to me it works. "Philip Roth used to spend a year writing 8 hours a day – total shit". The main talent of the writer was putting up with your own shit – "God this is terrible!" But after a year – or in Ridiculusmus' case, a week – they'd come back and try to pick out anything that had a little life. Jon tells me they're looking for conflict or drama; I'm pretty sure they've found it.

With the few sparks of life picked out and a core idea to work on, Jon and David can spend months to years researching their ideas. With no director, touring becomes an intrinsic part of the creation process: "Working the show out as we perform to an audience, in a way the audience become our director". The audience's immediate response lets the duo work out line for line what's funny and what's not.

When they started out on *The Eradication of Schizophrenia in Western Lapland*, the duo had only settled on two things; they wanted to work with collaborators and they wanted to base something on a family. With a week dedicated to development work at the **National Theatre Studios**, it became clear that mental health was a recurring theme in their improvisations. David's father had exhibited psychosis while he was growing up before his brother also discovered that he had "the gene that makes you flip".

"I think that's where madness starts, amongst the pieces and the teacups", Jon notes while talking about the focus on the family. While he tells me his time in a psychiatric ward didn't particularly influence the production, he recalls that there was a man on his ward who would tell rambling tales about how the novelist John Fowles having stolen his wife; Jon didn't believe any of it, but years later what he had thought of as delusions turned out to be all true. Were his character's delusions in *Eradication* all meant to be true? Of course not, but the implication is rather amusing.

Two years and one script later, the show began touring, and as you can imagine with such a touchy subject, responses to the depiction of psychosis were mixed. "A schizophrenic was not happy with me saying, "It's not like that, it's not like that. You need to be a lot more worked up."" Others argued that delusions were very personal, internal things; if you've been through psychosis, it is understandable not wanting to be represented on stage. But in their challenging position as theatre makers, Jon insists that

Ridiculusmus' ultimate goal is to entertain. Even if the subject matter is bleak, you want to make people laugh.

Set up so that the two performances were running simultaneously, Jon describes the challenges of such a complex play. "The problem is trying to act this very weird script where you're trying to be in the moment on one side but need to fully pay attention to the other side...you can never really get lost in the piece in the typical method acting way". As Jon points out: "there's no rule about what mental illness should be", and certainly not in how it should be depicted.

And from that springboard, Jon tells me about Ridiculusmus' next project. With *Eradication* having been the first part, the duo are now focussing on the second instalment in a trilogy on alternative discussion-based therapies for mental health. With trials running in South Carolina, the treatment of therapy-resistant PTSD in war veterans is the theme for their next instalment. Premiering at the Melbourne Festival in autumn, the performance will see Jon playing a veteran living in a box in his kitchen with David out the back door trying to convince Jon to have the MDMA treatment.

But even with the best intentioned plans, an ominous thought hangs over our discussion. Jon tells me that they've recently been rejected for funding from the Arts Council. Although Jon insists the Arts Council value Ridiculusmus, apparently they are better suited to a project based funding model: "The fiscal sadism of this Government's slashing means there just isn't that much money to go around". Having lost their spot at the **Barbican's** Pit Theatre due to funding, and with no manner in which to sustain the company without external support, Jon fears they might have to close. "If we don't get [the project funding], I don't know what we're going to do... It's a fragile existence". Without the funding to carry out their research, who knows whether they will be around at all in a couple of years. I certainly hope they are. Their work may not be conventional, but Ridiculusmus' creative vision is unique, and we cannot underestimate how important that is for the arts today.

Towards the end of our discussion, Jon tells me about an article written recently by David Edgar. Entitled *Death of the Playwright*, the article argues that the devised theatre is pushing out the old idea of the playwright. But that's not the point. Theatre is a collaborative art and all that matters is the end product, what is shown on stage and what people will remember. While Edgar might be right that devised work often is poorly thought out, Ridiculusmus' complete devotion to their art and incredible focus in creating work is too valuable to the British theatre scene to just lose overnight.

"When starting out on a project, the team usually have few ideas set in stone"

"The fiscal sadism of the government means there just isn't enough money"

Arts

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Sargent – A Bridge To The Modern

Indira Mallik finds that Sargent was not all that he was painted to be



Edouard and Marie-Louise Pailleron by John Singer Sargent, 1881. Photo: Des Moines Art Center

John Singer Sargent is not often included amongst the great painters of the late 19th century. It's an exclusive club. Monet, Renoir, Picasso, Degas, Rodin, Cézanne, van Gogh, and Klimt amongst others dominate the public perceptions of art in the 1880s-1910s, and with good reason. Some of the biggest movements in art history took place in that period; it was the birth of modern art in the form of impressionism, the beginnings of cubism. At the turn of the century the age of the *avant garde* had started sweeping through Europe, leaving Sargent looking somewhat stuck in

"Each figure has arresting eyes that pierce the viewer."

the archaic realism of yesteryear. He and his paintings were regarded by many of his contemporaries as accomplished but lightweight – pandering to his rich patrons rather than contributing to the innovative canon of European art of the era. Modern critics have often taken the same view; Sargent has gained a reputation for painting portraits that depict the moneyed literati and society heiresses of Paris and London. A virtuoso but with an oeuvre that is staid and facile.

Sargent: *Portraits of Artists and Friends* at the **National Portrait Gallery** tries to dispel this. It mostly

"His emphasis was placed capturing light on the subjects."

succeeds. The subjects themselves are what we would expect from Sargent; the paintings number his artsy bohemian friends, a distilled 'who's who' of European society of the age. Amongst Sargent's sitters are Henry James, *Treasure Island's* Robert Louis Stevenson, Auguste Rodin, Claude Monet, and WB Yeats, considered by some the greatest English poet of his generation. Each painting is charged with expression and character, and each figure has arresting eyes that pierce the viewer, anchoring them to the moment depicted.

Andy Warhol said of Sargent "[he] made everybody look glamorous.

Taller. Thinner." Indeed, within the nearly 70 portraits exhibited, there is no unsightly mole or wrinkle in sight. Sargent seems to conjure the sitters from pure light, illuminating their face and drawing them out of their shadowy backgrounds with the skill of a sculptor. The paint suggests at, rather than delineates, the contours and planes of his subjects. Sometimes hands disappear altogether in an insouciant flourish into folds of clothes, the colours whirling and smudging into one another. He sometimes leaves parts of the canvas unpainted, as in his portrait of Vernon Lee, which captures the

Arts

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

intelligence and brilliance of the art historian, woman of letters (Vernon Lee was the pen name of Violet Paget) and feminist, all with the greatest economy of brushstrokes.

The influence of Sargent's training with the celebrated French society painter Charles Auguste Émile Carolus-Duran is apparent. Carolus-Duran's method of teaching was at the time radical; an admirer of Velázquez, he insisted that his pupils draw and paint at the same time with a loaded brush on unprepared canvas. His emphasis was placed on capturing light on the subjects, expressing the object through fluid painting rather than seeking to create a solid mass or a precise tonal structure.

Sargent employs this technique with mastery in one his best earlier portraits: a commanding likeness of Carolus-Duran, which bears the touching inscription "to my dear master... [from] his affectionate pupil". Much of Carolus-Duran's style is evident in Sargent's work; both men's portraits depict the sitter glancing out from the canvas from dark, sparsely painted of backgrounds. They paint in the vein of Velázquez, the Spanish master by whom Carolus-Duran was inspired. Velázquez's mid-17th century *Portrait of Juan de Pareja* in particular bears great resemblances to the style that Sargent favoured for much of his career. One of his fellow students remarked in 1847 "Mr Sargent is about 18 years old and one of the most talented fellows I have ever come across; his drawings are like old masters, and his colours are equally fine". And Rodin commented that Sargent was "the Van Dyck of our times" after seeing the painting *The Misses Hunter*.

Sargent straddles the line between realism and impressionism, never quite committing to either. However his work is never simply reiterating the old, and his paintings are profoundly modern.

His double portrait of the Pailleron children is nothing like what children were depicted as in the 19th century. They stare out from the canvas, lit spookily, half in shadow, their expressions sombre and knowing, and their complexions deathly pale against the rich velvet of the background. This haunting portrayal with its psychological intensity is thought to have inspired Henry James' gothic horror story *Turn of the Screw*. Similarly, oversized lilies hang over the girls in *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, bringing a hint of danger into the serene picture of two young girls lighting lanterns in the twilight.

Sargent's paintings of Robert Louis Stevenson show him at his most experimental; in *Robert Louis Stevenson and His Wife*, his usual way of focusing on the sitter's face is abandoned for a staging that seems incidental, almost photographic. The writer is shown looming, mantis-like, thin as rake, and walking towards one end of the canvas; on the other

"Sargent made everybody look glamorous. Taller. Thinner."



Robert Louis Stevenson by John Singer Sargent, 1879. Photo: Taft Museum of Art

end his wife folds herself into a chair, hiding her face with a shimmering golden veil. The space between the figures is charged with tension, and an open door takes centre frame implying unknown secrets and limitless possibilities.

Even in his more conventional paintings, theatricality is ubiquitous. The sitters become larger-than-life versions of their characters. Warhol may have thought Sargent to be glamourizing his sitters, but he was sometimes far from flattering, remarking that he lost a friend every time he painted a portrait of one. It is not to be forgotten either that he painted *Portrait of Madame X*, the now notorious painting of Virginie Gautreau in a plunging black dress which so scandalised French Society that the sitter was from then on entrenched in gossip, and Sargent was forced to leave Paris.

The National Portrait Gallery exhibition seeks to show Sargent at his least conventional; these paintings are after all, un-commissioned, and Sargent presented many of them to his friends as gifts. The collection

does show him at his most fluid, but also paints him as the perennial watcher – forever on the outside looking in. Nowhere is this more highlighted than in his portraits of Monet. He depicts the great impressionist painting *en plein air* and *sur le motif*, some of the only evidence we have that Monet did so. Sargent admired Monet immensely, collecting many of Monet's works and later switching to his style of painting out in the open. In these paintings we see almost a desire to imitate Monet's characteristic use of colour and brushstrokes; the grass is painted in the hues that Monet is known for, and this marks Sargent's desire to move into impressionism, a transition which he never quite mastered despite his best efforts. Monet was said to be quite irritated by Sargent's frequent desire to learn from him, and he wrote to his wife complaining that Sargent "is making an extraordinary inquiry about the use of yellow and green and asking me if I am coming to London; he needs me to advise him on the pictures he is working on".

"His work is never simply reiterating the old, and his paintings are profoundly modern."

Sargent was in many respects the end in the line of the old masters; in the vein of Velázquez and Ingres, he was one of the last great society painters. His paintings did not test the boundaries of art as many his contemporaries did, but his work is no less for it; by sticking staunchly to realism whilst modernism directed his contemporaries, Sargent created a dialogue between classic and modern, bringing together in his work Van Dyck, Velázquez, Monet, and Degas using visual quotations, thereby reinventing realism for the 20th century.

His paintings show a great humanism and empathy for his subjects, and it is his affection for them that shines through to confer to them an ageless glamour. Whatever his shortcomings, this exhibition shows Sargent at his best.

Sargent: Portraits of Artists and Friends is running at the National Portrait Gallery until 25th May. Tickets £14.50; £13 for concessions.

Radical Histories: what does it mean to be British today?

Fred Fyles takes in a century of the country's artistic history at the Hayward Gallery

In the summer of 2014, in response to the hysteria generated by the 'Trojan Horse School' scandal, the Education Secretary Michael Gove issued an edict stating that schools in the UK must begin promoting that most nebulous of terms: British Values. In an age when it is just as easy to speak to a friend in Lagos as it is to phone our grandparents in Woking; when foodie culture means that everyone's palate is globally educated; when people can move through the EU at will, breaking down notions of private borders; what does it really mean to be British?

It is this question that has been posed to seven artist-curators in the Southbank Centre's show *History Is Now*, in which the years 1945-2015 are radically reinterpreted, and the cultural legacy of the second half of the 20th Century is celebrated. Does Britishness mean a sleeping video of David Beckham, as it does to Simon Fujiwara? Or perhaps it is best represented by governmental reports on BSE, the offering of Roger Hiorns? Certainly everything in Britain is not peachy keen; this much can be ascertained before you reach the exhibition, when one spies the surface-to-air missile installed on the Hayward Gallery's roof, ominously pointing to an invisible target.

The missile forms part of the collection of Richard Wentworth, who looks back to his childhood for inspiration; the oldest of all

the curators, Wentworth sees the years 1940-60 as a formative period for British culture. The end of the war led to a widespread, if uneasy, optimism, as Britons took their first new steps into a brave new world of TV sets and polyurethane. This shift towards consumer culture is reflected in Tony Cragg's work *Britain Seen from the North*, in which a jumble of plastic flotsam forms the outline of the British Isle; tilted on its side, the country seems prone under the weight of its newly accumulated wealth. It was this optimism that led to the foundation of the Hayward Gallery, part of the Southbank Centre development created during the Festival of Britain, an irony that cannot be overlooked.

However, not all was peaceful in the land of plenty. While they seemed to be free of the threat of invasion, a vein of violence still ran to the core of British society; we therefore have Henry Moore's bulbous sculptures, unnerving in their fluidity, and Francis Bacon's psychological explorations of the human form, in which figures seem to melt into each other. Robert Capa's shots of the D-Day landings, iconic in their shaky quality, show that we will indeed fight them on the beaches; but Lowry's scene of a popular sandy shore shows that we will live, laugh, and love on the beaches too.

Perhaps what is at the heart of being British lies in our institutions;



Richard Hamilton, *The State*, 1993 Photo: Tate, London 2014/Hayward Gallery

the NHS, for example, which is the country's largest employer, and which forms the centre of Barbara Hepworth's *Hospital Drawings* series, part of Wentworth's display. This idea of institutions is continued by Simon Fujiwara, whose curation of a number of artefacts of Britishness is inspired. Taking as inspiration the fundamental shift from material to immaterial production that occurred during the reign of Thatcher and carried on for the next thirty years, Fujiwara's collection manages to be both eclectic and focussed.

The role Thatcher played is represented by the costume worn by Meryl Streep in *The Iron Lady*, a white-washed biopic of the divisive leader who fundamentally altered the British economy; next to it we have a ton of coal, taken from the Minorca Surface Mine, one of the country's last open coal mines. This smooth slab, which was hewn from the very earth, seems as unfamiliar and unnatural as a piece of alien technology, a fact that is subtly alluded to by Gavin Turk's *Trash*, a bronze case of a bin bag. In fact, it is somewhat ironic to have Thatcher represented here; how could she have believed in 'British Values' when she stated that "there is no such thing as society", a claim succinctly refuted by the brooms used by community clear-up teams following the Summer 2011 riots, on display next to Streep's costume.

Above all, Fujiwara's collection reveals the contradictions inherent within British society. Our obsession with class and aspirational lifestyles is represented by empty packets of Waitrose herbs and Nigella Lawson salad servers, which are juxtaposed against a place setting for The Clink Restaurant, a charity scheme that employs and trains prisoners. The contrast between physicality and immateriality is shown through Prem Sahib's *Sweat Panel*, which creates the illusion of a steamed mirror through the meticulous application of hundreds of resin drops. Towards

What are mot

For working-class girls, in particular, being "feminine" is often the only way to escape the competition at school.

The education system works against most working-class kids - but the chances of 'success' for girls are lowest.



"Whilst free from the threat of invasion, a vein of violence ran to the core of Britain"

An extract from *Who's Holding the Baby?*, 1978, The Hackney FL

Arts

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Flashers made of?



WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF N.U.P.E. AND OF THE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION.

Flashers Photo: Hackney Flashers/Hayward Gallery

the end of the exhibition we are presented with a short video. Entitled *Imagineering*, and produced by the government, it highlights the importance of imagination as a source of wealth. Fujiwara shows us how we have moved, through the years, from coal to creativity, and explores what happens when happiness is treated as just another commodity.

Other curators represent British institutions in different ways, be it in a positive or negative light. Hannah Starkey takes the Arts Council Collection as her starting point; the world's largest loan collection of British modern and contemporary art, it is the Collection's wide range of photographs that have provided the inspiration for Starkey's witty, bleak view of modern Britain. Like Fujiwara, Starkey attempts to portray a country that has fallen in love with the allure of consumerism, contrasting images taken from advertising with grim photos, often in black and white, showing social isolation and alienation.

One of the highlights of Starkey's collection are Paul Graham's photographs, taken in social security offices around the country in the mid-80s. With their decrepit atmosphere, the photos highlight – in garish technicolour – those who have been abandoned by a welfare state that promised so much for so many. Elsewhere we have Chris Killip's images; in one, a woman lies face down on a wooden bench, her skirt being blustered by an invisible wind; in another, a crying child from Tyneside brings his knees up to his face, displaying his worn boots to the camera.

Whilst Starkey shows the worst of Britain, she also shows us some of the best things that come out of the country, including a sense of radicalism that runs deep through the UK like a vein of Welsh coal. *Who's Holding the Baby?*, a series of text collages from the Hackney Flashers Collective, highlights the poor childcare provisions for working class women; looking like a precursor of a riot grrrl zine, the black and white text confronts the viewer, in a radical display against authority.

From this group of radical feminists we move onto another: Christine Voge's pictures of a Chiswick-based refuge for women. The first of its kind in the UK, the centre was soon overwhelmed, holding up to four times its allocated capacity. These are the selection of Jane and Louise Wilson, whose collaborative collection reinforces the idea that twins often share an uncanny mental connection. Their collection focuses around British conflicts of the 20th Century; unlike the current jingoism on display centred around the centenary of WWII, the Wilsons look much closer to home, focussing on the Irish Troubles and the Greenham Common Women's Camp, which



Costume designed for Meryl Streep in *The Iron Lady*, 2011 Photo: Hayward Gallery

sprung up in protest to the decision to place cruise missiles at the RAF base. A row of photographs of graffiti make up Conrad Atkinson's *Northern Ireland 1968 – May Day 1975*, under which a series of quotes centred around the Northern Irish conflict are printed on orange, white, and green paper. By placing them so close together, Atkinson brings together the personal and the political, showing us the people behind the slogans.

Such British radicalism is also celebrated in John Akomfrah's selection of BFI-funded films, many of which are experimental in nature; the majority centre around home-grown artists, such as Francis Bacon, Richard Hamilton, and Barbara Hepworth, whose work was inherently ground-breaking. While the majority of the films do seem interesting, they are just too long. The 17 total films on display have a combined running time of over ten hours; while I do have a lot of time for video art, quite frankly there's only so much one person can take.

The same accusation can be levelled at Roger Hiorns, whose display consists of a collection of research he has done on the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy outbreak and resulting media hysteria, which

peaked in the mid-90s. The only fitting word I could think of is exhaustive; this is not a compliment. The amount of content that Hiorns is trying to fit into the three rooms is enough to make a serial hoarder embarrassed; along the wall there are scientific reports in plastic wallets, entire TV news programmes on the outbreak, and whole governmental protocols on controlling the outbreak. Hiorns would certainly benefit from another curator, one who could help him cut down his extensive collection, and sadly his section marks the lowest point in the exhibition.

Conceived also as part of the run-up to this year's general election, the Hayward's show does indeed succeed in showing that Britishness is defined by our shared histories. It may not show us where we are going, but it certainly shows us where we have been, and – while some curators could do with a more confident hand in limiting their content – is overall a very compelling exhibition. Britain is a huge topic to take on, one whose boundaries are not easily defined, but the 7 artists on display have by-and-large managed to show us that history is, indeed, occurring right now.

History Is Now: 7 Artists Take On Britain is on at the Hayward Gallery until 26th April. Student tickets £8

"The Hayward shows that Britishness is defined by our shared histories"

Arts

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Utterly Overpowered By Arthur Miller Max Falkenberg is emotionally blown apart at Wyndham's

I have a confession to make. In my ignorance, I know practically nothing about Arthur Miller. Arguably one of the greatest playwrights of the twentieth century, at least a superficial understanding of Miller's work should probably be expected from me, but not even that can I offer. Clueless, but with great anticipation, it was in this mind-set that I walked into the **Wyndham's Theatre** for their production of *A View from the Bridge*.

One of Miller's early works, the play portrays the relationship between Italian American longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his orphaned niece Catherine. Set in 1950s Brooklyn, two of Carbone's cousins arrive illegally from impoverished Sicily. The strong silent Marco contrasts the lavish, platinum blond Rodolpho who, falling in love with Catherine, unearths a deep seated jealousy and unease in Eddie. A tragedy in which each character draws sympathy from the tense audience, this is unlike anything I have seen before. With no one individual to label the villain, an overwhelming agitation builds throughout the performance.

Mark Strong's piercing eyes are a sight to behold. Imposing and powerful, Strong's immaculate focus

and complete dedication to his role as Eddie is not only completely convincing but also builds a beautifully sympathetic character whose desire for respect and loyalty hit the audience right at their heart.

Little can be said to describe the beauty with which this production has been crafted. Directed by the Belgian Ivo Van Hove, best known as the artistic director of **Toneelgroep Amsterdam**, the display is simple and polished. A single doorway is placed in the centre of the grey background with the audience surrounding the action on three sides. The stage is blank with a continuous glass bench marking its perimeter. Known for his avant garde, experimental approach to theatre, Van Hove has focussed on the subtleties of each character. Mr Alfieri, a lawyer who narrates the story of Carbone is placed as an integral part of the production. Played by Michael Gould, Alfieri observes the action from the back of the stage, the whites of his eyes highlighting a deep, unsettling pressure on the characters.

Particular credit should be given to Phoebe Fox who, in her role as Catherine, is both immediately lovable and remarkably powerful in confronting Strong. Delicate and kind, Katy's influence on Eddie is



Mark Strong and Phoebe Fox in *A View from the Bridge* at Wyndham's Theatre. Photo: Jan Versweyveld

heart-warming and makes this play's tragic story all the more painful. The bleak grey costumes and mute lighting give the play a distinct aged feeling. With Alfieri's narration, the production comes across as a snapshot from a black and white film with its distinct air of hindsight going far to crush the American Dream.

It is odd reviewing such an overwhelming production. I try to be somewhat objective, critical and still embed my opinion into the piece, but with this, that's just not so easy. As much as I want to objectively analyse the piece, on this occasion, my emotional response far outweighs anything else I could say. With pulsing church music running in the background and a drum punctuating moments of heightened tension, it almost feels like it is Van Hove deciding when I should breath, when my heart should beat and when I should cry. As Alfieri tells us, "I could see every step coming, step after step, like a dark figure walking down a hall towards a certain door."

So could the audience, but we were powerless. Like a well-planned ceremony, this production ripped up a man's pride while we watched it rain blood from above.

A View from the Bridge is on at Wyndham's Theatre until April 11th.



Photo by Yuebi Yang

The PHOENIX

est. 1887

We are looking for:

- Short Story Writers
- Photographers
- Graphic Designers
 - Artists
 - Poets

email: phoenix@imperial.ac.uk

HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

Imperial Hunger Games takes television world by storm, shots immediately fired

In a televised event that has never been attempted before, three students and two members of staff took part in Imperial Hunger Games, which was over in under an hour.

The show was commissioned by “Students Trying to Overcome Interdepartmental Conflict”, or STOIC, as an attempt to prove that as long as different members of the College community are put under horrific conditions, they will eventually learn to communicate, reason and, eventually, live amicably together.

However, despite trials ran using mice proving that they were able to co-operate under the same conditions, the run itself involving the human contestants was a complete failure.

An “arena” was created by STOIC that was an empty concrete shell of a room, within which the contestants were placed, devoid of all technology, paperwork and Communication teams that the contestants could hide behind.

The stage was set for the vaguely anticipated event with expectations extremely high that if students made a request to the staff, they would-for once- actually take into account the opinions of the students; however things only went from bad to worse.

The contestants were then left to fend entirely for themselves, whilst placed under increasing social pressure from “observants” to communicate and interact. The observants offered up challenges for the contestants to complete satisfactorily, and they were

scrutinised as they attempted to do so.

There was no food provided and only water was available for the subjects.

The contestants included two members of staff, one of whom has been branded the Serial Hall Killer. The three students thrown into the mix were “I represent the student body” Wom Theeler, vaguely familiar Sports Don student, and Skilippa Phett, the Media Dictator.

However, reaching a state of peace was seemingly impossible, and within minutes the contestants were snarling, arguing and throwing dirty looks before completely turning on each other, or being brought down by the observants.

Theeler collapsed early on. Under the immense social pressure to explain why we pay Union entry fees, he slumped in the corner whilst trying to search his pockets for “Excel Spreadsheets,” seemingly having forgotten all contestants were stripped of any factual, relevant knowledge before they entered the arena.

His final blow was when he was challenged on why students were not told about the Weeks closure, which knocked him out completely, after he admitted he couldn’t remember when he was first told about the decision.

The Serial Hall Killer was a stronger contestant; her first tactic when challenged about the Weeks closure was to lull everyone into a comatose state by using long, sweeping sentences including numerous

transparent “buzzwords,” including, ironically, the word “transparent.”

When attacked with a sleek “2-Class Society division between expensive and cheap halls” swipe, she started throwing out lowered rent prices left, right and centre.

However, those observing were quick to dismiss such futile tactics too, throwing increased rent prices back in her face.

She eventually admitted defeat, once realising that she had no definite answers to really solidify any chance of victory in the arena. She announced she would need back up, and bowed out shortly after.

Skilippa’s aggression and “shade throwing” offense tactic increased the tension between herself and other contestants to the point she was ignored.

She was left throwing controversial but pointless blows into the arena, such as “Why bother sending students to College Council if they don’t listen to their views?”

Sports Don staved off attacks from other contestants from being on the “students are ignored” offence. He repeatedly struck other contestants using buzzwords, including “Teddington,” “AgainstActon,” “No consultation,” and “Imperial is ran as a business.”

Sports Don narrowly survived the Games: should any contestant have targeted him with a Coach Window however, the blow almost certainly would have knocked him out.

The arena was live streamed over the internet, and people could tweet



ideas to increase and prolong the social pressure too. It even had a hashtag, to encourage student engagement, another myth STOIC are struggling to prove with other projects.

The arena was emptied after just one hour, after all contestants seemed emotionally exhausted, and, in the case of Theeler and the Serial Hall Killer, practically catatonic. It is thought Theeler was in need of chemical mood boosting facilitation shortly afterwards.

STOIC have vowed to attempt Imperial Hunger Games termly, and are already in search of the next recruits to see if social nirvana can be achieved using other combinations of contestants. Experts remain sceptical.

The chair of Imperial Questions Live, Tim Limblebee, remained positive about the entire event: “We actually had two people watching the live stream, and for a couple of minutes three so that’s definitely worth the money we spent on this arena.”



HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

Diary of A Fresher aged 18 3/4

Friday 13th of February

My hall has started to order food off Tesco online, although they keep screwing up our order. I thought I had ordered 3 potatoes but instead was delivered three sacks, so will be having to eat potatoes for a week.

My hall has started to order food off Tesco online, although they keep screwing up our order. I thought I had ordered 3 potatoes but instead was delivered three sacks, so will be having to eat potatoes for a week.

Saturday 14th February

Today ate roughly my body mass in mash potatoes, and couldn't move for an hour whilst crying over American Girl, who is no longer texting me back. I also drank a litre of Tesco basics vodka, which was a bad idea as I then threw up all my mash potato. It was roughly the same consistency and the same colour it was when it went down.

Sunday 15th February

Dinner: three jacket potatoes and chips. I tried to make sweet potatoes by rubbing some chips in sugar stolen from the JCR, but this is apparently not how it is done.

Ran into Dorothy today whilst chewing absent-mindedly chewing on my potato snack sticks. She is walking now, although said she will always have a slight limp, but seemed optimistic about it. I too want sex so good one day it is worth struggling to walk for the rest of my life. Spent five minutes being sadly envious of Kriss.

Monday 16th February

Dinner: roast potatoes with a side of mash. Skin has turned slightly yellow but

think it might something to do with my bedsheets as I haven't washed them since I started.

Tuesday 17th February

Today I ate three potatoes, slightly raw as I couldn't be bothered to wait for the oven to cook them.

Wednesday 18th February

HAVE REALISED YOU CAN MICROWAVE POTATOES OH MY FUCKING GOD

Dinner: five jacket potatoes with rubbery cheese I stole from the JCR. Seasoned with salt I also stole from the JCR.

Thursday 19th February

Can no longer eat potatoes, feel like I am about to die from lack of protein. Have resorted to stealing my corridor mate's protein powder, although that too made me feel sick.

I eventually threw the protein powder up, and it still looked suspiciously like thrown up mashed potato.

We predrank tonight to go out to Roxy, and thought it would be hilarious to take Stuart's frozen whole salmon on the night out with us. It seemed so good, especially when we pretended the salmon tapped into the tube with his own, aptly named oyster card, but forgot it would defrost.

The salmon started to smell around midnight, although we tried to keep him cold by submerging him in pitchers of woo woo and purple rain.

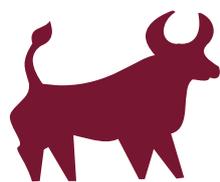
No-one remembers where we left the salmon, so had to share potatoes with Stuart as he didn't have anything to eat for dinner the next day.

HOROSCOPES



ARIES

This week, your sister's school friend, who you've had a crush on for most of your life, suddenly returns to your life as she decides to crash at your sister's place. You're not sure what's happened but she seems distraught - either way your long term relationship is going to hit a strain.



TAURUS

This week, in order to spice up your sex life, you and your long term partner decide to try something new. Much to your turgor, she perks up at the idea of a threesome and suggests her attractive gym buddy; pity she spent most of the three-way with her. On the upside you made a really good sandwich during - with turkey and a little mustard.



GEMINI

This week, your long term partner, with whom you have a child has come out as a lesbian. Cutting you loose and taking your son. It would have been ok if she didn't get custody and if your son didn't think all of your guy friends were 'daddy' too, seeing as he had two mums.



CANCER

This week, your pet monkey is found out by animal control. After the loss of your partner, he was the only thing left in your life that was good, even if he did shit on your stuff and have constant control of stereo. It's ok though, you're pretty sure he's gone into cinema, maybe he still thinks of you.



LEO

This week, your careless friends accidentally tell your crush about your eternal feelings for her. She realises that you are the perfect guy for her and always have been. Unfortunately you are abroad and are not present to 'sign for your package' - what's worse is that you return from the trip with a girlfriend. Shit.



VIRGO

This week, even though you are happy with your current relationship, you still can't help feel something for your crush; it doesn't help that she's always there. Your pals are going through old videos and they decide to watch your sister's prom. You're not sure how it happened, but you get off with your crush. Things are looking up.



LIBRA

This week, after deciding to go on a break with the perfect girl, you sleep with another girl that's clearly had a thing for you for a while. Needless to say, your crush goes ballistic and breaks up with you. It's not fair, you were on a break. Something tells you, regardless of how many times you drunkenly marry her, she will not let you forget this.



SCORPIO

This week, one of your friends encourages you to re-kindle your love for synth music. You get a regular gig at your local coffee place and awaken the musical genius inside of you. Unfortunately, no one else agrees with your style, what's more your musical friend refuses to play anymore. You choose to give up to bring her happiness.



SAGITTARIUS

This week, you're getting married in a partially bulldozed church in London. Everything has lined up to be the perfect wedding and you love for your new girlfriend is at an all-time high. Just as you are about to say the final words. Your old crush comes in. You say the wrong name at the altar...



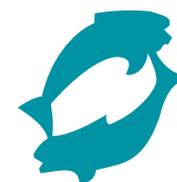
CAPRICORN

This week, your sister and your best friend are getting married. An opportune moment to get a quick one in with your crush, with whom you've been very 'off and on again'. The wedding was beautiful and it makes you cry about how unsuccessful your weddings have been. Oh, and your crush is pregnant.



AQUARIUS

This week, your crush gives birth to your beautiful child. You can't help but feel that you love her and want to spend the rest of your days with her and raising your kid. You decide to propose to her, pity your friend accidentally found the ring and proposed to her instead. What's worse is that she said yes. You're pretty sure they've banged.



PISCES

This week, a lot is changing in your friendship group. Your sister and husband are moving out of town to raise their adopted twins and the mother of your child is leaving to work in Paris. Life will never be the same. In a last ditch attempt, you leave her a voicemail, maybe she'll read it before she flies away - in any case, you hope Rachel will return.

Puzzles

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

Puzzles Editor | Michael Faggetter

Crossword

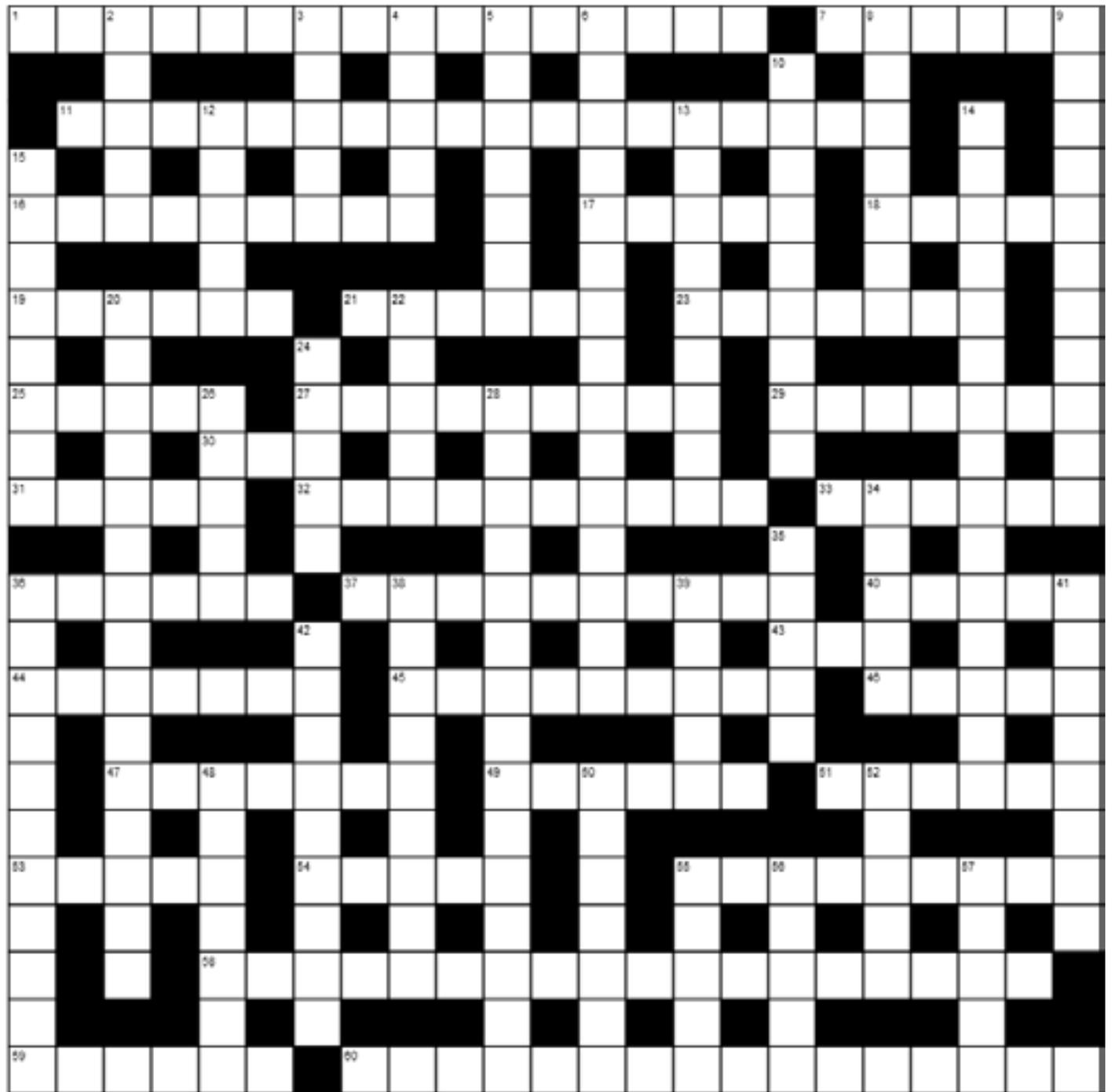
Jamie Dutton and Ben Harvey

Across

- 1 Children's playground game (5,2,3,6)
- 7 Biscuit brand (6)
- 11 African island nation (3,4,3,8)
- 16 Not hurt (9)
- 17 Vicious, mean (5)
- 18 Insert (e.g. into the body) (5)
- 19 Spanish province (noted for its bay) (6)
- 21 Greek god of music (6)
- 23 Small bowl (7)
- 25 Headdress (5)
- 27 Jump on the _____,
take up popular belief (9)
- 29 Renowned 14th century English poet (7)
- 30 Intrude, break open (3)
- 31 Can be preceded by hand, vital and
church (5)
- 32 Flexibility (10)
- 33 Pastry (6)
- 36 Peasant farm worker (6)
- 37 Punctuation mark (10)
- 40 Minor local official (historically) (5)
- 43 Thomas Anderson alias (3)
- 44 Wax _____ - Talk enthusiastically (7)
- 45 Breastfed babies (9)
- 46 High horse whinny (5)
- 47 Outrageous (7)
- 49 Nick _____ - England number 8
(Rugby Union) (6)
- 51 Sam _____ - Australian tennis player (6)
- 53 Troublesome (5)
- 54 Relating to vision (5)
- 55 2008 Film starring Nicole Kidman and
Hugh Jackman (9)
- 58 Shakespeare tragedy (6,3,9)
- 59 Adjusts (6)
- 60 Brontë novel (9,7)

Down

- 2 Snitch (5)
- 3 River-dwelling deity (5)
- 4 Stockpile (5)
- 5 Health inspection (7)
- 6 Head of company (e.g. of the BBC) (8-7)
- 8 Pointed pillar (7)
- 9 British TV crime drama (11)
- 10 International negotiation (9)
- 12 Crown (5)
- 13 Fundamental particles (9)
- 14 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5 etc. (9,6)
- 15 Table sports game (8)
- 20 Abattoirs (15)
- 22 Racy poster (3-2)
- 24 Bottomless depth (5)
- 26 Suspension of breathing (5)
- 28 1929 economic disaster (4,6,5)
- 34 _____ Paul - Breaking Bad actor (5)
- 35 High IQ society (5)
- 36 Plant organelle (11)
- 38 U.S. Detective Agency / Album by Weezer (9)
- 39 Type of pasta (5)
- 41 Heavenly (8)
- 42 British private schools (9)
- 48 Bird noted for singing whilst in flight (7)
- 50 Burn with no flame (7)
- 52 Latin for earth (5)
- 55 Bet everything (in Poker) (3-2)
- 56 Deadly sin (5)
- 57 Move abruptly (5)



Last Week's Solutions

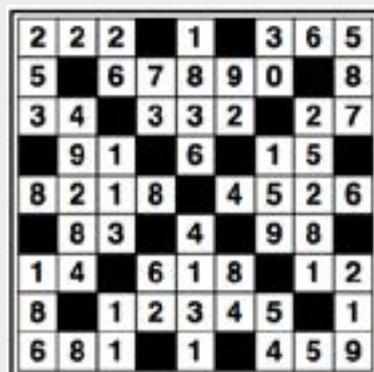
Weekly Quiz

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| 1) Triptych | 5) Ovoviviparity/
Ovoviviparous
animals | 7) Irish |
| 2) HSBC | 6) Nairobi | 8) Narnia |
| 3) Rwanda | | 9) Emperor |
| 4) Elements | | 10) Threonine |

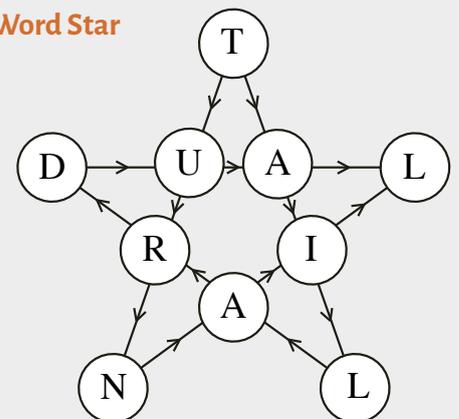
Anacrostic

- LUFTHANSA
 1: LAURA (AURAL)
 2: UMPIRE (IMPURE)
 3: FLUSTER (RESTFUL)
 4: TARRAGON (ARROGANT)
 5: HURRICANE (RAUNCHIER)
 6: ALARMING (MARGINAL)
 7: NATURES (SAUNTER)
 8: SACRED (CEDARS)
 9: AGREE (EAGER)

Cross-Number



Word Star



Puzzles

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

Puzzles Editor | Michael Faggetter

Weekly Quiz

QuizSoc

This quiz has been brought to you by QuizSoc: quiz@imperial.ac.uk

1) Obscure Nerd Trivia

What is the name of the world in which the Warcraft series, including WoW, takes place?

2) World Geography

Which American state can come in North and South varieties that have Bismarck and Pierre, respectively, as capitals?

3) Questions About Good Songs

Why did Johnny Cash shoot a man in Reno, in Folsom Prison Blues?

4) TV and Cinema

Which Clint Eastwood film has become a huge financial success and tells the life of Chris Kyle?

5) Making Your Science Degree Work For You

What property, whose name derives from the Greek for "handedness", identifies molecules that cannot be superimposed upon their mirror images?

6) World History

Which African nation was invaded twice by Italy – first disastrously in 1895, then with more luck in 1935?

7) The Internet and its Wonders

What is the self-given name of guys who complain girls choose "douchebags" instead of them and end up being "friendzoned", all the while lamenting that they "finish last"?

8) In the Last Week

In which European capital have two attacks been carried out, seemingly by Muslim extremists?

9) This Day in History

Tara Lipinski wins the gold medal for ladies' singles figure skating on the 20th of February 1998. This gives her what record in terms of gold medals won at the Winter Olympics?

10) ...and if you got all the other right, their initials spell out...

A namesake matrix can be used to determine the vertices of a graph that possess which property that means that they are endpoints to the same edge?

FUCWIT

Attention Puzzlers!

It is clear from the large number of correct solutions that were submitted this week, that the puzzles section in Felix is popular! However, to keep this double-page spread going, we need your help. We need more puzzles!

If you want to write a puzzle, or have any ideas for puzzles that you would like to see here, then please email us!

Send in your completed puzzles to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk. Points are awarded for each correct solution, bonus points (in brackets) are awarded to the first correct answer!

Points available this week:

Wordsearch	6 points	(+2)
Weekly Quiz	4 points	(+2)
Word Search	4 points	(+2)

Leaderboard

Individuals:

1. Adam Stewart	106
2. Catmelon	39
3. Jem Ong	37
4. Kebab King	21
5. Angus	8
6. Gene H.	7
7. Fengchu Zhang	3
8. Gabriel Quek	2

Teams:

1. Fully Erect	107
2. L3Gendary	71
3. Mindsuckers	48
4. Dapper Giraffe	15
5. WG	13
6. AnyonebutKofi	8
7. Ebolalala	7
8. Aerodoku	2
9. Guang <3 Le	1

Word Search

Paul G.

Find 72 colours hidden in the grid horizontally, vertically or diagonally. All the words to be found of six letters or less are listed below, but it's up to you to discover the longer ones.

No colour is nested inside another: for example, if you find POWDER BLUE, which contains RED spelled backwards, then RED must be found somewhere else in the grid.

When all the words have been found, the 17 remaining letters, taken in order, will spell out the names of two dyes.

AMBER	DRAB	MAROON	RUSSET
AUBURN	DUN	NAVY	SABLE
AZURE	EBONY	OCHRE	SEPIA
BICE	ECRU	PEACH	SILVER
BLONDE	FAWN	PERSE	TAN
BRONZE	GINGER	PINK	TEAL
BROWN	GOLD	PUCE	TITIAN
BUFF	INDIGO	PURPLE	VIOLET
CORAL	KHAKI	RED	YELLOW
CREAM	LEMON	ROSE	

I K A H K C A L B H C T I P E R S E P C
 C C C E C U P T C O N R U B U A M B E R
 H H H M N C L H T Y E R G L E E T S R E
 A C H E L I O T R O P E N H R S E P I A
 M A H R S C R Y R L C E D S H O Z E W M
 P E I A O T D E E A E A L N C R N A I A
 A P O L R N N M G R M A R O O N O G N H
 G V A D U T O U G N T A R R N L R R K O
 N T E G A N R N T E A U R C E A B E L G
 E N R R D C L E G B S T H I I T E E E A
 L U E E M O O R U S R A N L N N E N A N
 B A R E C I E V E S R O O O I E B O N Y
 A L V N R Y L T A C E N W G M G M O V A
 S Z I E E G E I O O G A R N G A S A G A
 R L U L N L E A O A G E G O V M N I U P
 V E L R R D L M M N B I L R I I N N I R
 N O V A E A E E I U A D D R E G O N I I
 W U C L E C O R A L R T C N E E K L I C
 A S D T I T I A N A I D I R I V N N E O
 F F U B E S K Y B L U E S I O U Q R U T



Clubs and Societies

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

C & S Editor || Ben Howitt

Crystals and Concertos

Yingwei Ouyang gives her perspective on her big night with ICSO

It was the end of one of the last weeks of term; uni life was definitely hectic by that point, or at least it was for me. It was lab week, so although I was knackered from a long week of afternoons at the bench, Friday was exciting and rewarding. I had finally completed the third experiment of the term and obtained large, defined crystals. This seemed to bode well for the concert later that night, or perhaps it placed me in a better mood in advance of the performance. Going straight from labs to pre-concert rehearsal was quite a transition, but also a lovely way to celebrate the end of the week by doing something that I love, besides Chemistry!

The concert itself was an even bigger adjustment. Playing in the Sibelius Hall, Helsinki, last summer was an experience that I'll never forget. Performing in the Great Hall, right in the heart of a university so focussed on science where we are used to academic work, was also a unique experience. It was even

more exhilarating as the concert was completely sold out!

This undoubtedly lifted everyone's spirits and boosted the jubilation of our opening piece – Dvorak's Carnival Overture, which received wonderful applause. The adrenaline continued on into my performance of Prokofiev's Second Violin concerto, and I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did. The first half of the concert was very well-received with rounds of applause, and the second half was no exception. After Marquez's festive Danzon and Rachmaninov's atmospheric and much more solemn Isle of the Dead, we received a standing ovation! All who attended the concert that evening thoroughly enjoyed themselves and we would like to thank those of you who came to watch us perform!

After a restful break (apart from revision for some), ICSO is gearing up for our next concert; Saturday 28th February, 7.30pm at Cadogan Hall, near Sloane Square. The programme

includes a varied repertoire and features Martin James Bartlett, BBC Young Musician of the Year 2014. It is definitely a concert not to be missed!

The programme opens with Gershwin's An American in Paris, full of jazz and saxophones. This is followed by Mozart Piano Concerto No.20, with Martin James Bartlett, which is a total contrast to the first piece and a chance to witness the virtuosity of the pianist. The second half has a Russian theme with Borodin's In the Steppes of Central Asia and Stravinsky's Firebird Suite; music from a mystic ballet of love and oppression.

I am looking forward to returning into the orchestra to accompany our soloist and I can't wait to perform such a great programme!

Tickets can be purchased online, or in person on 25th and 26th February, at the Blyth Centre on 5th floor of the Sherfield Building, as well as on the door.

<https://www.union.ic.ac.uk/arts/orchestra/tickets.php>

ArtsFest: A Very Vocal Evening 3.0

BEN HOWITT
C&S EDITOR

On Wednesday night I had the pleasure of attending my first ArtsFest event of the year – A Very Vocal Evening (3.0), presented by The A Cappella and Musical Theatre societies. All four established A Cappella groups gave performances, and various solos and duets were performed by members of both societies old and new.

The ladies and gentlemen of the A Cappella society, many of them fresh from the International Competition of Collegiate A Cappella, performed versions of songs that ranged from classic barbershop harmony to a sneak preview of the new Beatbox group, which will debut next Thursday in Metric.

Making the crossover between A Cappella and MT was Nick Bradshaw, who performed with the Techtonics in the second half. He later gave a rendition of 'Moving Too Fast' from The Last Five Years, accompanied by jack-of-all trades Ehsaan Shivrani.

Ehsaan in fact featured in 12 of the 17 acts presented at the evening,

appearing separately as an on stage pianist, a temp, an off stage pianist and an electric guitar player.

The evening had performers ranging from their first year with the society to individuals now on their third degree at Imperial, but the focus was on the new. The Scopes performed a new piece in addition to their normal set; Take Note are almost entirely new following a rebranding from Girls' Barbershop; and there were no fewer than six performers new to MTSoc this year. Confident deliveries from Heather Campbell, Roshani Abbey, Farah Shair, David Phillips and the aforementioned Nick Bradley served to show that the society's upcoming productions do not lack for performers!

This is the third year now that the event has taken place, and audience numbers were once again high. By the end of the second half, we were down to standing room only – the audience apparently having been drawn in by the promise of great singing and dad dancing.

The Artsfest Finale takes place tonight (Friday) in the Union Concert Hall. Doors 18:30, curtain 19:00.



Image: Indian Society

Hit the Highway with Indian Society

East Meets West is a student run multicultural show that accumulates the talent across Imperial College and showcases a cornucopia of cultures. It is the longest running student show in the UK and its 23rd anniversary show, *Highway*, will be held at the **Richmond Theatre** in London on 22nd February 2015.

The purpose of the evening is to raise money for charity whilst enjoying a show highlighting a fusion of Eastern and Western cultures through various art forms including dance, drama, fashion shows and music. This year the show takes the form of a start to finish production where the drama element links all of the various acts together. The title 'Highway' represents the unforgettable journey that the characters as well as the audience will embark upon over the course of that evening.

East Meets West displays an array of dance and musical acts from all over the world, truly embracing the vibrancy of cultures from around the globe. In terms of Eastern dance forms there is a variety ranging from Bollywood to Bhangra, *Bharatnatyam* to *Gaana*. Intertwined with Western art forms and including Funkology, hip hop, Afro-Caribbean dance, Light Opera, Jazz band and belly dancing, this evening promises an incredible diversity!

East Meets West is all about nurturing hidden talent through inclusivity. A key ethos of our show is allowing anyone and everyone interested to participate in the show, turning students into West End performers. This contrasts *East meets West* from other university shows because it allows everyone to get involved and focusses on not just one art form, but a medley of four! It is refreshing to see a student show where instead of selecting the *crème de la crème*, the aim is to make every

participant feel like the *crème de la crème* by the end of the show.

The heart of the show is charity and all the efforts surrounding the production are centred on improving the lives of others around the world. "This year, we are proud to support the British Asian Trust and their anti child trafficking campaign, which strives to empower young women and help survivors recover from the abuse and trauma of being trafficked".

East Meets West started 22 years ago as a simple idea to demonstrate classical Eastern acts alongside more contemporary Western performances. From performances in Imperial College's very own Great Hall in front of 400 people, the show has grown into a massive production over the span of two decades. Previous venues have included the Shaftesbury Theatre, Eventim Apollo, IndigO2, London Palladium and most recently, the Novello Theatre.

The show is now accommodating for people in their thousands as a result of the show's immense popularity that caters not just to students but for a family audience and people of all ages.

East Meets West does not simply aim for excellence in performance. It aims to create a unique performance that blends culture, commitment, pride, passion and elegance with entertainment.

East meets West will play at the Richmond Theatre at 18:00 on Sunday 22nd February. Tickets start at £15, and can be bought at www.emwtheshow.co.uk/tickets.html or there will be paper tickets on sale in SAF or Sherfield every lunch in the lead up to the show.

SONIKA SETHI
EAST MEETS WEST VICE PRESIDENT

Clubs and Societies

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

C & S Editor || Ben Howitt

“It’s time for you to get involved” – Student Volunteering Week 2015

Michael Chung digs into the myriad ways to volunteer while you’re studying

“**H**iya! Do you have a few moments to volunteer for a good cause?” “Ah sorry I’m in a hurry” This dialogue has occurred in the JCR for too long. And as students, who are stereotypically drunk 24/7, it is time for us to stand up and change public perceptions.

The National Student Volunteering Week (SVW) is taking place next week. Imperial will be one of many universities over the UK to celebrate the positive impact made by student volunteers in their communities, raise awareness of the value of student volunteering and inspire more students to get involved. A group of Imperial Hub SVW Champions and I have been working together since November to deliver a fun-packed programme for you all next week!

We all know why we should volunteer. It provides a great warm feeling to be able to give something back to the community and make a difference to people who are less fortunate than us. According to recent figures volunteering contributes £4.8 billion to UK GNP, and many charities just could not carry out the

initiatives they have without the help of volunteers. Volunteering not only contributes a social impact to the community, but also economically to the country.

But what most people forget is that volunteering is a two-way process. Yes, a lot of it is about you giving your time and effort, but throughout the journey you will earn invaluable skills and meet amazing people, as well as having some fun away from labs and destressing!

Volunteering increases your exposure to the world, since different opportunities uncover different social issues. Being around one of the wealthiest boroughs in London, it might be easy to assume that everything is fine. We see big expensive cars on the road, school children wearing their hats on scooters and, of course, the many shoppers coming out of Harrods with expensive handbags and cutlery.

The truth of the matter is, the life expectancy at St. Charles is nine years lower than that of the Queens Gate area, though it is only a short 30 minute bus trip away. Life expectancy says a lot when it comes



June Gan at the Tower of London Poppies exhibit Photo: Imperial Hub



Helping to clean up Brompton cemetery. Photo: Imperial Hub

to the living standards and welfare of residents and this just uncovers the deep social issues on our doorstep. The more knowledge we have on the surroundings, the more informed decisions we can make in life. Personally, since volunteering with Imperial Hub, I have changed quite a few of my habits and make more ethical choices day to day.

If you are ready to move on to a higher level, being a volunteer manager is even more rewarding. Whether you are coordinating a regular community project or being a club officer in your clubs and societies, the experience provides you with many transferrable skills, from effective communication, to problem solving, to planning and organising events. Being Imperialites, we can receive training through the Union’s Imperial Plus scheme, as well as the weekly Lunch and Learn sessions by Imperial Hub.

These programmes not only recognise the time and effort you have put into volunteering, but also the different skills you have gained, with both schemes offering the opportunity to gain qualifications. Not to mention the privilege to be nominated for Community Connections Volunteer of the Year at

the annual Union Awards!

Many of you who have started looking for jobs would have encountered competency questions. What could be a better answer than your volunteering experience to show that you are a rounded young professional? In fact, a survey has shown that amongst 200 of the UK’s leading businesses, 73% of the employers would hire someone with volunteer experience over someone without, and 94% of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary, or being promoted; a reminder that your time spent volunteering now may be paid

back in the future.

All sounds good and ready to give it a go? Well you’re not alone! Currently almost 400 students take part in over 35 different opportunities, many of whom are regular volunteers – for example, Schools Plus tutors last year collectively spent 1340 hours tutoring kids from a poorer background, inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers. Have a look at what some of the volunteers have said and why they enjoy it so much!

Last year, 100% of SVW volunteers agreed that participating in SVW had been a positive experience for them, so it’s now time for you to get involved!

Volunteer Profile

“Life is beautiful – why don’t we make it even better?”

KATHERINE YAN
INVESTMENT AND WEALTH
MANAGEMENT MSC.



Clubs and Societies

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

C & S Editor || Ben Howitt

What's On – Student Volunteering Week

Events will be running throughout next week across campus and around London. There's something for everyone!

Throughout the week

Find us in the JCR to learn about the different opportunities some of our student led projects provide, including Imperial Co-op, Raincatcher and the El Salvador Project. Also, is there someone who has given their time to make a positive impact on your time at Imperial? Come to the stall and take part in The Great Volunteer Thank You. All you need to do is write your message on our thank you postcards and we will deliver your appreciations to them!

Tuesday

Inspire school pupils at Imperial – Help give school pupils an exciting tour around Imperial and answer their questions about what university life is like. In association with the Outreach Department.

Wednesday

Hang out with history – spend an afternoon cleaning and gardening at one of London's oldest and most distinguished cemeteries.

Clean up a city farm pond – join a team of volunteers to catch and re-house wildlife from the Deen City Farm pond, drain the pond, and re-fill it. Also enjoy a tour round the farm and meeting the animals!

Memory Cafe – help serve teas and coffees, as well as chatting, joining in and helping out with the week's activity, chair exercises, at a local group for older people run by the Memory Service.

Conversation Cafe – join a 'speed-chatting' group bringing English speakers together with newly-arrived International Students.

Get fit and make a difference with GoodGym – join students from across London on a run to a community that needs your help.



Thursday

Science discovery afternoon – spend an afternoon inspiring the next generation of scientists in a local primary school by demonstrating some fun, interactive experiments.

Help out at Imperial Co-op stall – making ethical food more accessible for students by selling a wide range of Fairtrade and organic food to students.

Friday

Friday food collection – help out on a stall collecting dry food and tins for a local foodbank. Or bring along any un-perishable food that's been sitting in your cupboard.

Sunday

Help feed the homeless – join Imperial Souprun on their weekly trip around the local area, collecting and distributing food and hot drinks amongst local homeless people.

All attendees will be invited to our Thank you event, where you will be joined by some of the regular volunteers, as well as some of our beneficiaries.

If you don't have much time

Desk to Difference – don't have enough time to volunteer? Come along to our lunchtime drop in and write a letter to a child in hospital or answer queries from visually impaired people through an iPhone app. Drop in sessions on Tuesday (SAF 121) and Thursday (SAF 120) lunchtime next week.

Bring non-perishable food items to Sherfield Foyer to be donated to local food bank on Friday!

Photos: Imperial Hub

Erasmus take a weekend trip up North

JULIA SPINDEL
C&S WRITER

From the 23rd to the 25th of January, the Erasmus Society spread their wings and flew the Imperial nest to visit Liverpool and Manchester! After some good old FiveSixEight grub (and ale) following Friday lectures, the multilingual-chatter-filled five hour coach journey to Liverpool commenced.

Some of the students hadn't met previously and this was the perfect icebreaker. After a very quick turnaround at the Liverpool YHA, that evening the society President, Lauren Anders, a Liverpoolian herself, introduced the society members to the nightlife of this fantastic city. They headed to Fleet Street, first to Krazyhouse, then to Baa Bar.

Students experienced the wonder that is a night out that doesn't drain your overdraft! Relative to London, the prices were nearly as cut down as the average mini-skirt (despite the very chilly breeze!), and there was much more of a student feel to the place. The Erasmus group definitely made the most of it.

Blessed with sunny skies not common in Northern climes, and armed with stomachs stuffed with a full English breakfast, the group spent the next day exploring Liverpool. Following a walk along the Albert docks, the students visited The Royal Liver building (the 'i' as in 'alive', not as in 'Liverpool'), one of the first buildings ever made from reinforced concrete. On its two clock towers sit the Liver birds, and



The Erasmus society relax in their short break away from London. Photo: Eduard Feicho

legend has it that, should they fly away, the city of Liverpool would cease to exist. During their Saturday stroll, the group also came across a Superlambanana sculpture, a cross between a lamb and a banana, of which 125 were designed by the Japanese artist Taiso Chiezo to celebrate Liverpool's status as the European Capital City of Culture in 2008. Other pit stops for the day included (of course) the Cavern Club, St. George's Gardens, the Eleanor Rigby statue, the Museum of Liverpool, the International Slavery Museum and the Walker Art Gallery.

The group travelled to Manchester by train on Saturday evening then, after checking in at their next YHA, hit Deansgate Locks for some

well-earned beverages. Almost all bars required an entrance fee, which rendered the bar crawl plan pretty expensive. But luckily they had Fabian on board, who managed to blag the group of 20 into a bar for free. Even more impressively, all group members made it to the hostel breakfast the next morning!

And Sunday was reserved for culture vulture-ing. First stop was Manchester Cathedral, where they were given a tour by an expert retired literature professor. He first showed the students, in a style not unlike that of an academic tutorial, the Angel Stone discovered in the wall of the cathedral's south porch, evidence for the presence of an early Saxon church built in 700AD. He then

explained that the flat wooden ceiling distinguishes this Cathedral from most other European varieties.

A visit to the stunning gothic John Ryland Library, first opened to the public on 1st January 1900 after ten years of construction (the final results were just a little more impressive than our own Central Library), was followed by an essential recce of the Old Trafford stadium. The students explored the players' changing rooms and the VIP lounge, before walking out onto the pitch in double file. It was especially impressive to hear how much effort goes into maintenance of the grass.

The Addison-Lee coach returning to London on Sunday evening was full of very tired, but very content

Erasmus Society members, following a weekend full of British culture and socialising with other students from all over the world.

Erasmus Society holds social events every week and the committee are currently organising a tour like this one, but to Dublin, for the end of June. Any students, Erasmus or non-Erasmus are welcome.

We are also holding an event on the 10th of March for any Imperial students interested in doing a Year Abroad to talk to both Imperial students who have done a Year Abroad, and students from abroad who are studying at Imperial this year. So if you fall into one of these three groups, please keep an eye on our Facebook page for details.



Nominations close

1 March

You'll only have one week left!
Nominate yourself now at
imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

Think you
can do it?
We know
you can.

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

We're running a number of information sessions about the elections and campaigning to help you when you stand.

How to...be a campaign machine

The quick guide to making the most of your campaigning time and getting the votes cast for you.

Monday 23 February 2015 18.00 - 19.00

Meeting Rooms 3, Union Building, Beit Quad, South Kensington

How to...write your way to election success

Writing a winning manifesto that captures the imagination, and more importantly, the vote of your fellow students!

Wednesday 25 February 2015 18.00 - 19.00

Meeting Rooms 1&2, Union Building, Beit Quad, South Kensington

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections





Nominations close Sunday 1 March, 23:59

Find out everything you need to know about
The Big Elections and how to stand at

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections



IMPERIAL COLLEGE

IMPERIAL MEDICALS

VARSITY 2015 | 18.03.2015

ticket and travel information available at www.imperial.ac.uk/sports/varsity

Imperial College London

Imperial College Union

sport imperial

#IMPVARSITY

Double victory for Imperial Fencing's 1st teams

On Wednesday both the Imperial men's and women's 1st teams were in action in the first round of the BUCS Fencing Championship. The women's team, who won the Championship two years ago, were in action at Ethos against Newcastle: the first weapon up was foil and although Imperial has been struggling this season in foil the team managed to get a one hit lead after a tense match in which the score was 45-44.

The second weapon up was épée and the Imperial women managed to extend their lead with a 45-37 victory, which meant that going into sabre, Imperial only needed to reach 36 hits in order to guarantee victory. In the event, doing what they do best, Imperial also won the sabre, thus sealing victory with a decisive 45-20 score line, giving an overall result of 135-101. They have thus set up a last eight match against Edinburgh in Scotland, which is where the men's 1st match took place.

Imperial men's 1st, Champions last year, were away to St. Andrews in their first match of the Championship and after losing one

fencer, due to "a delayed train", arrived in the home of golf with about an hour to spare before starting the match. The first weapon up was foil and after a hard fought contest St. Andrews pulled ahead 45-38, a lead of seven. The second weapon up was sabre but even without Commonwealth double medallist Maiyuran Ratneswaren, Imperial won the sabre 45-41, leaving a target of winning the épée by at least three hits. The team fenced tactically and kept the score low throughout the épée and went into the last match with a two hit lead, needing one more hit to win. The final fencer, Filip Aniés, got the needed hit early on and then proceeded to get double hits, keeping the score low and running the clock down. With 4 seconds remaining the lead was still three and St. Andrews was forced to flèche from the line. Filip picked the fencer off and when St. Andrews repeated the move, hit him again with one second left, with the result that Imperial won the épée 40-35 and won overall by two points, 123-121. Next up for the men's 1sts are the premier league south Champions, Cambridge.

"[...] doing what they do best, Imperial also won the sabre"

Immortals lose to Birmingham 41-0

Valentines Day was a special day in every Immortal's heart this year as it saw us travel to Birmingham to take on the best team in the country. After taking five hours to get to the pitch after multiple motorway closures and heavy traffic on Country Roads, the mood on the bus was a little down but C'est La Vie and Blame It On The Weatherman for the fog causing accidents. Once we arrived in Birmingham to face the Lions the mood switched to one of focus after seeing the 90-man Birmingham horde we were to face. The Immortals kicked off to start the game, only an hour and a half late, and Birmingham returned well. The Immortals defence came out firing and Arjav picked off the Lions quarterback in our own end-zone.

This is when the Immortals hard-running, ground and pound offence came on to have a go at the best defence in the country. All things considered it went pretty well, we ran hard and picked up some first downs but ultimately had to punt it away. Birmingham showed real skill in their special teams throughout the game and returned the ball for good field position where their offence punched the ball in for a touchdown.

This winning formula spelled the rest of the game out for the Lions; we would pick up some first downs, run hard, pass well but always punt which is when they would get a good return and score. The Immortals troubles came in the second half, being 21-0 down and having played a tough, physical half of football.

The defence were working hard against a team that were well-drilled and hard hitting and managed to block a PAT kick to deny Birmingham an extra point after a touchdown. The final Immortals offensive drive saw D'Emanuel Olagbaju, the battering ram, get injured and Birmingham called all three of their time outs to force the Immortals into one last ill-fated punt. Some may say that the fact they were already winning 41-0 makes this a douchemove by Birmingham but I couldn't possibly comment. The Immortals punted the ball and gave a good chase but saw two of the starting offensive line, Henry 'Now Has An Even Uglier Head' Turner and Sam 'Permabroken' Hill take heavy hits to the head and go off the field with concussions.

The defence went onto the pitch determined not give up any more points; they played hard, physical football and denied the Lions again and again until the game was over. Despite the heavy final score line, 41-0, the Immortals played a good game of football considering the roster size difference and the number of key players including G.Orab and Mini Harry Collini playing both offense and defence.

The Immortals look forward to the final game of the regular season next Sunday 22nd February against the Baths Killer Bees. Having narrowly lost to Bath away earlier in the season it is a game that the Immortals are more than keen to win.