



Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London

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Shining a light on women at Imperial // Indira Mallik

Felix investigates sexism at Imperial

NEWS

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

Following our Campus Sexism Survey, Felix look at the results, in our six-page report on misogyny on campus.

A Felix survey on sexism at Imperial College London has revealed a number of concerns over the treatment of female students and staff across

multiple areas.

The survey, which ran for six weeks, gathered about 300 responses from students, alumni, and staff. Around two-thirds of respondents identified as female.

Just over 40% of respondents had experienced misogyny at Imperial, and over 70% had experienced peers making derogatory comments about women.

While 80% of people thought Imperial was an inclusive place to work or study, 30% thought Imperial did not work hard to make things more

inclusive, and just over 20% felt Imperial College Union (ICU) did not do enough for inclusivity. Availability of support seemed to be a particular sticking point, with nearly 50% of people saying they did not know where to go if they were the victim of discrimination, and only 30% agreeing that Imperial did enough to support victims of discrimination.

Felix spoke to Professor Stephen Curry, Assistant Provost (Education, Diversity, and Inclusion), who entered his role in October 2017, and will hold the position for an

initial period of two years. A professor of structural biology for half of his working week, he spends the other half exploring how Imperial can create a more inclusive community. He told Felix there were a number of aspects that led to the creation of his role, which partially developed out of the position of Provost's Envoy for Gender Equality: changes within society that have put inclusion on the agenda; increased awareness of the harassment in higher education; a greater appreciation of the mental health of

students and staff; and reflection on Imperial's Institutional Culture Report (ICR).

The ICR, published in December 2016, was triggered by a number of sexist incidents at Imperial, and said the College had a "sink-or-swim" culture. It described an "all-consuming focus on academic performance", "bullying and discriminatory behaviour towards staff and students", and "ingrained misogyny" so deep it had become normal." It concluded with

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How far does Imperial have to go?



Fred Fyles – Felix Editor

Over the past couple of months, *Felix* have been running a survey into campus sexism. You may have seen some of our beautiful posters around campus, designed by our incredibly Arts Editor Indira. There were a number of reasons I wanted to run such a survey: firstly this year will have marked three years since the ‘Misogyny at Varsity’ incident, where the Imperial Women’s Rugby team were appallingly treated, in a display of sexism that showed how little many in society value women’s sports teams.

That year was the first year I was involved with *Felix*, and I can remember what the mood was in the office and on campus when the story broke: one of anger and frustration. Since then we’ve had Imperial’s Institutional Culture Review, which found problems on campus with competitiveness and a lack of support. In both instances, the College held up their hand, and promised to change. One of the reasons to do this survey was to see whether

that change has been delivered.

The second main reason to do the survey stemmed from speaking to friends and acquaintances about their experience at Imperial. I realised I couldn’t think of any woman I was friends with at Imperial who wasn’t able to recount some kind of anecdote where she was made to feel small, or unworthy, or uncomfortable, on account of their gender. Not one. Everyone had an example, whether it was being told

they should wash up the beakers in their chemistry lab because they were a woman, or being catcalled by random men at sports night. This survey, was in part, a chance to give people a voice.

Simone Weil once wrote “the love of our neighbour in all its fullness simply means being able to say ‘What are you going through?’” I like to think *Felix* exists to give a voice to the students here at Imperial, and the chance to speak their truth, to say what

their experience has been like. By all accounts, the results of the survey show this experience is not a happy one for many.

Is it a truly accurate account of life at Imperial? No. The survey was self-selecting, and – as you might imagine – those who were most unhappy were more likely to contribute. The reality is probably not quite as bleak as the survey makes it seem, but even if only a small number of students are having these experience, it’s still far too many.

The College and the Union are both trying to make things better; the College, in particular, have been making real efforts to get more women into academia, and when I sat down with Stephen Curry – Assistant Provost (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) – he outlined some of the things the College have put in place to address the issues. While these will lead to changes on campus, the survey shows we have a long way to go. Hopefully we’ll get there, sooner rather than later.

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NEWS

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

TEF: The government strikes back

NEWS

Joanna Wormald

Deputy Editor

Degree courses to be rated individually in extension of the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Degree courses are to be rated on teaching quality in an extension of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). In addition to rating each university as a whole, individual subjects will now be categorised as gold, silver, or bronze.

The ten week consultation launched earlier this week by the Department for Education (DfE) is a response to criticisms that current TEF rankings do not reflect the variation in teaching quality across different courses offered by each university.

Universities minister Sam Gyimah said: "Universities will no longer be able to hide if their teaching quality is not up to the

world-class standard that we expect.

"The new subject-level TEF will give students more information than ever before...This will help applicants make better choices, and ensure that more students get the value for money they deserve from higher education," he added.

In addition to the new TEF ratings, Gyimah is launching an open data competition to develop apps designed to help prospective students make their decision. Technology companies and coders will have access to the government's Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset, which contains information such as employment and salary up to ten years after graduating. Gyimah said the competition will "harness the creativity and enterprise of coders and tech businesses to create new tools to help applicants get value for money".

Imperial, which is one of 50 higher education institutes taking part in the pilot scheme, received a gold rating when the first TEF results were

released in June 2017. The College's performance in individual subject league tables however has been more questionable, with Physics at Imperial falling to 30th place in The Guardian's 2018 league tables. College analysis at the time claimed this low ranking was partly because The Guardian does not include research impact in its analysis.

The subject-level TEF will deliver its objective of "revealing which universities are coasting or relying on their research reputation" by analysing student feedback, drop-out rates, and graduate outcomes. These metrics have previously attracted criticism (*Felix 1676*).

The next TEF ratings are due to be published this summer.

When students were asked for their opinions on the TEF, one of the major issues was that a gold university might offer bronze courses and vice versa. Rolling out the TEF to subject level will help to allay these concerns but does nothing to tackle fears that prospective student



Sam Gyimah, universities minister // Flickr/Policy Exchange

will be put off applying to certain courses because of their ratings. Research indicates that this will affect BAME applicants the most.

The subject-level TEF may also be a way for the government to get tuition fee changes in through the back door. Under the original proposals, universities with a higher TEF rating would be allowed to raise tuition fees in line with inflation. Following last year's general election however Theresa May announced that fees would be capped at £9,250 until 2019.

Last month education secretary Damian Hinds said there should be greater variation in tuition fees, with the cost of individual degrees linked to their value "to our society as a whole". Fees for arts and social sciences could be cut, reflecting the lower earnings arts graduates typically earn compared to those studying sciences.

Former education secretary Justine Greening, whom Theresa May removed from her cabinet post shortly before the announcement was made, highlighted the risks of the proposal.

Speaking on Peston on Sunday at the time, Greening said: "The thing that matters is social mobility and making sure we don't end up with a system where young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds feel they ought to do one of the cheaper degrees, rather than doing the agree they want that will unlock their potential."

This is particularly true of Imperial, which was recently revealed to be the most unequal university in the UK, due to the additional financial pressures of living in London.

New strategy for sports at Imperial unveiled

NEWS

Frank Leggett

News Writer

Sport Imperial and Imperial College Union have partnered to reshape sports and physical activity at Imperial College London.

The partnership aims to bring affordability, accessibility,

and new opportunities for both student and staff bodies. It has put forward six objectives, including creating added value for the College, increase activity levels across all College bodies, and improve efficiency.

A price review of all sport facilities, a restructuring of the student sport governing body, and the introduction of a new activity tracking app have been set to take place in the first six months. The strategy is set to extend over a period of four

years.

A single sport committee is set to be put in place. Notably, the committee will seek to homogenize representation of sports clubs: in an effort to lower costs, as well as reviewing the prices, the partnership will tender the Ethos gym and will seek out a single sportswear supplier for all sports clubs. Transport will be restructured, with coaches made available for all performance clubs in the second year. A code of conduct will be put in place for all sports clubs and their members, while

a charter outlining the expectations for sports and physical activities will be created.

The partnership wishes to play a significant part in the college wide implementation of the 'five ways of wellbeing' programme. There is also a wish to increase the college's standing in the British University and College Sport (BUCS) ranking: the goal is to reach at least 15th place by the end of the strategy. Imperial's current ranking is 17th, behind Stirling and Manchester at 16th and

15th place respectively.

Will Hollyer, the Head of Sports at Imperial said: "This strategy, and the fundamental changes it brings to sport and physical activity at the College, has the potential to make a sustainable and positive impact on the lifestyles, experience and wellbeing of our people for the better."

The new strategy comes after talks of a shake-up of sports at Imperial last year by the Union, amidst criticism of Sport Imperial for its poor communication and

services. The then-Deputy President (Clubs and Societies) James Cox said: "This aims to solve the root cause of a large proportion of our issues surrounding sport at Imperial, namely communication and transparency over decisions and the complexity of processes".

NEWS

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"Since coming to Imperial, I've always felt an

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

75% of women surveyed had faced derogatory comments while at Imperial, from sexual harassment to saying they can't do science.

Over half of the female undergraduates who completed the survey reported having experienced misogyny as part of their studies, and just over 40% of all respondents reported having witnessed it. A quarter of the women who responded also said they had experienced bullying or harassment due to their gender.

The vast majority of these experiences, based on reports obtained through the survey, were derogatory comments from the individual's own peer group: over 75% of women said they had experienced peers making such comments during their time at Imperial, the majority of which involved sexualised language or belittling comments about their ability.

One student told *Felix*: "I can't even begin to count the number of times

derogatory comments have been made about myself and other female students. The constant objectification, judgement of our clothes and actions, and being constantly referred to as bitches, sluts, or whores... every time I call out a man on their use of derogatory language they laugh it off as harmless."

Other students were accused of swapping sexual favours in exchange for good grades: one woman was asked whether she was sleeping with a teaching assistant to get a good mark on her report, while another told *Felix*: "I was told I must have given the assessor a handjob under the desk because I did better than a male peer in a viva assessment."

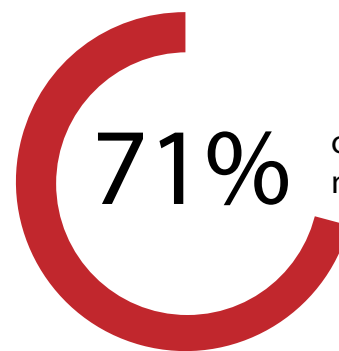
Many said they found it difficult to call out sexist language, with a number of women saying they were called "over-sensitive" or accused of "over-reacting" when they challenged such comments. Three-fifths of the women surveyed said they had experienced derogatory comments about women being left unchallenged.

Professor Curry admits it is "impossible for College to police every single interaction that happens between students", but says "every member of the College community has a responsibility for appropriate

behaviour on campus". One intervention he feels can lead to tangible change is the introduction of Active Bystander Training, which has been rolled out to a number of departments, and some key volunteers within ICU. The training, which teaches people to confront discriminatory behaviour, "is quite an effective way to start a conversation, to make sure more people are primed and equipped [to call out sexism]".

He also highlighted the importance of codifying standards of behaviour from a student's first day at Imperial: "We have to send out a very clear message at the beginning, saying we expect these standards of behaviour. In our Department [of Life Sciences] we have introduced lectures for freshers talking about respect, the Equality Act, what harassment means. It's about trying to build a culture where it doesn't matter who you are, you're welcome here, and you'll be treated with respect."

Katie*, a final year student in the Faculty of Engineering, told *Felix* she'd experienced sexism since arriving as a fresher: "Since coming to Imperial, I've always felt an undercurrent of sexism. It started in first year, walking past a male sports team at sports night – I was catcalled and looked up and down so fiercely that I



71%

of respondents had experienced peers making derogatory comments



55%

of respondents had experienced derogatory statements about women going unchallenged

felt exposed. This became a regular occurrence at almost every sports night. Casual sexism disguised as jokes and 'lad banter' has always been rife, so much so that even the women here have accepted and often go along with it – including myself as a naïve fresher, wanting to fit in."

Katie also highlighted the difficulty in speaking out, but said it could also be due to intimidation women on campus feel. She described a number of incidents within the Royal School of Mines (RSM), including slut-shaming, derogatory chanting, and sexist behaviour by the 'Chaps Club' – one of Imperial's 'Tie Clubs', which serves as a society

for current and former members of Royal School of Mines Union (RSMU).

"We were told not to complain about sexist comments to ICU, since it would make our department 'look bad', and when one of my friends wanted to make a complaint about the Chaps we were told we had to take it up directly with them. It's intimidating for a woman to speak to a large group of older men about their behaviour, and so she did not make the complaint. It's hard as a woman to speak out about sexism through fear of becoming isolated, or receiving a backlash from peers for making a complaint".

Robert Tomkies, the current RSMU President

and ICU's President-elect, is aware of the challenges faced by women within the RSMU. He told *Felix*: "In the RSMU this year we have placed gender equality and inclusivity at the forefront of our priorities." RSMU has identified a number of outdated traditions and sought to change them: a number of the old chants were retired, and new chants selected in the run-up to this year's Bottle Match; people singing the old chants were identified and told to stop. Tomkies also cited a number of other concerning traditions that had been identified, such as the "President's Yard", which was previously done on stage in underwear, and has since been

Felix investigates sexism at Imperial

NEWS

(cont. from front)

a number of recommendations, including creation of a senior management position responsible for "integrating equality and diversity provision within the institution".

"There are a lot of challenges there, and no overnight solutions," Professor Curry told *Felix* "Much of the ongoing work is trying to change the culture, and needs a lot of conversations with people." While there have been a number of schemes

initiated since the ICR – increased diversity training, signing up to the Race Equality Charter, and integration of equality, diversity, and inclusion within the new Learning and Teaching Strategy – Professor Curry said: "Clearly it's a job not just

for two or three years, but a job for the next 10-20 years. Imperial is embedded within a society that is deeply unequal in many ways. We want to be more proactive in trying to tackle that."

This special report looks at the experiences of

women across all aspects of Imperial life – from undergraduates, to academics, to clubs and societies, and finally to the issue of sexual harassment and violence – to see how far we've come over the past few years, and how far we still have to go.

If you are affected by any of the aspects highlighted by these articles, please consider contacting the Samaritans (08457 90 90 90) or speak to your personal tutor.

NEWS

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

undercurrent of sexism" – students speak out

removed.

Regarding problems students had with coming forward, RSMU put in place anonymous surveys at the beginning of this academic year asking for feedback, and has since established an online incident form, where students can submit reports. They have secured funding for active bystander training for all key volunteers within the RSMU – including sports captains – and are looking into ways to prevent sexist individuals from attending RSMU events.

Tomkies told *Felix*: “Tackling these issues will take a continued drive from the RSMU over several years, but this year’s committee is proud to have been part of those steps. Culture change cannot happen overnight, but RSMU has started a change that lays strong foundations for greater inclusivity in the future.”

A representative of ICU told *Felix*: “These figures are very concerning. Misogynistic and discriminatory behaviour is simply not acceptable in any form to Imperial College Union, and that applies equally to all of our social spaces, student activities and events. We have trained our staff and student leaders in how to be ‘active bystanders’ and our professional staff deal swiftly with any incidents that take place within our bars and events.

We are working with College on the response to the Institutional Culture Review, and we acknowledge that we have work to do ourselves, to make clear to our members and volunteers that such behaviour is not welcome within the Imperial College Union community”

Women in STEM

Another significant theme that emerged from the survey was hostility faced by female students who were often told they should not be at Imperial. Overall, 38% of women had been told they couldn’t or shouldn’t do STEM subjects, with many students reporting being told they did not deserve to be there.

As well as comments about natural abilities – “women shouldn’t do engineering”, “women aren’t as good as men at hard sciences” – women reported being told positive discrimination or the use of quotas had made their time at university easier. “You only got an offer because you’re a girl”, was one comment reported in the survey, while “companies only hire female engineers to fill a quota” was another.

Serena*, a fresher in the Faculty of Engineering, reported similar experiences, saying she felt more pressure to do well at her subject as a result: “If a guy fails, they fail because they’ve not studied hard enough, but if a woman fails, it’s seen as being because she’s a woman. The reasoning completely changes.”

One aspect of Imperial life that can increase the visibility of women students is the infamous ‘Imperial ratio’ – used to describe the relative lack of female undergraduates compared to their male counterparts. This year, men made up over two thirds of the total cohort, with 730 male applicants placed, compared to 335 women, giving a ratio of roughly 70:30 men to women. This figure varies greatly between departments and years.

While some respondents described such language as “banter”, others highlighted the impact it can have. “It

makes me feel like I shouldn’t be there”, said one student, while another said it “encourages the continuation of a mindset, even if it’s claimed in jest”. Some respondents said such comments had a cumulative impact on them during their time at Imperial: “I’m treated as less deserving of the job because I am a woman,” one said. “It tends not to be major, but just consistently every day – it chips you down.”

Serena talked to *Felix* about her experience:

“I think the biggest issue with misogyny is with my peers. Sometimes they will joke, like when we’re doing coding, they’ll say ‘oh girls don’t know how to code’. It’s discouraging – you’re just trying to do your work, and then these comments pop up. Even though it’s claimed to be done as a joke, or it’s subtle, I think it’s a reflection of how they really feel about women, deep down.”

Some departments have created networks for

women to support each other on campus: students from the Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) Department, for example, recently set up a society for women within the department, which they said they hoped would “bring together an active community of women in EEE”. Such initiatives to improve the experience of women in STEM have been adopted at higher levels within the College – the Juno Committee in the Department of Physics, for example, aims to address under-representation of women, while Imperial has been awarded an Athena SWAN Silver award for commitment to advancing women in academia.

While such moves may address the undercurrents of sexism, they have been met with pushback from a number of students and staff, both male and female. One female respondent said: “Women at Imperial should not receive any extra support – financially

or emotionally. We should be made equal to men in every way [otherwise] we look incapable.” Another said they believed the main source of discrimination was against white middle-class men – a view echoed by a number of staff members who took our survey.

James*, an undergraduate aeronautics student, told *Felix* he felt positive discrimination was a major feature of the Faculty of Engineering: “You see all these posters promoting women in engineering, and there are a number of bursaries or funds that are only open to women, but no such schemes apply for men. Are the women here to fulfill quotas? Arguably, yes. Their technical ability seems to be lower [than the men], and ability-wise, a larger number of women in engineering don’t know what they’re doing.”

Professor Curry told *Felix* the College needed to “push back against [these ideas] even harder, because it’s a ridiculous

proposition”. He says only 17% of professors at Imperial are women, and “if you’re going to argue the best people are at the top, that’s manifestly not true. That view comes from people who mostly function within their in-group, where they reinforce prejudices and biases”.

He says the idea women get lower offers is a presumption: “There is no evidence for it. No department has a policy that admits women on lower ratings.” While quotas in recruitment are not allowed in law, he says “departments are charged to make sure they are proactive about encouraging under-represented groups to apply.” While the College “will still appoint the best candidate every time”, increasing the pool of applicants will mean “there is a diverse field of candidates.” He remains optimistic for the future: “I think that is a position that is untenable, that is losing ground, and I think we are seeing a shift.”



Women reported being made to feel they didn't deserve to be at Imperial // Amy Mather

NEWS

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"I was told I wouldn't be able to balance childcare with a PhD" – women on the path to academia

NEWS

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

Women face derogatory comments from staff, advice not to do PhDs, and hostile SOLE feedback from students.

While students were more likely to hear peers make derogatory comments about women, nearly one in four women still reported experiencing misogyny from staff. More women also felt gender impacted how they were treated by their lecturers than felt the same about their peers.

As with comments from their peers, the vast majority of instances seem to take the form of off-the-cuff remarks: women reported teaching assistants saying they should be the one to shake up solutions since it would “help me learn how to cuddle my baby in the future”, tutors telling women in the group they could “do the easy equations”, and demonstrators in computer labs saying “trust girls to care so much about colours” when female undergraduates were picking out wires. Students reported feeling uncomfortable about these comments, but being reluctant to call them out lest they be seen as “humourless”.

A number of women at Imperial also reported not having access to the same teaching opportunities as their male peers. “I’ve had consultants preferentially teach the males in the

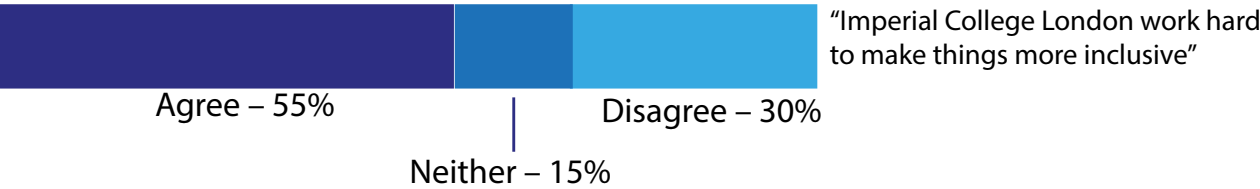
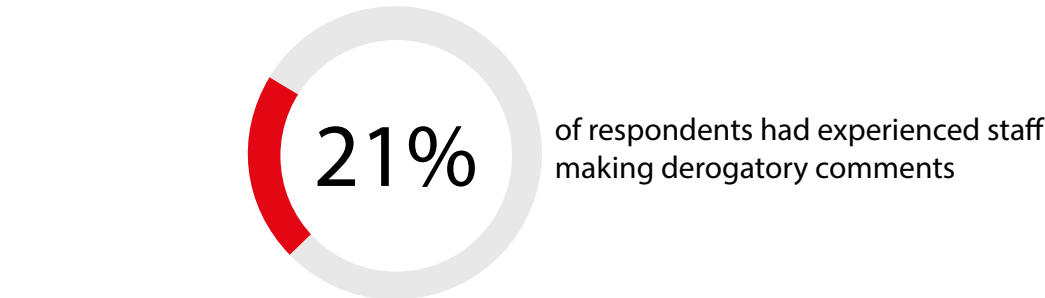
hospital group, and sometimes ignored questions from me and my female colleagues,” wrote one medical student, while another said she was not allowed into surgery by her consultant since she “would make a great GP”. She was told to do work on the ward instead, while males in her group attended surgery.

Other women reported assumptions about their future life choices being used to convince them not to pursue careers in research. Frequently, respondents to the survey told *Felix* about times when they’d been told not to go into academia or other high-intensity careers because they would soon be having children, and “would not be able to balance childcare with work”. One medical student was told “there was no point in pursuing a high-flying research career, because I would soon get married, fall pregnant, and leave the profession”. This comment came from “a man hired to be a pastoral guide for female and male students, with power over their careers in terms of references.”

Another respondent reported frequent incidents of women being told to go into “teaching and jobs requiring empathy, like

“Female academics will often be described in hostile terms when compared to men”

“My gender makes no difference to how I am treated by my supervisors”



nursing”, even when they clearly expressed their intention to pursue a PhD, and had achieved top grades throughout their time at Imperial.

A 2014 report from the government’s Science and Technology Committee identified that only 17% of STEM professors were women, and that – while there was “no single explanation for the lack of gender diversity” – “it is the result of perceptions and biases combined with the impracticalities of combining a career with a family”. The report found that the early period of academic STEM careers was characterised by a lack of job security, and – since this period coincides with a time when many begin to think about starting families – there was a high attrition rate as a result.

Professor Curry believes this attrition rate can have a knock-on effect for women at the undergraduate level: “Most of the time, the person standing at the

front of the lecture theatre is a man, so a young woman coming in to do a science or engineering degree thinking ‘what are my chances in this field?’, the rational assessment is that your chances are less than those of a man.”

As these women progress through the ranks of academia, as well as facing barriers from their superiors or those allocating grant funding, they will often face challenges from below, as students give them much more hostile feedback.

“Student feedback is incredibly biased against women,” one postdoc researcher reports. “Even if two academics deliver similar lectures and the outcomes for the students is the same, the feedback about a woman will be hostile and negative, whereas about men it will be pretty average.” She points to a study into student evaluations of teaching (SET) – surveys like Imperial’s SOLE, upon which universities often base promotion or

firing of lecturers – which shows students regularly rate women lower than men. Such evaluations have become increasingly important in the higher education landscape as they help form judgements in the Teaching Excellence Framework – a rating system for universities which revealed its first set of results last year.

As well as the amount of scrutiny received, female academics will often be described in negative terms compared to men. A couple of years ago, Dr Ben Schmidt, an assistant professor of history in the USA, scraped descriptive data from 14 million reviews on RateMyProfessor.com, and compared what kind of adjectives were used to describe men and women. Words like ‘funny’, ‘cool’, and ‘brilliant’ were more likely to be used to describe men, while women were more likely to be called ‘harsh’, ‘annoying’, and ‘aggressive’.

Language can get quite vitriolic. One respondent

told *Felix*: “My peers will frequently call female lecturers things like ‘bitch’ behind their back if work is returned late, but their male counterparts are not subject to anywhere near the same level of abuse.” Another student said: “One student was rejected at an interview by a woman, and started loudly saying unrepeatable things in the computer room about her on the basis of her gender.”

A first-year student from the Faculty of Engineering, spoke about her experience: “After our first term we had SOLE feedback, and this divide was evident. It was also there in our course group chats. If a man teaches poorly, they don’t really say too many negative things, but if a woman teaches something poorly, they’ll just relentlessly call her stuff like ‘bitch’.”

“My peers,” she said, “are much less kind towards female lecturers.”

NEWS

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How can we improve inclusion across sports clubs?

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

Despite a welcoming environment, a number of students don't feel sports teams are treated equally.

In 2015, Women's Rugby were scheduled to play out Varsity, having been assigned the Headline Match. However, after coaches left earlier than scheduled, the stands emptied while the match was in progress, and the team was left stranded at the stadium, despite previous assurances from Sport Imperial that this

would not happen. The women's team had also been promised dinner and drinks following the match, but arrived to find the men's team had been fed, and were asked to leave the facilities. By the time the women arrived, most of the food was eaten, and the remainder was cold. Some team members also reported receiving abuse from a Sport Imperial employee, while one player told *Felix* that, as they were ushered onto the last coaches, "drunk male rugby players... were shouting how they were waiting for 'those lesbians'."

Following complaints from the Women's Rugby Club, an investigation was launched by the College,

which upheld the majority of the claims, but found "no evidence" for sexist or misogynistic language used by staff (members of the club maintain sexist language was used). Professor Debra Humphris, then-Vice Provost (Education), said: "As an institution that strives for excellence, we must take a leading role in moving towards a more mutually respectful community."

Three years on, and with another women's team headlining Varsity, have things changed?

While fewer students had experienced misogyny as part of their Club, Society, or Project (CSP) than within the academic sphere, over a quarter of the women surveyed said they had faced sexism. Of

these, the vast majority were those involved with sports teams. In general, students were less likely to have experienced discrimination from fellow CSP members (21% of respondents had), but were much more likely to have faced it from members of other CSPs (36% of respondents).

A number of respondents reported clubs participating in sexist behaviour, particularly objectification of women. One student told *Felix*: "I have been in multiple sports clubs over the years, and am a fan of sports night. However, one game has particularly stuck in my mind. It was played by a male club, who would announce the name of a woman on their club's other table, and then count up to ten. The male members of the club would put their hand down when they thought they had reached the appropriate rating for that girl. This was all in earshot of the girls they were rating."

Other women reported sports teams "referring to Union 'pussy' as 'cold'", while another said "It would be nice to see women promoted more in sport, and not put down or harassed by men."

The organisation of sports teams at Imperial, and in particular the resources different clubs receive, was also a source of discontent for women in sports. In total, about 30% of respondents agreed with the statement "Sport Imperial (the College's sporting body) ensure all sports teams are treated equally", while the same number disagreed, and the majority were undecided. However, when respondents not involved with sports teams were removed, the majority of students felt Sport Imperial did not treat teams

equally, with only 12% of women agreeing they did.

While some of this discrepancy could be explained by the fact men's and women's teams may be in differently classed divisions, a number of students said they felt women's clubs were not provided with as much support. "Even though the two teams [of my sport] are in the same division," one student told *Felix*, "most people seem to believe the men's team is more important. They get better training slots, and much more funding for coaching."

Another club member said: "Our club has had to struggle to be taken seriously and included in Imperial activities, whereas our male counterpart is one of the most respected clubs. I believe it is only through them helping us that we have been taken seriously."

Emma*, a member of a women's sporting team, told *Felix*: "I think Sport Imperial has a completely different set of goals and values to what can be expected of a sports coordinator. Their primary focus is branding and 'value added' to the College reputation, as opposed to engaging as many people as possible. It is not acknowledged that women's sports are more likely to recruit beginners, and therefore need more support and coaching to be able to safely play these sports."

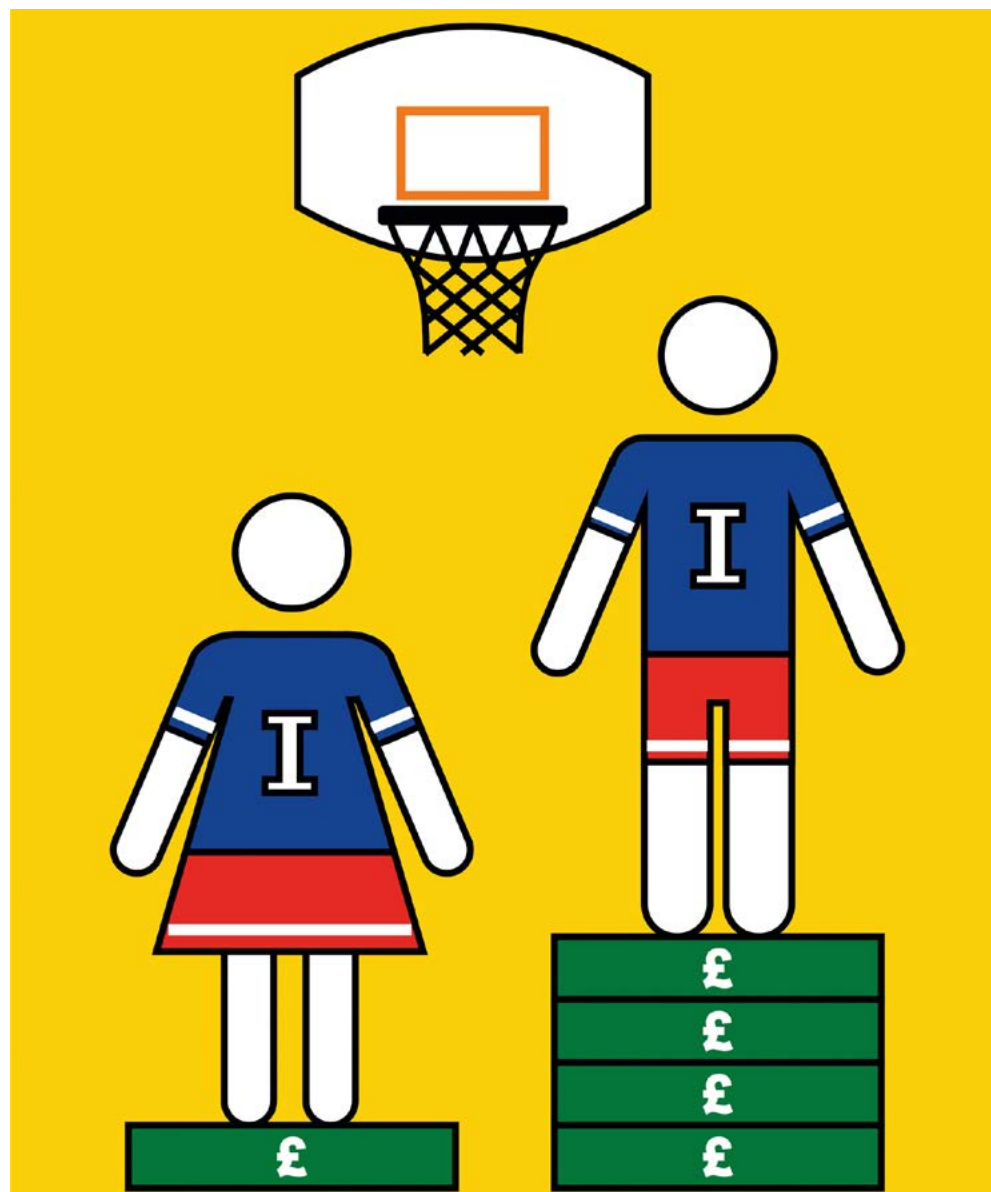
She went on to say the higher membership numbers for men's clubs meant they got preferential allocation for training space; some women's sports teams train until 11pm on weekday nights, meaning members didn't get home until past midnight. She also highlighted that increased centralisation of sport services, combined with the

fact many women sports players are spread across campuses, has meant female students are more likely to be involved with sport at a local level.

Emma also raised concerns about current promotion of women in sport, saying Imperial Girls Can week was "a particularly sore spot for everyone I know": "Patronising 'calorie burning' spin classes, turning up and giving out pink t-shirts at our regular BUCS fixtures... when really members of our committee are buying kit and equipment out of their own pocket, organising the referees, and coaching the team themselves with no payment or training – it tasted particularly bitter."

In a statement for *Felix* a College spokesperson said: "Sport Imperial is committed to encouraging participation from all students. We know that women can face barriers in participating in sport, that's why we work to challenge perceptions, celebrate women's sport, and create an environment where everyone feels comfortable."

"It is *not* the case that Sport Imperial gives preferential funding to male teams. Sport Imperial funding is allocated to clubs according to where their highest ranked team sits within BUCS – this could be a men's or women's team. The club itself then makes the decision as to how this funding is distributed, and to which teams. For sports that are not included in BUCS, clubs can apply for funding which is allocated based on the developmental and competition requirements. Sport Imperial applies an objective process with equal opportunities for both men's and women's clubs and teams."



A number of respondents felt women's sports teams weren't valued // Veronika Šigutová/@werika

NEWS

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Lack of support is a concern for many when it comes

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

Students report not knowing where to go if they've been the victim of sexual assault or harassment

Susan* had just started her third year at Imperial when she was sexually assaulted by a staff member, on a night out that had been arranged for students. “At first, when he came out with us, I was thinking ‘does anyone else find that a bit weird?’” she told *Felix*. “He gave me a hug, then another, and another all in quick succession. It made me feel incredibly uncomfortable, and I decided not to talk to him for the rest of the evening.” However, the staff member continued to come up to Susan throughout the night, despite the fact she had made it clear she didn’t want to spend time with him: “He came up to me and started chatting, so I just went back inside, but he found me again, and commented on my breasts.”

Later on in the evening, when the group had moved on to a different venue, Susan and the staff member ended up near each other at the bar: “He kept asking me what I wanted to drink, over and over, so I turned away, because I just didn’t want to speak to him. He asked ‘why won’t you talk to me? Why won’t you let me buy you a drink?’ And then he grabbed my ass.”

Susan’s experience is not an isolated incident within higher education: an investigation by the *Guardian*, published around a year ago, found

students in the UK had made at least 169 allegations of staff sexual misconduct towards students, including three incidents at Imperial. The actual number of incidents is likely to be much higher; Dr Ann Olivarius, a senior partner at law firm McAlister Olivarius, said these results were “just the tip of the iceberg”, while Dr Anna Bull, co-founder of the 1752 Group, which aims to tackle sexual misconduct in higher education, said: “There is evidence to suggest that the actual figures in the UK would be staggering.”

Susan chose not to report the incident to the College or the Union, citing the pressure such proceedings can have: “If something happens to him, if he loses his job, does that become my responsibility? And then all of these proceedings are fairly uncomfortable to go through. Already when these kind of things happen you think you’re in the wrong, and then having to explain what happened to someone else is just horrible. It’s just such a difficult thing to do.”

“While Susan does not have classes with the staff member who assaulted her, she still has to see him in the department”

The 1752 Group has a number of strategic priorities, implementation of which would go some ways to addressing sexual misconduct in



The Union building was reported as a hot-spot for sexual violence // Imperial

higher education. One is to “implement an enforceable national code of conduct that clarifies professional boundaries”: the group says students are often “unsure what behaviour is acceptable” from staff members, due to “blurred lines around the professional relationship between staff and students.” This is something Susan found in her experience: “All these things are grey areas – I’ve been to drinks for research groups, and that sort of thing, because it’s a work setting, but we need to draw clear lines. Even though we are both adults, he’s still in a position of power over students, and that kind of behaviour – going out with students – is wrong. But it’s not advertised as being wrong – nowhere at Imperial.”

“If you are assaulted

at university, then it is a university issue. I don’t think I’ve seen anything at Imperial saying ‘if a staff member does this you need to report it’. And that’s quite an astonishing oversight.”

These concerns over the ability to handle sexual misconduct were echoed by a number of women Felix spoke to, with one postdoc saying: “UK universities do not have the policies to be able to cope with [staff-student sexual harassment and bullying] at the moment – and that’s quite frightening.”

While Susan does not have classes with the man who assaulted her, she still has to see him in the department occasionally – something which greatly affects her: “I’ve seen him, and he’s made eye contact with me and said hello. I just feel so uncomfortable and nervous, and

I just don’t want to say anything back.”

“8.5% of respondents to our survey reported experiencing gender-based violence”

Susan is one of the 8.5% of respondents to our survey who reported having experience of gender-based violence – a broad term defined by the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or that

affects women disproportionately”. While this violence does not necessarily need to be sexual, the majority of reports Felix obtained through the survey related to sexual assault and rape.

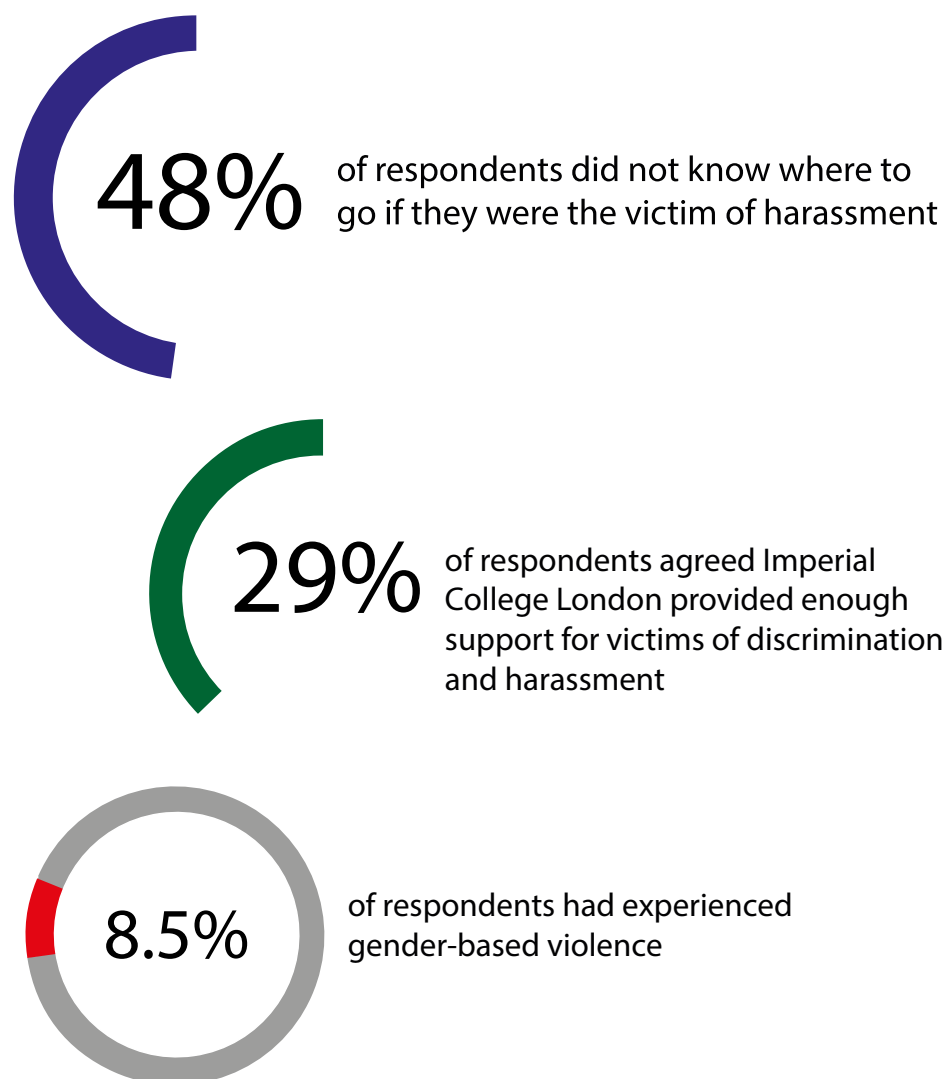
The actual proportion of students who have experienced sexual assault may well be higher: one NUS report suggests that one in four female students across the UK has been sexually assaulted, with far more facing sexual harassment. The College, on its website, says it is “committed to promoting a university environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and respected”, while ICU’s Safe Space Policy aims to “create an environment in our venues that all students, staff and visitors feel safe, happy and protected in.”

Unfortunately, a number of those who

NEWS

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to reporting sexual violence and harassment



filled in our survey did not feel safe on campus: “I have been harassed by unknown men whilst going about my everyday life since puberty,” wrote one respondent. “It was only when I arrived at Imperial that I began to face harassment from my peers... I have been touched, grabbed, and mauled without consent. I have felt frightened and scared of being raped. I rarely felt that any of my male peers respected me as an equal human being.”

The Union building seems to be a hotspot for sexual violence, particularly at events like ACC Night. “If ‘gender-based violence’ includes minor sexual assault – slaps on the bum, that sort of thing – then it’s certainly something that happens on a regular night in the Union,” wrote one respondent, while others

reported being groped in 568 or sexually harassed in Metric. One respondent said the Union Bar was where she had experienced the most derogatory comments and the greatest number of threats of sexual violence.

“Some women who reported their cases said they had not been helped by the College or Union”

When women have faced violence, many do not feel confident about reporting it to the College or ICU. In a survey organised by an Imperial student earlier this year,

only 8.7% of respondents said they would report a sexual assault to ICU, citing concerns about the incident being treated as minor, or fear they would be blamed or not taken seriously.

Some women who had reported their cases said they were not satisfied with the results: one woman, who had been raped, told Felix: “College did nothing, nor did the Union. That was only one of a number of cases I believe have been swept under the carpet.” Another, who was raped by another student whilst unconscious after a night out, said the College had not been helpful: “I was advised that if I was unsuccessful with the police that I would have to see them on campus every day, and that it would simply make my university experience

more difficult. Imperial’s culture of protecting students’ reputations above wellbeing is partially responsible for this.”

Last term *Felix* reported on the experience of one alumna who had reported her sexual assault to the College and the Union; the investigation took more than seven months to be completed, during which time the victim was passed between at least six staff, and left unsupported. “This experience pushed me back into a suicidal state,” she told *Felix*. “Absurdly, the sexual assault investigation was more distressing than the sexual assault itself.”

Another student said she had never reported incidents of sexual harassment “simply because there is no clear channel to do so... Imperial should implement an easy to use, online sexism and harassment reporting tool”.

Others mention that existing services at Imperial are not advertised. Susan, prior to being assaulted by the staff member, had been sexually assaulted on campus by a non-Imperial student, after being emotionally manipulated into going to an isolated area with him. This time, she reported it to campus security: “They were incredible. They took me down to their office, and made me feel so comfortable. If you are assaulted, you are under no obligation to report it – you’re so busy trying to process what happened, the thought of having to explain it to someone else is unthinkable – but the security services were fantastic.”

After taking a statement from Susan, security phoned the police with her consent, and helped to make a report. They posted the perpetrator’s face on the College’s security boards and shortly

after he was arrested while leading another girl away from the main campus. With Susan’s consent, the security services got in touch with College tutors, and helped her organise mitigating circumstances. She was also fast-tracked into the College counselling service.

“One student said she had never reported sexual harassment because ‘there is no clear channel to do so’”

“Reporting these kind of things is one of the hardest and most unthinkable things you can consider in that situation. However, there are services to go to if you know where they are on campus – I would never have gone to the Union with this, but security were fantastic. If you can report it, and you feel like you can – it’s no way an obligation – there are things you can do.”

One of the reasons Susan wanted to share her experience was to let people know there were places they could go to for help. Our survey found that many respondents are unaware of available support: fewer than half of respondents said they knew where to go if they were the victim of discrimination or violence, while only 22% of women surveyed felt that the College was doing enough to provide support for victims of discrimination.

The topic of sexual misconduct has become more prominent on

university campuses, and the College is setting up a working group to deal with the issue. Professor Curry told *Felix* it would “look across the board at staff and student experiences, and come up with a unified set of policies and procedures that create a credible reporting system, so that staff and students don’t feel like there is nowhere to go”.

As well as the creation of a more accessible reporting system, the group should also clarify and codify what behaviours are considered acceptable from academics – a topic Professor Curry believes academics are becoming more aware of as a result of increasing discourse.

One of the key challenges the working group will face, Professor Curry admits, is the issue of communication: “There are gaps, and in a large, complex organisation [like Imperial] there are always going to be gaps, or problems with communication, which recent cases have highlighted. One important thing is to make sure the students’ union and the College are joined up in a way that works for students.”

“It’s a big job to do,” he says, “and it can’t be dismissed or brushed under the carpet.”

Names have been changed. If you have been affected by anything discussed in this article, please consider phoning The Samaritans (116 123), Rape Crisis (0800 802 9999), or Survivors UK (020 3598 3898) for confidential support and advice. Students can also contact their Faculty Senior Tutors for support, or reach out to ICU’s Advice Centre, which offers independent, impartial, and confidential advice.

NEWS

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Strikes come to an end, as UCU rejects UUK deal

NEWS

Joanna Wormald

Deputy Editor

Potential further strikes, as UCU members feel UUK offer falls extremely short of demands.

The four weeks of strikes that have hit campus end today, a few days after a deal to resolve the pensions dispute was rejected. The agreement would have seen members of the University and College Union (UCU) make larger pension contributions while the current scheme is phased out.

The proposal, which was considered by the UCU's Higher Education Committee, would have seen members and universities paying larger amounts into pension funds for three years as

part of a transition phase beginning in April 2019. Independent experts would also have been called in to evaluate the size of the pension deficit, which Universities UK claims is around £6 billion.

Following feedback from UCU members, however, the deal was rejected. It was deemed "insufficient" and "far worse than anything that members could consider accepting". One UCU member, who has previously spoken to *Felix* about the strikes, said: "There have been mixed feelings in the UCU. We would love to return to our jobs but the deal on offer was truly terrible."

"The point of the strikes was to keep the defined benefits pension scheme. All this deal offers is a transitional three years – during which we pay more to receive less – while the defined benefits scheme is phased out," they added.

In a statement Dr Michael McGarvey,



Staff have been striking since the middle of February // Joseph O'Connell-Danes

president of Imperial UCU, said: "Under intense pressure from senior management of universities around the country, UUK stated it would like to meet with UCU as soon as possible. We now expect UUK to come back with a serious offer that staff can accept which leads to an end to the dispute."

He added: "We hope members of UUK,

including Imperial College, will finally act responsibly and help to resolve the dispute by stopping their attempts to destroy the value of our pensions for the sake of the students and staff at our universities."

If no agreement is reached, 14 days of further strikes will go ahead between April and June. Dates have not yet been decided but strikes are

expected to be organised around exams in order to maximise impact.

If a fresh deal is reached, UCU members hope to be given more time to look over the proposals – rather than having to hold emergency meetings in the street, as was the case at Imperial.

"We've been disappointed in both UUK and UCU in their communications with members," said

Felix's UCU source. "We hope any future detail is communicated with enough detail and time to consider carefully before a national vote."

The Imperial UCU Twitter account announced the postponement of "Not the President's Address". A UCU-sponsored event is planned for the near future.

Leadership Election winners revealed

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

Robert Tomkies will be the President of Imperial College Union next year.

The winners of this year's Imperial College Union (ICU) Leadership Elections were revealed last Friday.

The Officer Trustee team for next academic year will consist of Robert Tomkies as Union President, James Medler as

Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) (DPCS), Alejandro Luy as Deputy President (Education) (DPE), Claudia Caravello as Deputy President (Finance & Services) (DPFS), and Becky Neil as Deputy President (Welfare) (DPW). Andy Djaba will serve as *Felix* Editor.

The contest for Union President was one of the closely-run in the election, with ten candidates in total. After nine rounds of voting, during which candidates were eliminated and their votes redistributed, Robert Tomkies, the current Royal School of Mines Union (RSMU) President was declared

the winner, with 1267 votes. He beat runner-up Michael Edwards, the current Royal College of Science Union (RCSU) President, who received 1045 votes.

The contests for DPFS and DPW were also contested, with three candidates for DPFS and two candidates for DPW. In the race for DPFS, Claudia Caravello was declared the winner after two rounds of voting. She received 1236 votes, while her closest competition, Ella Rice, received 1031. Becky Neil will be the DPW for 2018-19, after beating Matthew Hayward after two rounds of voting; she received

1198 votes compared to Hayward's 1090.

Alejandro Luy will be next year's DPE, receiving 2166 votes, while James Medler will be DPCS, with 2078 votes. Both positions were uncontested. Andy Djaba was elected as *Felix* Editor in the first round of voting, beating three other candidates with 1356 votes. The runner up Jennifer Lea, who had promised to "make *FELIX* edible", received 590 votes.

Presidents of five of ICU's six constituent elections were also voted in this week. The President of Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union (ICSMSU)

for next year will be Dan Faehndrich, who received 563 votes and ran unopposed. He will take a year's sabbatical, as ICSMSU President is a full-time, paid role. RCSU President will be Michael McGill, RSMU President will be Marta Wolinska, and City and Guild College Union (CGCU) President will be Andrew Hill.

This year's Leadership Elections saw an overall turnout of 35.65%, down from last year's turnout of 36.79%. A spokesperson from Imperial College Union told *Felix*: "We're proud to have maintained our place as the most democratic students'

union in England & Wales, and we're grateful to the 1000+ candidates and 6500+ voters who took part. Congratulations to all the winners – we look forward to working together to improve the lives of Imperial students."

"Additionally, we acknowledge there were issues with the support and communication we offered to candidates throughout. We are listening to the feedback we have received from all involved, and will offer further opportunities for participants to give their views; we will learn from this in order to improve elections in future"

COMMENT

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COMMENT

Shaul Rosten*Comment Writer*

Why Donald Trump is America's best chance at true gun reform

Comment writer Shaul Rosten argues that Trump has the ability to enforce stricter gun control laws and will be more effective than anyone else



Lets put those normal sized hands to use // Flickr

It is unnervingly common: you pick up your phone, open your news app, and scroll through the stories. As usual, there is one bemoaning what (insert name of stupid politician here) has to say. There is one, invariably, discussing Bitcoin. And there is one reporting on a shooting in a US school or university. Whilst the statistics have been inflated by some, it doesn't take much thought to appreciate that our American cousins have a serious problem with guns. The debate, like many in the modern Colosseum of social media, is heated, with vehement adherents to ideologies on both sides. Of course, this issue is hardly new, having plagued Presidents from Obama back to Reagan.

The prime difficulty in putting an end to these atrocities lies in the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This declares, in defence of the individual against potential tyranny of the state, the right to keep and bear arms. Now, this doesn't mean that the government cannot do anything about it: State and Federal authorities have the legal power to regulate the possession and use of firearms, within certain bounds. However, politicians and Americans have simply refused to compromise on the issue. Unlike other contentious political debates, the charged and highly partisan political environment in the US

has decided that, for legislation concerning guns, there is no compromise to be had. The powerful National Rifle Association (NRA), which boasts over five million members and control of basically the entire Republican party, has repeatedly and vocally lobbied against gun control in any measure that has so far been proposed. And that is why President Trump is a beacon of hope. I really never thought I would be saying that; let me explain.

Don't get me wrong; Trump is not my idea of a model of human behaviour, and I certainly don't endorse a good number of his statements and policies. However, although his erratic statements, off-script speeches and late night tweeting are certainly highly politically unconventional, and arguably un-Presidential, it is this quality – of a lack of any desire to be liked or

respected on Capitol Hill – that provides a potential avenue of progress for gun control in America. The simple fact is that, whilst Democrats hate Trump, so do Republicans. They made every effort to get rid of him as their candidate, and many Republican lawmakers still hold him in contempt. But he doesn't care. He has only ever cared about one thing: Donald Trump. Now, that's hardly an admirable characteristic, but what it does mean is that he pretty much only does what he thinks he should do, and not what people tell him he should do. So, when he encounters problems, he is perfectly happy to change his mind. He has absolutely no concerns about his political status, because he doesn't do conventional politics. He speaks to his supporters directly, and engages with whomever he needs to in order to get what he wants

to get done, done. He worked with Democrats on a Spending Bill, and has been negotiating with them, much more closely than some Republicans would like, to make political concessions in return for increased border security measures. In short – Trump does what he wants, not what he thinks will poll well, or what his party, or their lobbyists, want him to.

And in this, he offers an opportunity for real change. The NRA has pushed all the Republican Senators and Congressman that it financially supports – a large number – to give no quarter on gun control legislation. But, for all the ears the NRA has in Washington, it now lacks that of a key official: the President. In a video recording of part of a bi-partisan meeting held by Trump to discuss gun control, which the Guardian recently published online (I would

encourage you to watch it), the President very openly called out Lawmakers for being “afraid of the NRA”, before proclaiming “they have less power over me.... What do I need?”. Now, don't think that he isn't also in bed with the NRA: they donated \$30 million to his Presidential campaign, and he has proclaimed himself their friend repeatedly. But, whilst he may support their broad aims in supporting the Second Amendment, he does not rely on their support in the same way that prior Presidents have done, and that current Republican officials do. He likes them, but he doesn't need them. Trump has a tendency of being very happy to compromise on what hard-line Republicans view as politically sacrosanct, in order to get done whatever he happens to want at the time. Gun control is the ultimate Republican red line, but President Trump doesn't care. As a result, there are two clear paths to the possibility that Trump may finally secure gun control in America.

For the first part, gun control offers him probably the largest bartering chip for Democratic support that he could ask for; the possibility that he could get Democratic support to build his wall, in return for lasting and effective gun control, is very real. Secondly, Trump is sympathetic to gun control, and, as pointed out, he pretty much does what he likes, and leaves party lines to be blurred by his words and actions. Therefore, even without an exchange

with the Democrats, gun control under Trump could well happen, if he is convicted enough in his belief that it should be legislated. In the aforementioned meeting, he supported the re-introduction of a bill to the Senate that imposes “universal background checks for commercial gun purchases, including at gun shows and over the internet”. He argued strongly against a Republican, saying that, where there is concern over the mental health of an individual who possesses guns, the guns should be confiscated immediately, and due process – i.e. adjudication in courts – could happen later. His approach is by no means liberal, but it is, if nothing else, pragmatic. He supports banning assault weapons, raising the minimum purchase age, and enforcing stricter mental health screening, all sensible approaches, and all vast steps forward in the immovable tussle of American politics.

For all that his confused tweeting and conflicting statements give off an air of incompetence, and disorganisation, they fundamentally betray a glaring self-interest. Trump wants to do what he said he would get done, and anything that pops up along the way that he fancies. He is not a committed ideologue, nor does he care for the support of those who are. Whilst this may, for the most part, be to his detriment, he might just end up wielding this tendency to the benefit of the people of America. Here's hoping that gun control is his legacy.

POLITICS

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China’s *House of Cards* – The rise of Xi Jinping as China’s President for life

How the Chinese President broke the longstanding rule of a two-term limit for Chairmanship of the Communist party and the dire consequences it entails.

POLITICS

Avirup Banerjee
Politics Editor

In 1911, the Wuchang Uprising brought down the Qing Dynasty, thus bringing to an end the longest continuous imperial civilization of 8,000 years. One of the most powerful dogmas perpetrated by the ancient Mandarins that allowed the firm rule of the emperors was the idea that the emperors had a Mandate of Heaven. This proposition held that ultimate power resided in the mind and body of the one legitimate ruler of China, blessed by the gods.

Whilst much has changed in the hundred years of republicanism in China, both the Guomin-dang (GMD) and even the atheistic Communist Party of China (CCP) have over the years adopted the Mandate from Heaven. After the inaugural (but brief) presidency of Sun Yat Sen and the turbulent war lord era, both the CCP, led by Mao Zedong, and the GMD, led by Chang Kei Shek, morphed into dictatorial rulers. However, after the deaths of these authoritarian figures, both in China and Taiwan, measures were taken in succeeding decades to prevent a future leader adopting a one-man authoritarian rule.

In large parts, the success of China in the last thirty years can be attributed to its efficient political administration by a collective of technocrats in the upper echelons of the Communist Party.



China’s National People’s Congress // Wikimedia

With strict ten-year term limits, generational leadership changes have been brought forth regularly without turmoil and strife. However, over the course of last week, these vestiges on the limitations of power within the Communist Party of China were broken up by the most powerful leader of modern China since Mao.

“President Xi is paving the road to becoming President-for-Life”

President Xi-Jinping, in a naked power grab, successfully abolished the long standing convention of a two term limit, thus paving the road to becoming President-for-Life.

In an emotionless and bureaucratic display of orderly change, the stony-eyed President introduced and proposed the motion (lifting term limits) to the National People’s Congress which in a Stalinist manner passed unanimously. Remarkably, this blatant disregard for tradition surprised very few, considering the steps Xi Jinping has taken since assuming the presidency. The son of a surviving member of Mao’s calamitous Long

March (Xi Zongxun), Xi Jingping descends from political royalty and his accession to the politburo in 2007 signalled the inevitability of him succeeding Hu-Jintao.

Since taking power, the CCP has already conferred the fictitious title of “core leader” thus elevating him to a previously non-existent pedestal – a move eerily similar to Deng Xiaoping (the architect of the Tiananmen Square massacre) being given the title “paramount leader”. Furthermore, in an unprecedented move, Xi-Jinping incorporated “his political thought” into the Constitution with his name embedded into the governing document, which his two immediate

predecessors were not able to do for themselves. The first of the fourteen points which constitutes the newly inserted guiding principles of Xi Jinping for the CCP states, “Ensuring Communist Party of China leadership over all forms of work in China”. This destroys any hope of democracy taking root in China any time soon.

President Xi is probably the most powerful leader in the world, and will remain so for the foreseeable future due to China’s geo-political and economic pre-eminence and the absence of internal opposition. Recent years have witnessed a purge of dissenting leaders within the party, all under

“The GMD and CCP have over the years adopted the Mandate from Heaven”

the guise of rooting out corruption. However, very few are fooled by the ostentatious show trials condemning past leaders, while Xi Jinping’s inner circle amassed their wealth. This is disheartening to all those who value liberal democracy. With a potential unofficial president for life, the argument that greater economic

POLITICS

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integration with the west and free market capitalism would lead to an inevitable democratization of China has ultimately been silenced. Moreover, if his policies in the recent past can be taken as a predictor of the future, a more hostile and hawkish China will surface.

Xi-Jingping showed the entire world his ambivalence to the rule of law and democracy when he took a hard-line approach to Hong Kong in the summer of 2014, breaking the long held Chinese commitment to universal suffrage in the Special Administered Region. By adding the caveat that any candidate wishing to be in the ballot for Chief-Executive (yes, that is what they call their Mayor in Hong Kong) must first receive the blessing from Beijing, which handpicks the candidates the people of Hong Kong can choose from, the promise of universal suffrage enshrined in Hong Kong's Basic Law Article 45 was nullified. When Hong Kong was handed over by the British to China in 1997, it was preceded by decades of negotiations which gave

"Xi-Jingping has shown the entire world his ambivalence to the rule of law"

assurances to the British Government and most importantly to the people of Hong Kong regarding protections to civil rights. Xi-Jingping's refusal to accept any opposition in Hong Kong to greater integration resulted in cast iron promises from the Chinese state. Dangerously, the mainland government actively pushed for extreme police action to quash the non-violent



Xi Jinping in the White House// Flickr

2014 Umbrella Revolution by using pepper spray and acts of violence.

For sixteen of the last twenty centuries, China has consistently been in the top two with regards to GDP. To Xi Jinping, the rise of China is simply the restoration of the natural order. In fact, the Mandarin term for China, "zhōng-guó", derives its name from the idea that China is at the "centre of civilization". Thus Xi-Jingping has endeavoured to assert China's pre-eminence to the world using both soft and hard power.

Xi-Jingping understands that China is at a cross-road. Slowing economic growth, rising debts, and other internal problems like environmental pollution have the potential to unravel the CCP's grip on power

by a growing dissatisfied middle class. Xi-Jingping has effectively used populist economic measures to meet the growing aspirations of China's middle class. For years now, resentment has grown in China over poor air quality due to the country's rapid industrialisation. President Xi has effectively responded to this challenge by investing billions into green energy sources, such that China is now the largest producer of newly-added renewable energy. Through his One-Belt initiative, the Chinese government has sustained (by increasing its national debt) millions of infrastructure jobs. Furthermore, the initiative, which aims to recreate the ancient silk road, has increased China's profile internationally. The rise

of China has collided with Xi-Jingping's political rise, which has meant dire consequences for China's neighbours. In foreign policy, Xi Jinping has stepped up China's rapid remilitarisation with specific attention given to the South China Sea. By propping up artificial islands and laying claim to the territorial waters of sovereign neighbouring states, President XI has indicated China will take an aggressive approach to establishing regional hegemony over the United States.

For much of China's history, instead of external threats, internal civil wars have been the source of bloodshed and chaos that have weakened and replaced one governing power by another. In the mid-19th century,

"Xi Jinping has stepped up China's rapid military build up on the South China Sea"

the Taiping Rebellion resulted in the deaths of 30 million Chinese (more than the total casualties of World War One). China is a geographically and culturally diverse political entity unrivalled by any western nation. Succeeding generations of Chinese leaders have feared this unity would be broken if greater freedoms were given to the masses due to resentment over

an unequal upliftment by China's economic rise. Xi-Jingping's father who was a political leader under Mao saw the horrors of the Great Leap Forward (which killed 20 million from famine) and the Cultural Revolution (which stunted the intellectual development of millions of Chinese children). The Chinese have a long memory – there won't ever be a newer iteration of Mao's *Little Red Book*. Xi Jinping is a Frank Underwood-esque brutal pragmatist who is less driven by ideology than realism. President Xi is more ideologically akin to Deng Xio-Ping in believing that "it doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice". However, through this blatant power move, President Xi has shown his willingness to sacrifice constitutional norms for greater stability.

The ancient Chinese had a curse: "may he live in interesting times". Well, like it or not these are interesting times. The developing world in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, which has been suppressed for the last two hundred years is finally awaking from its long slumber.

The allure of establishing a strong man to the Chinese political establishment is clear, as it would assist in guiding China through these transformative times. Xi-Jingping has gambled that the many problems facing China can only be solved by establishing a strong authoritarian leader, unencumbered by short-termism. To all those who are friends of China, we wish China all the best. However, to those of us who also value the importance of democracy and liberty, it would be a sad proposition if China's rise can only be propelled through authoritarianism.

SCIENCE

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Behind the scenes of London's snowy adventure

Science Writer *Rachel Ong* explores the science behind the flurry of snow we got a couple of weeks ago.

SCIENCE

Rachel Ong

Science Writer

With the weather seeming to be on the verge of spring, it seems hard to believe that just a couple of weeks ago London had experienced some of the most severe snow days in years. Air temperatures dropped to a 27-year low, and – much to everyone's bother – signal failures and track problems disrupted the tube services citywide. If you ventured out that week wondering if you had walked through a portal to Siberia, you actually were not too far from the truth!

It was a vortex of cold Siberian air – nicknamed the 'Beast from the East' – which caused temperatures in the UK to plummet so drastically. The stream of northern polar air, which originally lingered at a very chilly -50C, had unexpectedly changed its wintry path to the east, swooping over the UK instead!

This was due to what meteorologists refer to as a Sudden Stratospheric Warming, an unprecedented increase in the temperature of the Earth's atmosphere between 10-50km above the surface. In this atmospheric region, jet streams of air currents travel round the world from west to east with a special polar night jet forming in winter months that is seen to encircle the area surrounding the Earth's poles. Occasionally, changes in weather patterns or increases in pressure within the atmosphere of the Northern Hemisphere may disturb

the westerly winds and disrupt the smooth flow of the polar night jets. The distortion of these polar jets could be powerful enough to reduce, and even reverse, the direction of the westerly winds. Additionally, the high-latitude stratospheric air starts to compress over the polar ice caps; during compression it can warm by up to 50C in just a few days. This results in newly redirected easterly winds which sink lower in the atmosphere, disrupting the polar vortex, causing the cold jet streams to flow further south than usual.

"It was a vortex of cold Siberian air – the 'Beast from the East' – which caused temperatures to plummet"

In February, this very phenomenon resulted in the biting-cold Siberian air streams swerving around the UK, bringing the unusual cold spell to London. The weakened westerly jet streams were not powerful enough to bring warm air from the Atlantic over to the UK. This resulted in a blanket of crisp white (and later grey and slushy) snow for a week!

Looking back to a couple of months ago, there was a similar occurrence, as a significant amount of snow over the city descended, the likes of which were unseen since 2012! But the big question is whether it is



Is it cold in your snowstorm, freezing your brain? // Felix

climate change that is causing these unprecedented weather patterns. Largely, climate change affects different regions in different ways, and this is a highly debatable topic amongst experts in the field. Scientists generally do concur, however, that human activity releasing greenhouse gases has definitely contributed to the global climate shifts. The direct results are complicated, but the especially low winter temperatures this year provide support for the argument of climate change.

In fact, many scientists think this is the precursor to more extreme and unpredictable weather for future years to come. What is worrying many climatologists is that there has recently been an extraordinarily intense

heatwave in the Arctic, despite it experiencing no direct sunlight since October. Temperatures in the Arctic have been recorded as warmer than those in London, New York, and Paris at any one time! Furthermore, in January, the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) released news that the Arctic sea ice cover had shrunk to a "new record low" of 5.04 million square miles. This rate of sea ice depletion is currently the highest in at least 1,500 years, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which was published last December. Global climate systems are highly dependent and sensitive on each other, and such drastic changes in one part of the world will

have huge implications on other regions.

"We have to realise the weather we experience now is just a physical ramification of many complex systems around the globe"

While we cannot be sure whether this is simply a shocking anomaly, or the start of a new weather trend, we have to realise

that the weather patterns we experience now are just the physical ramifications of many complex systems operating at various locations around the globe, and are functions of many, many different factors.

But at least for us here in London, winter is now (hopefully) over! As we are all gearing up for the coming of spring, we do not have to suffocate under a mountain of fleeces, scarves, gloves, and hats anymore...right? Definitely! Despite yellow warnings for snow and ice still being issued across the UK amidst concerns of Storm Emma, these are mostly concentrated in northern England and Scotland. Thus, London seems to be off the hook in terms of slushy pavements and runny noses – at least for now.

SCIENCE

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I can show you the world: How gene therapy brightens the future for eye diseases

Developments in gene therapy could offer hope for a cure to inherited retinal diseases in the near future.

SCIENCE

Sarah Wong

Science Writer

You may have your mother's eyes, or your father's nose, as genetics plays a significant role in determining physical traits such as height and eye colour. But genes can also determine other things: diseases! Cystic fibrosis is an example of a disease that has a genetic basis, meaning that the conditions can be passed on to subsequent generations.

Genes are the information that our bodies hold, so our cells know how to react in certain environments. Imagine a construction worker: she obtains her information from the blueprint (i.e. genes), and from these instructions is able to build an object. Simple, right?

Unfortunately not! Errors do occur, and the blueprint can contain mistakes. In the case of inherited retinal diseases, a group of conditions that affect the eyes, this can result in symptoms such as blurred eyesight, and eventually loss of central vision.

Research has indicated that the cause of at least five types of inherited retinal diseases stem from an erroneous gene known as BEST1: it contains information that builds channels to allow substances such as calcium ions to be transported in and out of the cells. Subsequently, this allows these cells to interact with the surrounding nerve cells. A faulty form of the BEST1 gene causes these

cells in the eyes, namely the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE), to lose function, resulting in detachment of the RPE. Previously proven in mouse and canine models, the integrity of RPE is vital to the general health of the eye, as it maintains the correct environment for other nearby cells. Any detachment of the RPE, large or small, can impact the health of photoreceptors – the cells that are essential for detecting light. Thus the disease eventually leads to the loss of sight, and is currently untreatable.

“To correct the error, scientists have been trying to utilise viruses as carriers”

To correct this error in the genes, scientists have tried to utilise viruses as carriers to transport the healthy copy of the gene into the targeted cell. While some may fear the use of viruses – as they are notorious for being infectious and deadly – broadly speaking, virus carriers often have their virulence removed, meaning they would not be able to cause any harm once modified. This idea of transferring the healthy copy of the gene into a person is called gene therapy.

Recently, a group from the University of Pennsylvania, led by Karina E. Guziewicz, has developed a treatment of this type, targeting these

genetic forms of macular degeneration in a canine model. In the model, the scientists have identified the molecular mechanisms at which the disease is causing issues and verified the identity of the gene that needs to be transported back to the patient to reverse the mistake. The researchers used adenoviruses (AAV2) to augment the BEST1 gene in one eye, leaving the other eye untreated for comparison. The virus

that contained the healthy gene was injected into the sub-retinal region of the eye with micro or macro-detachments.

Results indicated that the host's immune system did not react to the virus, suggesting the safety of such a treatment, since adverse immune responses can lead to failure of the therapy or result in harmful effects on the host. In addition, researchers found the delivery of the healthy BEST1 gene

is well located, suggesting the viruses are specific to the intended target. Using non-invasive scanning techniques, the researchers also noticed the lesions in the treated eyes were resolved, showing the restoration of the retinal structure. As mentioned, the structure of the eye is essential for maintaining normal vision, therefore this clearly is a step forward in curing inherited retinal diseases!

While dog models

closely resemble humans, future research in this field should use human models with RPE cells to further prove the safety and efficacy of this gene therapy. Furthermore, the group discovered that light stimulation can worsen the detachment of the RPE. Since this was not observed in human patients previously, more work is needed to establish whether this phenomenon occurs in humans too.

PINT OF SCIENCE

Beer + Science



7 pubs

Science talks in local pubs

MAY 14, 15, 16



7-10pm

TICKET RELEASE: April 9 - SAVE THE DATE!
INFO: pintofscience.co.uk/organisation/imperial

SCIENCE

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Ready player one – how games are fuelling ‘citizen science’

Programs like FoldIt are using our enthusiasm for problem-solving to crowdsource solutions to scientific puzzles.

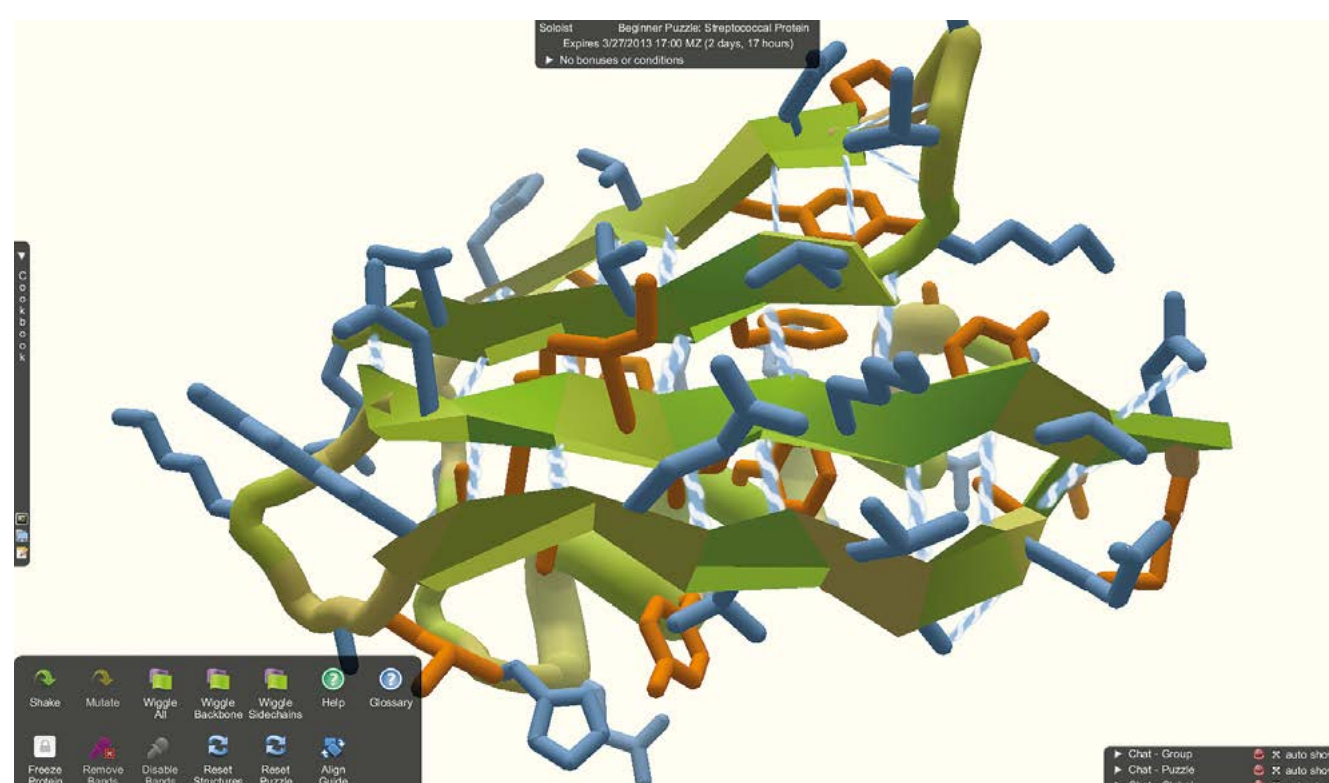
SCIENCE

Varshit Dusad

Science Writer

If you were told that the next solution to one of our endearing medical and scientific challenges may be coming from a bunch of computer gamers around the world, your immediate reaction will be one of disbelief. Though it sounds surprising, a computer game called *FoldIt* has been a beneficial tool in helping scientist with solving one of the most difficult problems existing today in science: identification of the three-dimensional structure of proteins from their linear amino acid sequences. The game utilises the superior cognitive ability of the human brain in ‘pattern matching’ and ‘spatial reasoning’, then uses machines to identify the correct three-dimensional structures of proteins. In fact, this game was exclusively designed for this purpose by the University of Washington (UWash). Before *FoldIt*, the scientists at UWash were using general public computer powers to solve protein folding by complex algorithms. However, they realised that humans have an ingenious imagination, which – if properly used – can identify folded structures of proteins much better than computers. They were right! *FoldIt* was first launched in 2008, and in 2010 a *Nature* paper showed that the results provided by FoldIt players were far superior to computer-based results.

So, what is the problem with protein



The user interface of FoldIt // FoldIt

folding? Proteins in our cells are microscopic machines, responsible for almost all our basic functions ranging from digestion to respiration, excretion to movement. Being machine-like, their three-dimensional structure is very important for the functions they perform. When unfolded into two dimensions they are merely a chain, strung together by amino acids in different sequences. Knowing this sequence and its biochemistry is simple, but it is very difficult to identify the final three-dimensional structure which proteins take inside cells. There is no common way to predict the shape all protein structures. An unfolded protein (a linear chain) has a large number of degrees of freedom, and applying a mechanism to sort through all possible shapes will take time more than the age of universe – even for a single protein.

In *FoldIt*, the protein structures to be solved are provided as randomly folded structures. Using the tools provided in the game, the players fold the structures into the most stable conformation possible. Based on their stability, the solutions are scored, and the highest scoring solutions are analysed by scientists to check their validity.

This strategy of outsourcing part of a challenging research problem to the public is called ‘citizen science’; it encourages direct participation of the public with mainstream science, and educates them about the important topics in science. The idea is not new: before the arrival of mainstream university-driven science, it was done by citizens motivated by reason and desire to understand nature. Both Charles Darwin and Galileo count as citizen scientists, and fields like

biology and astronomy have progressed largely by the contribution of amateur scientists.

In the 21st century, the model of citizen science has changed. Now a well-defined problem with loose constraints is passed onto citizens to solve. These usually belong to the category where large data collection and sorting is required, and computational methods are not enough to manage the scale of the problem. In *FoldIt*, the numerous folding states of proteins are identified using puzzle-solving capabilities of individuals which can bypass computational efforts desired by algorithms. Other popular examples include EteRNA, which deals with the folding of RNA structures, and is very similar to *FoldIt*. Another, *ClickWorkers* is run by NASA to classify images of Martian craters (a task which done by

solitary graduate students would require months of effort), and *Quantum Moves* which simulate the movement of atoms in the lattice. There is a larger list of such citizen science games online

FoldIt can be downloaded on your local computer and runs all three popular operating systems: Windows, MacOS, and Linux. The game provides a few introduction puzzles which teaches players how to play it, but beyond that the player can choose from science puzzles that are running. These puzzles do not last forever, though they may run for months until they are considered ‘solved’. Often, these puzzles are either unsolved structures of known proteins, or prediction of structures for synthetically designed proteins. Players can collaborate with each other by chats, organizing groups and sharing puzzle

solutions. Additionally, novel strategies discovered from players can be applied to develop better algorithms to automate the process. This, in turn, will help in making the predicting structure for artificially designed proteins simple, such that designed proteins can be effectively made for practical purposes.

Since its inception, *FoldIt* has been a powerful tool for advancing the number of proteins with folded structure. To its merit, it has some considerable accomplishments: in 2011, the *FoldIt* community deciphered the previously unknown structure of Mason-Pfizer monkey virus (M-PMV) which is responsible for HIV infections. The protein structure was solved in ten days of the puzzle going live, whereas it had previously remained unsolved for 15 years when attempted using conventional scientific approaches. In January 2012, the *FoldIt* community predicted the structure of a synthetically designed protein, which was later improved by players themselves to improve efficiency 18-fold. Last year, the Mars Inc. and UC Davis had released a series of puzzles to decipher the structure of aflatoxin, a group of carcinogens which are known to contaminate food crops around the world. The final goal is to design an enzyme which can degrade these aflatoxins based upon the structural prediction of aflatoxins.

Perhaps, if you are too busy to find time to save the world alone, you can give *FoldIt* a try

SCIENCE

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Connect with Conservation – LEGO goes green

The toy company is pivoting to eco-friendly manufacturing, as the dangers of plastic waste become clear.

SCIENCE

Steve Allain
Science Writer

It may be a surprise – for those who remember treading on rogue LEGO pieces in the dark – to hear the company is going green by producing plant-based plastics! Known as LEGO Botanical Elements, they will start to enter playsets later on this year, with the first pieces to be replaced including trees, bushes, and leaves. The plastic itself is sourced from sugar cane – while it may still have some ethical and ecological issues, it is far more responsible compared to crude oil. Thanks to the powers of modern science, the plant-based plastic pieces are technically identical to those produced using conventional plastic



Lego goes green (but red blocks still available) // CC

producing methods. Let us take a few moments to appreciate what this change means. Due to the time it takes for plastics to break down, they are often seen in the environment long after being dumped by people. Globally, very little plastic is recycled due to the material’s properties – with its durability and temperature resistance, plastic is notoriously hard to recycle, and it so often breaks down in the environment where it is dropped. This is, of course, unless it enters the ocean via a river, or by direct action of humans. Here the plastics break down under UV light and

transform into microplastics. These microplastics are then consumed by plankton which in turn are consumed by fish that can be caught and eaten by humans. This means plastic and its toxins are able to enter our food chain and therefore potentially poison us. By working to

“Microplastics can enter our food chain through plankton and fish”

remove the amount of oil-based plastics entering the food chain, we can help to prevent such occurrence. To make this step forward, the LEGO Group partnered with

the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to support and build the demand for sustainably-sourced plastic. As part of this, Lego joined the Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance (BFA) to aid in securing fully sustainable sourcing of raw material for the bioplastics industry. LEGO is not the first company to make such a move in order to help appeal to consumers who are trying to reduce their impact on the planet. When LEGO first hit the market in 1949, the dangers of plastic entering ecosystems and climate change would not be discussed or pondered for decades to come. Both companies and consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious, which is consequently helping to drive such a change in one of the world’s largest toy brands.

PHOENIX

From the Ashes

Phoenix, Imperial’s Art Magazine presents “From the Ashes”, a six-week long exhibition which embodies the cycle of art.

Join us at the opening night, Wednesday 21st March, at Imperial’s Blyth Gallery, to mark the start of this aesthetic journey.

ARTS

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That feeling when you're not invited to the impromptu seance.... // Manuel Harlan

Life, Death, and Theatre with the Ekdahls

The stage adaptation of Ingrid Bergman's semi-autobiographical work "weaves new patterns"

ARTS

FANNY AND ALEXANDER



★★★★

Where? The Old Vic

When? 21st February - 14th April

How Much? From £12

Pauline Ronnet

Arts Writer

Misha Handley steps onto the stage as Alexander Ekdahl and exclaims: "Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the longest play in the history of the world! ...Will it be boring?" Laughter from the audience marks a departure from Bergman's original cinematic version. Beresford's play has a feel-good vibe that sometimes feels like superficiality.

The play is indeed more than three hours long, with enough scope for two intervals – but this is nec-

essary to cater to the rich and complex material, and the moments rarely drag. We are stimulated by the energetic atmosphere, which is enhanced by the special effects that accompany the dramatic action. They sometimes have a showy quality but occasionally, when combined with seamless acting, are very successful in creating an emotional ambience that holds the spectator in thrall of the actor's performance.

Despite the title, it is above all Alexander's perspective, that of an imaginative and sensitive child, which we experience throughout Stephen Beresford's stage adaptation of Ingmar Bergman's semi-autobiographical film. The stage version is moderately successful at retaining the integrity of the original in its exploration of broad existential themes, which may not be condensed down to an hour or so's entertainment without cutting through

the vital nerves and life-blood of this intricate web of human turmoil. The enjoyment is mostly derived from the drama being well-played by a skillful cast.

The play begins on Christmas Day – ideal for some reminiscing, in which Dame Penelope Wilton indulges and is comically pathetic without pathos. She is the matriarch of the theatrical Ekdahl family, charming and ridiculous with her imperious airs and affected manners, a hangover from her years on the stage. Dame Wilton manages to be nuanced with a touch of grey-haired dignity and much wistfulness for her bygone years. Though time hasn't faded her romance with a family friend, and something in her manner convinces us she was beautiful in youth.

Her son is Alexander's father: in the play, a childish, cocky embarrassment of a husband; in the film weary and passive

with more than the usual amount of melancholy for his age. Before the drama yet unfolds, he delivers a speech that ought to sound pensive in shallow and unconvincing tones. It serves as a prologue to the play and meditates upon the purpose of theatre itself, in a strange intercrossing of worlds between the stage and real life; the purpose of the theatre, he concludes, is to provide a few moments' refuge from the harshness of life, whilst mirroring it at the same time.

Fanny and Alexander succeeds quite well: fantastical elements of ghosts, telepathy and magic are effective at transporting us to a parallel world, and to some extent at obviating the mundane. But these remain primarily tools that symbolize and abstract the character's sufferings and allow us to enter their imaginations, seeing the world as they experience it.

Beresford's production

seems to include a marked divide between the realms of the living and the dead which is less present in the film. Dinnertime scenes include the lavish menu being read out by two servants, whilst the Ekdahl family mime the merry enjoyment of simple pleasures. These sometimes occur right next to more emotionally tense scenes, such as one in which Alexander is wrestling with his fears and talking to the image of Death. This contrast between two worlds, designed to be unsettling though sometimes not subtle enough to feel coherent, provides a sinister undercurrent of evil foreshadowing, and attempts to lay bare the fears within each human being. The reconciliation of these opposing forces finds itself in the rambling speech of a joyful Ekdahl as he beholds his newborn daughter: "It is necessary and not in the least bit shameful to take pleasure

in the little world - good food, gentle smiles, fruit trees in bloom, waltzes."

Just as the dead remain in our minds, in the play they appear as stage figures. Alexander's father returns as a serene white-suited apparition, his brutal stepfather as a Grim Reaper. In each case we are left wondering as to whether these are simply representations of traumatic grief or fear, or whether the supernatural is an element of reality in the plot. We are left unsure as to where the division between imagination and reality lies in Alexander's mind. The ambiguity is concluded with a quote from Johann August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*: "Everything can happen. Everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist. On a flimsy framework of reality, the imagination spins, weaving new patterns."

ARTS

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Who stares into my soul?// Marc Brenner

Summer and Smoke sizzles with spectacular sentiment in stunning revival

Rebecca Frecknall directs a winning revival of one of Tennessee Williams' lesser-known plays

ARTS

SUMMER AND SMOKE



Where? Almeida Theatre

When? Until 7th April

How Much? From £5.

Three free performances in April (<25 years). Normal tickets from £10

Jingjie Cheng

Arts Editor

It is a time-tested dichotomy – the body versus the soul, the mind, with its emotions and intellect, versus the body's sensual physical pleasures. The battle between the two is the focus of one of Tennessee Williams' earliest and rarely-performed plays, *Summer and Smoke*. In a stunning new revival by young director Rebecca Frecknall, Williams' lesser-known play is performed in its

full emotional intensity, successfully drawing tension out throughout the three hours.

Patsy Ferran delivers a brilliant performance as Alma, a pastor's daughter and singing teacher whose prudish, formal upbringing leads her to suppress her long-time love for childhood friend and trainee doctor John Buchanan, eschewing physical pleasures for spiritual and intellectual fulfilment. This undeclared love nearly drives her mad, and it is this unspoken tension that Ferran embodies so well. Alma's nervous laugh and formal diction serve to hide the emotions that are churning inside her. John, on the other hand, represents the body in all its physicality – the fact that he is a doctor, interested in all the guts and 'ugly things' that are inside our bodies, is contrasted with Alma's spiritual background.

Matthew Needham, who plays John, has a stare so intense that it almost seems he can see right through Alma and into the turmoil of unfulfilled desire.

Originally called *The Anatomy Chart*, Williams' play is full of symbolism and contrasts. The anatomy chart hangs in John's office, and in one scene he grabs Alma and makes her look at the chart, telling her that there is nothing inside her but organs hungry for food, knowledge and sex – there is none of this 'soul' that she repeatedly mentions. John embraces this version of the body, and seeks immediate gratification for his desires, spending every night at the casino, and sleeping with Rosa, the casino owner's beautiful daughter.

Williams is known for his concept of 'plastic theatre': favouring a more malleable theatrical process that relies less on

realism and more heavily on the effect of sound, colour, movement and lighting to create evocative images on stage. Frecknall developed this concept beautifully in this production, with fluid scene changes on the same set created using these extra-textual elements alone.

The set itself was fascinating: nine pianos, stripped bare so one can see the strings inside, are arranged in a semicircle bordering a dusty space. The cast play on these pianos from time to time to create atmosphere - Angus MacRae's score complements and accentuates the tension and emotions perfectly. Dissonant sounds clashing among the pianos bring out Alma's clashing inner turmoil, while grand, harmonised motifs accompany major scenes and emotional intensity.

Furthermore, the use of light was integral to the show and was cleverly in-

tegrated into the piano set. In an impressive touch, fireworks were represented by lights running across the piano strings while gentle bursts of light rose behind the pianos. Indeed, the light and sound design, and the flexibility of a cast moving among pianos making music that threads seamlessly in and out of the scenes, is a unique touch that respects Williams' style.

The shooting of John's father, a respected doctor, leads to a dramatic turn of events as John goes off to finish his father's good work, while Alma, tortured by her conflicting values and desires, withdraws from the outside world. When they meet again, Alma has changed. She is now ready to embrace her desires – the old Alma, the spiritual, sexually-repressed Alma, is gone, she says. *'The girl who said 'no' – she doesn't exist anymore, she died last summer – suffocated*

in smoke from something on fire inside her.'

The idea of smoke, its ethereal, ephemeral quality, is stylistically important in the play, as is the fiery quality of summer. Alma's previous self goes up in smoke, but so do her hopes and desires: because after the shooting John has changed as well, developing a more spiritual outlook on life. He now views his relationship with Alma as a spiritual connection, and attributes his change to something she has inspired. She has become, to him, untouchable like the angel of the fountain under which they meet in the first scene.

This production of *Summer and Smoke* is excellent all round, and rightly puts the play out there again in an impressive revival with a stellar cast, visionary direction and innovative design.

Imperial College Choir



Bach Mass in B Minor
Holy Trinity, Sloane Square – Saturday 17th March, 7pm



Acts announced

The acts for Summer Ball 2018 have been announced, completing plans for an amazing end-of-year celebration on 23 June. Headlining the event are Blonde and James Hype, with support from Gemma Cairney and Goldierocks. The After Party performer is Guilty Pleasures.

Summer Ball is an annual celebration for all year groups with a free fun fair, fireworks display, photobooth, great value food and drinks, and a roster of performers including student groups and headline acts.

The theme for this year's ball is Roaring 20s which was decided by students in a Facebook poll.

Summer Ball 2018 starts at 19:00 and runs until 02:00 on South Kensington Campus, with an after party at Beit Quad until 06:00.

Get tickets at imperialcollegeunion.org/summerball



LSE vs Imperial 2018

Online tickets are sold out but you can still witness the showdown between Imperial College London and London School of Economics on Saturday 17 March at Heston Sports Ground.

Just make your way directly to the venue in Hounslow at 10:00 to enjoy a full day of fixtures across 12 sports. Please note, however, that transportation will not be available for those without a pre-sold ticket.

The action starts at 10 and is the first ever varsity match up between LSE and Imperial. Come support team Imperial and help us take the first title.



Bubble Party

Time is running out to get your tickets for Spring Carnival 2018. We're bringing the term to a close with an amazing bubble party at Beit Quad next Friday 23 March.

Thousands of bubbles illuminated by UV cannons will fill the venue for the ultimate UV bubble party experience. We've got hundreds of free glowsticks to give away, as well as live entertainment.

Expect face painters, live music, drinks deals, and food service until 01:00. Spring Carnival starts at 20:00 and ends at 03:00.

Get tickets at imperialcollegeunion.org/springcarnival18



Sports Strategy

Imperial College Union and Sport Imperial have joined forces to create a new joint vision for sport and physical activity at Imperial.

Over the next four years this strategy will look to promote, support and enable students and staff to enjoy a more active lifestyle. There are six overarching objectives in the strategy and feedback is invited.

There will be a discussion forum on Monday 19 March, 13.00–14.00, SAF Rm 275D - MDL2 and a special Student Sports Clubs meeting on Thursday 22 March, 17.00–18.00, SALC 10, Sherfield Building.

Read about the strategy at imperialcollegeunion.org/sportstrategy

BOOKS

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Japanese literature through the ages

Books Writer **Pavan Inguva** discusses his love for Japanese literature, and introduces two of his favourites.

BOOKS

Pavan Inguva

Books Writer

I have become quite partial to Japanese literature as a literary category. Most examples share overarching similarities in aesthetic flavour, such as the notion of impermanence of being, which derive from both cultural and religious developments throughout Japanese history. These sensitivities, observable in other Japanese art forms such as ceramics or paintings, result in a characteristically sublime writing style no matter when it was written.

For example, works by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, a 17th century playwright who wrote canonical pieces for *Bunraku* (puppet theatre) and *Kabuki* (live theatre) still retain a certain freshness and sophistication if read today. This is not to say that the authors write in the same style, but rather that the broader aesthetic sensibilities and literary traditions lend a certain elegance.

I would recommend Donald Keene's *The Pleasure of Japanese Literature* for a more comprehensive review on the nexus of Japanese history and aesthetics and its impact on literature. A commonality I particularly enjoy is the emphasis that these authors have placed on the self, going to great lengths to showcase the personal: tensions, passions and proclivities. I felt this characteristic has made many works relatable, helping me to crystallise and frame raw thoughts and feelings.

Modern Japanese literature uniquely



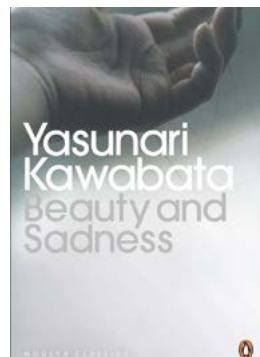
Kinkaku-ji, the Golden Pavilion which is the subject of Mishima's novel// Wikimedia

combines modernist and/or post-modernist themes with the Japanese aesthetic, including its perspectives and history, into a powerful read. Renowned authors like Natsume Soseki and Ryunosuke Akutagawa are characteristic of pre-WW2 literature, incorporating modernist themes and writing styles in their prominent works signifying the changing zeitgeist.

Naturalised foreign authors like Lafcadio Hearn have also gained some prominence, reflecting the increasing diversity that came with international trade and migration. This period also saw the development of Japan's first Nobel laureate in Literature, Yasunari Kawabata, who received the prize in 1968. Post-war Japanese literature saw several other prominent authors like Kobo Abe, Yukio Mishima, and Kenzaburo Oe (Japan's 2nd Nobel

laureate for literature) who started to incorporate contemporary and post-modern themes and writing styles into a Japanese context.

Even more contemporary authors like Haruki Murakami have been producing outstanding pieces of work (I quite liked *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*), contributing to a flourishing literary tradition.



Yasunari Kawabata's *Beauty and Sadness*

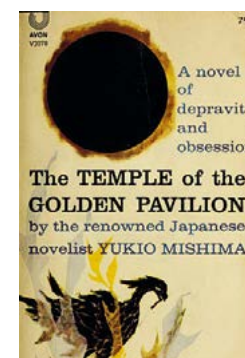
Kawabata edged out Mishima for the Nobel

prize in literature in 1968. He is best known for the books *Snow Country*, *Thousand Cranes*, and *The Old Capital* amongst others. Much of his work skilfully combines the intrinsic passions and feelings people have in our human (and particularly in our romantic) relationships, with the cultural and socio-political attitudes and tensions of the time.

Beauty and Sadness, while a nice short read, is an excellent representation of Kawabata's ability to capture the nature of a romantic passion between two lovers and the consequent tensions that exist in the self and those around. There are times when his descriptions almost enable you to vicariously experience the depths of such experiences.

It follows Otoko, currently a renowned painter and her youthful but life-changing romance with Oki, a much older

man. Their passionate affair resulted in Otoko having a stillborn child. Kawabata artistically shows the intrinsic tensions that we have during the peaks and troughs of romance and its failure; the sort of romance that transcends time and always lingers in the back of your mind, manifesting in every sigh and chuckle.



Yukio Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*

Mishima to date is one of my favourite

authors. His life story is fascinating to say the least and his writing is thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking.

A key theme present in his work is the notion of purity and beauty. The Golden Pavilion (also known as *Kinkaku-ji*) is a famous Zen Buddhist temple in Kyoto dating back to the 14th century. Mishima presents a fictionalised version of the 1950 incident when the temple was burnt down by a young monk.

We start with Mishima outlining various formative experiences the protagonist, Mizoguchi, has as a child. This is where the notion of *Kinkaku-ji* being the pinnacle of aesthetic ideals is implanted into him. Following his father's death, Mizoguchi becomes a novice priest at *Kinkaku-ji*. As the story progresses, we can see how his thoughts are shaped by his inner tensions and his interactions with a spectrum of characters, such as Kashiwagi (a twisted university friend with a philosophical bent) and the temple's Superior.

This results in a sublime and nuanced discourse on the nature of beauty and how one interacts with the concept. Mizoguchi found himself impotent as the idea of *Kinkaku-ji* seized him. As his thought process developed, or arguably as his mental illness worsened, the motivation to burn the temple deepened, leading to its eventual destruction with Mizoguchi enjoying a cigarette as the temple burns. The entire novel, while complex in story, remains accessible and serves as an excellent introduction to Mishima's work and Japanese literature as a category.

FILM

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Can we break the glass chair, and bring more women

Currently only 11% of films are made by women. We need to try and break this trend, but could 2018 be the breakout year for women in cinema?

FILM

Ashley Luckyram
Film Editor

Hollywood is narcissistic. A community that reflects the vanity and self-obsession of its constituents, when Tinseltown reflects back on 2017 they will not remember it for the Fall of Mosul, the Rohingya Crisis, or the ousting of Robert Mugabe, but for the wave of allegations of sexual misconduct that saw a number of La-La Land's power players – from Kevin Spacey to Dustin Hoffman – banished to the shadows. The watershed moment came in October, with almost 100 different women accusing producer Harvey Weinstein of varying degrees of sexual assault; since then the number of accused men in the

entertainment industry stands at around 200. It is disturbing to think that up until this recent tipping point these men were able to get away with such vile actions, highlighting just what a colossal change in

“It is disturbing to think that up until this recent tipping point men were able to get away with such vile actions”

culture is required.

Even more worrying has been the focus on the perpetrators and not the

victims, to the extent that some even sympathised with the former and suggested that the latter might just be disingenuous. While it is important that we allow due process and understand the difference between allegations and confirmed guilt, the National Sexual Violence Resource Centre estimates that just 2% of sexual assault accusations are false. If someone is accused of sexual misconduct, there is statistically a pretty good chance they did it. USA Today observed fairly early on that 2017 was the year in which sexual harassment became a fireable offence – a long overdue development. It is easy to see why the likes of Michael Haneke and Catherine Deneuve have expressed concerns about the momentum of the Weinstein Effect, and the story that broke about Aziz Ansari did give weight

to their argument that the #MeToo and Time's Up movements have the potential to turn into a witch hunt. What is clear is that they are the beginnings of a belated conversation whereby society can hopefully start to reshape and redefine what is and is not appropriate behaviour, and move to a new equilibrium that makes for safe and happy lives for everyone.

The ramifications of the Weinstein Effect have been wide-spreading. It is worth noting that he is not just a man guilty of forcing women to engage in sexual acts with him in exchange for lubricating the progression of their careers. Weinstein, both with his first venture into the film industry with Miramax, and later with The Weinstein Company, is also a bully. While he made a huge contribution to American independent cinema, launching the careers of the likes of Steven Soderbergh, Quentin Tarantino, and David O. Russell, as well as providing an audience for international fare from such names as Krzysztof Kieslowski, Pedro Almodóvar, and Abbas Kiarostami, Weinstein is renowned for his beyond aggressive campaigns during awards season, managing to as recently as last year drive the average *Lion* to six Academy Award nominations by throwing around his significant weight. It was a much welcomed change to have a much cleaner and more respectful Oscar race this year. Far more significantly, however, the behaviour of Weinstein and others has led to a lobbying for greater,

deserved female empowerment.

In addition to a conversation about the undercurrents of sexual practice, there has been much discussion about the marginalisation of women in film. So rarely do we see films led by women, and even rarer is the film created from a female perspective. While

“So rarely do we see films led by women, and even rarer made by women”

the likes of *Lady Bird*, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, *The Shape of Water*, *Phantom Thread*, and *The Post* all featured strong female characters in leading roles, in 2017 only 11% of films were made by women, a figure that has not increased since 2000. As well as delivering more positive portrayals of women on screen, we need to get more women working behind the camera. There was much celebration when Greta Gerwig became only the fifth woman to be nominated for Best Director and Rachel Morrison became the first woman nominated for Best Cinematography. Yet if we do not make changes at a grassroots level, and have more studios, production companies, and independent financiers invest in women, it will be difficult to see women like Gerwig regularly nominated.

Speaking from a purely statistical perspective, when there are only five slots available for Best Director, and only one in ten contending films is made by a woman (a figure even lower if one accounts for the type of mini-major studio films that tend to garner awards attention), it would be unlikely to have a woman nominated in the category every year.

It must be said that 2017 was a very good year for female directors, if not in quantity then in quality and prominence. Gerwig's *Lady Bird* led that narrative, earning five Oscar nominations as one of the year's best reviewed films. Patty Jenkins was the other big story, delivering a colossal box office success with *Wonder Woman*, and being rewarded with a sequel that comes with a \$10 million pay day. Looking beyond those two headline-makers, there was significant acclaim for Lynne Ramsay (*You Were Never Really Here*), Jane Campion (*Top of the Lake: China Girl*), Chloe Zhao (*The Rider*), Claire Denis (*Let the Sunshine In*), Agnès Varda (*Faces Places*), Naomi Kawase (*Radiance*), and Sofia Coppola (*The Beguiled*) at Cannes, while the summer saw Kathryn Bigelow, thus far the only woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director, return with another gritty and truthful drama with *Detroit*. Going back earlier in the year, there was acclaim at Sundance for Dee Rees (*Mudbound*), Eliza Hittman (*Beach Rats*), Maggie Betts (*Novitiate*), Zoe Lister-Jones (*Band*



Agnès Varda with a furry friend // *Le Pacte*

FILM

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directors into the film industry?

Aid), Gillian Robbespierre (*Landline*), Kitty Green (*Casting JonBenet*), Maya Forbes (*The Polka King*), Cate Shortland (*Berlin Syndrome*), and Helene Hegemann (*Axol Overkill*) in a line-up that was close to 50% female, indicating a wave of change at independent level. Ilyikó Enyedi's *On Body and Soul* won the top prize in Berlin, and went on to earn a Best Foreign Language Film nomination, a race in which Angelina Jolie was unexpectedly snubbed for *First They Killed My Father*. At the same festival, Sally Potter (*The Party*) and Agnieszka Holland (*Spoor*) had work well received. Even if Ana Lily Amirpour's *The Bad Batch* was a critical and box office bomb, it was refreshing to see a young woman able to take risks and create a work of such singular vision.

There are still questions marks amidst this wave of positive change, however. It is unfathomable that Patty Jenkins, having directed Charlize Theron to the Oscar in one of the greatest performances of the century in *Monster*, had to wait 14 years to follow up her debut feature. Ramsay returned after six years, during which time she had a tumultuous affair in charge of *Jane Got a Gun* which saw her quit in the first morning of production. That earned her a reputation as being difficult to work with, a tag she has referred to as "bullshit". As Mark Kermode rightly observed, were Ramsay a man she would be more likely to be labelled a perfectionist and a genius.

It will be interesting now to see whether last year's success for female directors, most notably Gerwig and Jenkins, will translate into a consistent march towards equality

behind the camera. It will evidently take a number of years to properly assess the impact of the recent shake up in Hollywood on cinema, as of course we will not see any projects that are now benefiting for another couple of years, but the early indications in terms of festival line-ups and distribution for women this coming year are good. Sundance again seems to be leading the way: Desiree Akhavan's *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* took the top prize, beating out work from Jennifer Fox (*The Tale*), Reed Morano (*I Think We're Alone Now*), and Christina Choe (*Nancy*) in the U.S.

"It is unfathomable Patty Jenkins had to wait 14 years to follow up her debut"

Dramatic Competition. Elsewhere, Elizabeth Chomko (*What They Had*), Claire McCarthy (*Ophelia*), Cathy Yan (*Dead Pigs*) and Isabella Eklöf (*Holiday*) had films play, while there were welcome returns for Debra Granik (*Leave No Trace*) and Tamara Jenkins (*Private Life*). Granik has not made a narrative feature in eight years since she launched Jennifer Lawrence's career on the way to four Oscar nominations for *Winter's Bone*, while Jenkins (no relation to Patty) has not released any work in eleven years since *The Savages* got two Oscar nods back in 2007. The examples of Granik and Jenkins demonstrate a worrying trend of female filmmakers being forced

into long periods of inactivity by studios reluctant to back them in spite of their critical and commercial success.

There is also much to look forward to later in the year. Earlier this week Julia Hart's latest *Fast Color* was warmly received at South by Southwest. Early reactions to Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time* have been mixed, but that should not take away from the fact that she is only the fourth female director to have been given a budget of above \$100 million. Josie Rourke, best known for adapting Shakespeare with a feminist spin on stage, will make her cinematic debut in November, pitting Saoirse Ronan against Margot Robbie in potential awards contender *Mary, Queen of Scots*. Alice Winocour, known for her underrated thriller *Disorder*, deals with astronauts in her next feature *Proxima*, starring Eva Green. Another acclaimed French director heading to space is Claire Denis, making her English-language debut *High Life* with Robert Pattinson in the lead. Pattinson also stars in the first part of Joanna Hogg's Martin Scorsese-produced double-header *The Souvenir*. Like Pattinson, Nicole Kidman is one of the best actors in the business when it comes to choosing projects from interesting filmmakers across the globe. Karyn Kusama's *The Invitation* was one of the best horror films of recent years. They team up for crime thriller *Destroyer* this year. Elle Fanning has become the face of teenage angst in cinema over the past couple of years, and she will continue in this vein in Mélanie Laurent's adaptation of *Galveston*, a novel by *True Detective* showrunner Nic Pizzolati-



Lady Bird saw Greta Gerwig getting behind the camera // A24

to. Laurent is best known to English-speaking audiences for her role as Shosanna Dreyfus in *Inglourious Basterds*, but she has already shown serious chops as a screenwriter and filmmaker for one so young.

The success of *Lady Bird* was hailed to the heavens, and called by some the first female-centred coming-of-age film from a female director. Anyone that suggests that has a short memory and has forgotten Marielle Heller's excellent *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*. Jennifer Kent's debut *The Babadook* has been attributed to many a nightmare. She heads to 1920s Tasmania for *The Nightingale*, which she claimed is not a horror, though that is exactly what somebody who was actually making a horror would say. On the television front it will be interesting to see how Andrea Arnold furthers

Jean-Marc Vallée's work in *Big Little Lies*.

This year's Berlin Film Festival featured a panel named 50:50 by 2020. Rather than giving in to the pressure to lay out a black carpet in lieu of the traditional red one, festival director Dieter Kosslick demanded that we have frank and intelli-

"The success of Lady Bird was hailed to the heavens, and called the first female-centred coming-of-age film"

gent conversations about the deep-seated issues

surrounding the treatment of women in film, instead of the meaningless displays designed more to protect the images of Hollywood's elite than drive real, important change. For us to jump from 10:90 to 50:50 in three years is perhaps too ambitious a target. That said, it appears as though we are in the midst of a significant paradigm shift, and hopefully soon the stories of Harvey Weinstein's seedy hotel room massages, of Mark Wahlberg being paid millions as Michelle Williams is paid \$800 for reshoots, and of Patty Jenkins having to wait 14 years to make her sophomore effort will be a distant, unsettling memory – a stomach-churning reminder of our ugly failures and the shameful way we have deprived of ourselves of great art in the name of narrow-minded bigotry.

FILM

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You Were Never Really Here – A thriller crossed with a horror crossed with an intense character study

Joaquin Phoenix tracks down missing girls for a living and, unsurprisingly, things go wrong. Film Writer Lawrence Good looks into his descent into madness and gives us his take on this nightmare-fuelled thriller.

FILM

**YOU WERE NEVER
REALLY HERE**



★★★★

Dir: Lynne Ramsay. **Script:** Lynne Ramsay. **Starring:** Joaquin Phoenix, Ekaterina Samsonov, Alex Manette, John Doman, Judith Robertse Fanning. 90 minutes

Lawrence Good
Film Writer

Tilda Swinton once called Lynne Ramsey “the Real McCoy”: a director whose films could not have been made by anybody else. Best known for her quiet and introspective work, Ramsay has garnered much critical acclaim – even having an “Every Frame a Painting” episode dedicated to her work. At first glance her latest seems a startling volte-face: the woman who brought us *We need to Talk about Kevin*, with its tense family interactions, has now directed a pulpy and violent thriller? Yet under the surface the two stories have much in common – most prominently that the psychological aspect of violence can be every bit as damaging as the physical. *You Were Never Really Here* is one of our most surprising action-thrillers of recent years: mostly quiet and restrained, tension builds until suddenly exploding into a pulsating blast of sound and fury.

The main character is Joe (Joaquin Phoenix), an aging PI whose principle

investigative technique is violence. He seems to specialise in tracking down kidnapped children, though his predilection for ball-peen hammers suggests his clientele is the sort who want rough justice. The film does feature a strong supporting cast, including Judith Roberts as Joe’s mother, John Doman as his boss, and Ekaterina Samsonov as a girl kidnapped and forced into prostitution; all of them exist to a greater or lesser extent at the periphery with little screen-time and fewer lines. *You Were Never Really Here* is most truly a concerto for a solo actor, and Phoenix excels as the soloist. Joe comes with

“The film is most truly a concerto for a solo actor, and Phoenix excels as the soloist”

all the usual trappings – a painkiller addiction, PTSD from a military career long past and a childhood mutilated by an abusive father. Yet the control and embodiment that Phoenix brings to the character is staggering. It’s nigh impossible to believe that this is the same man who played Commodus in *Gladiator* or Freddie Quell in *The Master*. This is made all the more impressive given how spare the script is: mostly he acts solely through his haggard face and weighty



Who filled their water gun with tomato juice?// Amazon Studios

body language. The score, by Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead fame, reinforces this sense of concerto with a bifurcated structure. Using extended periods of either silence or a pulsating and violent soundtrack, the film can either let you stay relatively relaxed or clench you in tightly as it ramps up the tension. This masterfully controls the mood, and Ramsay has an exacting power over your emotional response as a viewer.

You Were Never Really Here wears its influences lightly but deeply. It is so original and distinct yet bears the hallmarks of a wide variety of films and film movements. It is most definitely a noir: filled with pessimism, violence and a pulpy plot. Yet it lacks the heightened sense that defines most noirs

from *Double Indemnity* to *L.A. Confidential*. This realistic tone framing a rather extraordinary plot mirrors another film that *You Were Never Really Here* consciously apes – Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver*. Both films share a protagonist who struggles to fit into society, who fail to find meaning in their lives, and whose violence reflects their inner turmoil. But these two broken men are broken in different ways. Travis Bickle is the more detached; he will try anything to define himself, though can only understand the languages of violence and sex. It is mere happenstance that he ends up acclaimed for killing a pimp – he could have murdered the Presidential candidate instead. Joe, however, feels like he was once functional before washing up in his

current wrecked state – an oxymoronic mixture of rage, fear, and apathy. He does not seek validation from others, their desires merely act as a loose framework shaping his actions. Indeed, whilst Bickle seems unafraid of death, Joe is haunted by suicidal thoughts and it is only those that rely on him who break him out of his apathetic bent, driving him forwards. *You Were Never Really Here*’s other strong influence is the horror genre. *Psycho* is aptly referred to – both films ramp up the sense of dread and then suddenly explode into violence. Ramsay also visually quotes *The Shining* – an athematic reminder of the self-destructive capabilities of powerful men.

Ultimately, *You Were Never Really Here* is more of a character study

than a straight up thriller.

“Ultimately, the film is more of a character study than a straight up thriller”

It is more interested in how Joe reacts at every moment, rather than the implications of his actions as they ripple through the wider world. If you are prepared to accept the film and its preoccupations on its own terms then you will find an engaging and thoughtful film, utterly unlike anything else in cinemas.

MUSIC

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David Byrne is far too happy for my liking

MUSIC

AMERICAN UTOPIA



★★

Artist: David Byrne. **Label:** Nonesuch. **Top Tracks:** Everybody's Coming To My House; I Dance Like This. **For Fans Of:** Talking Heads; John Cale. 37 minutes

Adrian LaMoury
Music Editor

As frontman and founder of New York art-rock band Talking Heads, David Byrne is no stranger to experimentation. Since their final album, *Naked*, in 1988, he's released a string of semi-successful solo albums and collaborative projects with the likes of Brian Eno and St. Vincent. Something of a renaissance man, Byrne has dabbled in art, film and theatre; earning himself a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Golden Globe in the process. His book, *How*

Music Works, serves as a bible for aspiring artists and music theorists. New LP, *American Utopia*, is his first nominally solo release since 2004.

"Byrne deftly navigates an array of genres and styles. From piano-backed balladry to rippling electronica"

Always difficult to pin down, Byrne deftly navigates an array of genres and styles, from piano-backed balladry to rippling electronica (supplied by Eno), each crevice filled with influences from across the globe. However, one can't help but feel that this

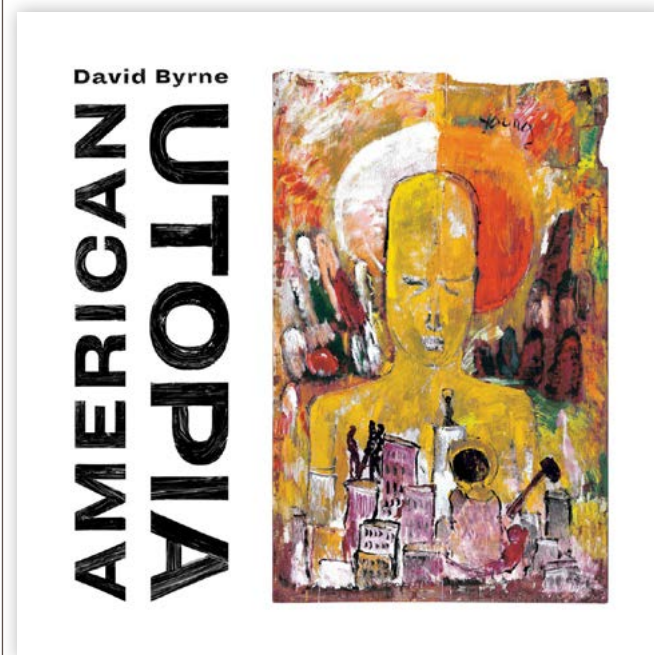
eclecticism comes at the expense of consistency, with very little in the way of musical coherence across the ten tracks.

Literally, the themes are clearer. You'd be forgiven for assuming that *American Utopia* must be ironically titled, but Byrne assures us this isn't so. Part of his multimedia project *Reasons to be Cheerful*, the record's message is one of optimism and positivity. It's an interesting sidestep from a man who built a career out of channelling modern life's anxieties. Instead of expressing his disillusion at society's commodities (think *'Once in a Lifetime'*), he celebrates the art of the ordinary and champions the mundane in campfire style sing-alongs. *'Every Day is a Miracle'*, with all its farmyard imagery ("Now the chicken imagines a heaven / Full of roosters and plenty of corn / And God is a very old rooster / And eggs are like Jesus, his son"),

comes across as more of a Sunday school ditty than a piece of avant-rock.

"It's an interesting sidestep from a man who built a career out of channelling modern life's anxieties"

Now don't get me wrong, I appreciate what he's trying to say, I really do. But there's something about the vibrancy of this album that feels, not insincere but, simple. Maybe that's just me. After all, being cynical is easy while genuine cheer is difficult to summon. But Byrne sounds tired and blunted. Attempts to veer off the beaten track



Have you ever tried potato printing? // Nonesuch

such as *'Bullet'* (an ode to a gunshot wound) and *'Dog's Mind'* ("We are dogs in our own paradise / In a theme park of our own / Doggy dancers doing doody / Doggy dreaming all day long") just come across as plain weird. Byrne has also come under fire for the lack of diversity in his production team – 25 men - zero women - for which

he publicly apologised, calling his decisions "negligent".

All this is not to say that Byrne isn't still at the pinnacle of his art, it'd be unfair to say he's lost touch. But, though it pains me, it's clear that he's really missed the mark on this one.

It takes a village to raise a song

MUSIC

SUPERORGANISM



★★★★

Artist: Superorganism. **Label:** Domino. **Top Tracks:** Night Time; Everybody Wants to Be Famous; Something For Your M.I.N.D.. **For Fans Of:** Superfood; Bad Sounds. 33 minutes

Bobbi Lang
Music Writer

Fittingly, my debut review is Superorganism's self-titled debut album, released at the beginning of March. Superorganism is a band formed by bonding

over memes and Skype rehearsals. Seven of their eight members currently reside in East London with eighth member, Soul, living in Sydney. In group photos they use a large cut-out of Soul's face. The band's mix of nationalities and backgrounds shines through in these 10 songs championed by Domino Records. The album provides 33 minutes of gloriously eclectic motifs, unusual soundbites and meticulous lyrics. ("Oh, have you ever woke up from a daydream / And realised that the world's gone crazy? / You people are all the same / Going blah blah blah, going bang bang bang").

My main issue with this

album is its bitty nature, the overwhelming use of fragmented samples in places can make for frustrating listening. I can't help but think that if *'Nai's March'* was to come on during your Spotify shuffle it would be skipped, not enjoyed. That being said, the

"Superorganism is a band formed from bonding over memes and Skype rehearsals"

album flows well from start to finish with the most notable tracks being *'Night Time'* and the singles *'Everybody Wants to Be Famous'* and *'Something For Your M.I.N.D.'*, where the immersive sounds pull through.

Whilst the dreamy tones and quirkiness go part way to making up for the lack of depth, it is far from revolutionary and I personally believe it could have been curated slightly more carefully to give it that edge and storyline.

I can imagine what a magnificently energetic live gig this would be, an 8-piece trying to groove their way onto the indie/psychedelic pop scene. You can find them in



Saccharomyces cerevisiae under microscope // Domino

London, following their 17-date North American Tour, on 25th May. A

fitting soundtrack to welcome in Spring and the festival season.

GAMES

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Dual screens are the only way to multitask // Flickr/ Travis Rigel Lukas Hornung

In defence of video game walkthroughs

Walkthroughs get a lot of bad reputation from the people who don't use them, however this is uncalled for as they provide a benefit to those who use them.

GAMES

Saad Ahmed
Games Editor

With the advent of video games and the internet also came the onset of walkthroughs, guides which tell you how to play a game and get through the story. They can vary in complexity, from telling you only the main points of what to do, to literally spelling out how to cover every little corner. This is something which pisses off a lot of gamers and is a source of endless debate and discussion.

In their defence, people who hate walkthroughs are coming from an understandable place. The point of a game is to immerse yourself in another world. You get involved in a story, learn to master the controls and gameplay

and in turn, get to experience the joy of working things out and finding interesting discoveries by yourself. Easter eggs can be considered as nice little rewards for the hardcore gamers who go all out and try and get everything they can out of a game. They may feel like it's something they've earned for getting so invested in the game. When other people essentially use a manual and get those trinkets for hardly any work, it can seem like the other people didn't really "deserve" the prize by comparison.

Complicating the issue is that games, unlike other forms of non-interactive media, require the player to act in certain ways in order to proceed through the experience. When you listen to a song, all you have to do is listen; only the music actually stopping will affect your ability to listen to it. A video game, however,

only really progresses in the way you're able to play it.

In addition to this, people play games for all kinds of reasons and to some, I'm sure, playing a game in any way besides "optimally" feels like a waste of time. There are plenty of games that have "miss-ables", which are

"Some people get more enjoyment from actually doing something"

sometimes designed so a new player would only know about them if they had actually read or heard about it beforehand. Some people don't feel like trekking back through a

lengthy game just to hit a few more side quests or recruit certain characters. While there are some notable exceptions, not doing them shouldn't make it seem like your play-through was an "incomplete" experience.

The biggest reason as to why people resort to using game guides are because of the time investment games require. Most of us aren't teenagers with all the time in the world. As we get older and go further through life, we get more commitments; as students, we have reports, problems sheets and assignments to catch up amongst other things. As can be expected, this means there are fewer and fewer opportunities to play games.

Some games are also long, complex and require hours of investment to get through. While this is arguably part of the fun and experience, some people

get more enjoyment from actually doing something than wandering around aimlessly and hoping that they stumble on the way forward. That's just how some games are designed; given that, it's no wonder people use walkthroughs to speed things along. For other people, using walkthroughs is just another way to get through their Steam library as fast as they can. That's what I'm personally guilty of doing, I blame all the great value Steam sales that just keep on coming.

Of course, walkthroughs aren't the only way to get out if you get stuck. A simple set of actions like pausing the game, doubling back a little and working your way through can be more productive than you might think. And sometimes, all you need to do is to turn off the game, sleep on it, and come back to the problem with a fresh

mind.

At the end of the day, I'd say that as a player, you should simply engage in some introspection about how you personally experience things, about how your brain digests experiences, and then decide from there how playing certain games would best suit your tastes. Because honestly, while it may seem like there's only one way to play a game, such as going in blind and learning things for yourselves, you should ultimately do what seems the best for you. We all just want to get the best possible gaming experience from each game. Sure some people may denounce walkthroughs, but at the end of the day, they just help people enjoy and get through the game in their own way. And as long as everyone is having fun, who are we to really complain.

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20:00 - 22:00

Cocktail Night

Every Tuesday
18:00 - 23:00

CSP Wednesday

Every Wednesday
19:00 - 01:00

Spring Carnival

Friday 23 March
20:00 - 03:00

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Cocktail Club

Every Tuesday
19:30 - 23:00

Pub Quiz

Every Thursday
19:30 - 23:00

PGI Friday

Every Friday
16:00 - 23:00

Wine Tasting

Wednesday 28 March
17:30 - 20:00

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Free Pool

Daily
17:00 - 23:00

Pub Quiz

Every Tuesday
18:30 - 23:00

Club Reynolds

Saturday 3 March
20:00 - 02:00

Whiskey Week

12 - 17 March

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TRAVEL

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Felix's Guide to backpacking in South East Asia

South East Asia is a popular destination between backpackers but long-term backpacking trips require a great deal of knowledge and preparation. Luckily, travel writer YanKai Kee has shared some backpacking 101 and his first-hand experience of touring the area.

TRAVEL

YanKai Kee

Travel Writer

I'm sure many people either are thinking about or have had the idea before of a backpacking trip around South East Asia (SEA). It's a region filled with its own unique culture, traditional cuisine that you can't find anywhere else in the world, and – most importantly – its beautifully untouched yet accessible nature. As a boy who grew up in Malaysia, I had the luxury of enjoying all of these as well as experiencing them on my first ever backpacking trip.

Conveniently, the other SEA countries are located within three hours of flight time from my homeland, and I'd been particularly motivated to visit Vietnam and Cambodia since I was very young (I mean after watching the famous Casey Neistat's travel videos on YouTube). This

article will be helpful for first-time backpackers and/or those who plan to visit South East Asia. It covers points like travelling essentials, special tips, and the local culture of different South East Asian countries which include Vietnam, Cambodia, and Malaysia!

Travelling essentials

The right mindset when preparing for a backpacking trip should always be: "Pack only the essentials for survival, and pack light". A backpack size of 30-40L is ideal to fit all of your travelling essentials. Personally, I went for the cheap Highlanders Starav 45L rucksack sold by Argos. I needed that much space because of the camera gear I tend to carry around, which took up half the backpack. Hence, you can imagine how little space that was for the 'essentials'. Medicines and travel insurance are vital, so do some research to understand the risks in the country you're trav-



Wedding in Tioman Island, Malaysia // YanKai Kee

elling to. Painkillers and medicines for common sickness, like colds and fevers, are a must. Other than that, well-known travel insurance is offered by World Nomads which covers up to 140 countries and has a good policy that fits most backpackers' needs.

Also, as a backpacker, try to plan ahead for a wide range of activities you'll be doing, which

includes selection of proper clothes and shoes. For clothes, pack very little of each type but bring a wide range – sports, city-touring, swimming, and wedding, as you never know. Besides that, a good pair of walking boots or trainers is always a backpacker's favourite. Also, bring a camera if you're an avid photographer like me, but phone-photography is good enough for most. Lastly, don't forget to borrow a good thick English book from Imperial library, just to let everyone else know that you're smart.

What's it like in SEA

When compared to the UK, SEA is very humid and hot. On average, the temperature there ranges from 25 to 32°C, with 80% humidity. This makes perspiration a problem for those who have never visited before. Showering 2-3 times a day is normal practice, hence be prepared to change your clothes very often. While

"One crucial mistake most people make is over-romanticising a backpacking journey"

I was backpacking, hand washing my clothes was my daily task. With a little bit of soap, some water, and a basin, you're good to go, and then you just need to leave it outdoors. Do not worry – there will be plenty of sunshine! Again, with the heat and humidity, slippers are very commonly worn for outdoor walking so get your hands on a pair if you have a chance!

Food here is very different from typical European cuisine. You might not like it initially. However, definitely keep on trying as I promise that you'll fall in love with it. In this

region, the best food is found on the streets, since very rarely is the traditional cuisine done right in a fancy restaurant. To find the best meal spots, ask the locals, look for signs if the restaurant is full, or look up food bloggers online as they know best.

Best mindset

One crucial mistake most people make is over-romanticising a backpacking journey. By and large, we travel to escape the norm and to relax our minds and bodies before heading back to the 'reality'; yet, backpacking is even more physically tiring than our regular lifestyle. In addition, backpackers often have to make compromises during the journey as money supply is low. People are willing to go to different extents when it comes to saving money in general, but to save money while you're travelling is yet another story. So in most cases, backpacking is quite



Street food of Hanoi, Vietnam // YanKai Kee

TRAVEL

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tough.

The reason why I think everyone should have this mindset before going on an epic backpacking journey is so they can prepare their minds for the worst. To use a cliché: you are going to enjoy something even more if you set your expectations low. Moments of leaving a city and realising you left your phone behind, having to force yourself to wash clothes despite the tiring day, or having bad weather for consecutive days can dilute your backpacking experience. But once you've accepted there's also the 'dull and boring' part within the trip and prepared your mind for such hardships, I guarantee you'll have a

“Trust me, you don't want to wake up in the middle of the night playing hide and seek with bed bugs”

memorable trip.

However, having said that, how can I not mention those beautiful moments you're most likely going to enjoy during a backpacking journey? Backpacking is for the beautiful panoramic sceneries that most people are too tired to hike to; it is for the story-telling sessions you get when you meet fellow backpackers; it is for those nights where you fall asleep listening to the waves of the ocean, and so on. It's just like life, isn't it? Having a cocktail of new experiences, adrenaline rushes, fun and tiring moments.

Finally, one of the most important mindsets you need to have is acknowledging yourself as an outsider. You're given a chance to explore beautiful countries, hence

respect the locals and their culture. For example, in Malaysia, it's prohibited for a man to shake a Malay woman's hand.

Practical tips

Next up is something practical that one must take into account – hostels. Choosing accommodation is crucial since the hostel is a 'safe-house' when one is travelling to a foreign country. You need to be able to trust the employees that work there with protecting your belongings, providing good travelling tips, and keeping the cleanliness of your bed. Trust me, you don't want to wake up in the middle of the night playing hide and seek with bed bugs. One popular site trusted by many backpackers is HostelWorld. I usually prioritise reading reviews about security, cleanliness, and value for money, while the rest are bonuses.

When staying at backpacker hostels, you'll most often encounter like-minded people that travel from different corners of the world, so don't be afraid to say "Hi" and introduce yourself! To me, sharing experiences is like viewing the world through the story-teller's eyes, and you grow a dif-

ferent perspective as you go along the journey and meet even more people. It's a rare and unique learning experience, especially for people like me who had lived in Malaysia for most of my life.

Special tips

Disclaimer: the following are activities which I found to be fun, but you might not find such experiences to be equally entertaining.

If you're visiting Vietnam and are of the adventurous type, definitely try to buy a motorbike for either the Hanoi–Ho Chi

Minh or Ho Chi Minh–Hanoi bike trip (then sell it off at the destination city). I didn't have a chance to try the long journeys but took short trips between cities and had a hell of a lot of fun. Rated as one of the most scenic highway in Vietnam, Hai Van Pass is where I rode during my time in Danang. Then again, riding a motorbike in Vietnam requires good to excellent driving skills due to its traffic conditions, that can only be described as wild. It's also worth noting that such motorbike journeys are illegal unless you have a driving licence recognised by the

Vietnamese government, so do it at your own risk. Other than that, if you are an avid hiker, the south of Vietnam would suit you very much! Places such as Sapa are straight out of a children's fairy tale if you ask me – people live in a valley with symmetrical paddy fields running all along both sides. If you go during the right season, the views will be exceptionally memorable.

In Cambodia, an amazing backpacking hostel, known as Monkey Maya, is located at Ream National Park, Sinhanoukville. Only 30 minutes away by tuk-tuk

from the main city, the place is a quiet nature hostel, perfect if you want to escape from the hustle and bustle. I was there for three nights and absolutely loved the vibes. The staff is a mix of locals and Europeans that aren't shy to share their hostel's weird and funky culture.

Finally, for the country I grew up in, Malaysia, the two main destinations I'll introduce are Penang and Tioman Island, both of which are islands along the east and west coasts of Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia). In Penang, go for the local food, but don't just rely on the internet as the locals always know better places. In Tioman Island (personal favourite here), there are several villages which you can stay in. I recommend Genting village as it has a good balance between civilisation and nature: it offers accessibility to the internet and food, yet it's rural enough not to lose the vibes of a small Malay village by the beach. In addition, other than being a diving and snorkelling heaven, Tioman is not short of adventurous hiking trails where a local guide is needed.

Ed.: To find out more about YanKai's travelling experiences or get more tips, you can visit his Instagram (@yankai_77).



The scenic view along the valleys of Sapa, Vietnam // YanKai Kee



Hiking group in Sapa, Vietnam // YanKai Kee

It’s nearly Easter – season of chocolate, chocolate, and

FOOD

Andrada Balmez
Food Editor

For unknown reasons, Easter is not my favourite holiday, and making food for it is not as pleasant as cooking for Christmas. So, Easter for me is more a holiday of sweets – especially Easter eggs. In my opinion, the only things that should be cooked during Easter have to have chocolate. Even if you have no idea what to make for Easter, you can always have everyday food and then impress everyone with some great chocolate detailing. I totally recommend getting some Easter eggs to share with your friends or, if you have some time, cook some simple chocolate cake – but more about that another time, really.

“In my opinion, the only things that should be cooked over Easter need to have chocolate!”

I am aware that there are hundreds of versions of chocolate eggs out there, but luckily for you, I’ve been testing the market for some years now and I have a pretty good idea about what is worth it and what is not.

ANDRADA’S GUIDE TO THE BEST EASTER EGGS



Godiva Treasure Egg

This is my all-time favourite Easter egg with absolutely no doubt! I cannot imagine something better, simply because my favourite chocolate is Godiva chocolate. The egg is big enough to stockpile you with chocolate for almost a week, and when you finish it... there are more small chocolates inside waiting for you! And just in case you get bored by the Belgian milk chocolate, the inside pieces are different: while some of them will return you to your childhood, others will make you feel like you are a responsible adult at a fancy party.

Hotel Chocolate Ostrich Egg

Yes, the name does it justice! This chocolate egg is the size of an ostrich egg – to be fair, they claim this, and I haven’t checked, but it looks legit enough to me – and it’s delicious. I would like to say that it is as delicious as an ostrich egg, but...I cannot confirm, sorry. In case someone else wants to check, you are more than welcome to. Now, I normally eat a lot of chocolate – I mean A LOT of chocolate – but this is more than even I can handle. Especially because, this comes with more than just the egg – it also has 27 pieces of chocolate and some mini-eggs.



Venchi Nougatine Easter Egg

And the bronze goes to.... I am trying to create some suspense for nothing here as you’ve probably read the name already. This egg is 56% dark chocolate with crunchy caramelised hazelnuts. I think that the best bit about it is the advertising: “comes with a useful surprise for your car/house”. I seriously thought that it is the awesome tin that will provide a useful storage space – am I turning into grandma? But, it’s actually a keychain! Oops, sorry for ruining the surprise. Anyway, do not buy the egg for the keychain alone – the chocolate is absolutely amazing!

Fortnum and Mason Colossal Egg

I think that this egg’s name is slightly misleading as it is not a Colossal Egg, but rather a matrioshka egg that ends up with a colossal egg! And the best part about the five eggs is that they all have different tastes (I hope). So far I’ve been through milk chocolate and salted honeycomb, dark chocolate orange, and the white chocolate with strawberry and black pepper. Yes, all of them are absolutely great and yes, I am probably eating too much chocolate, but that white chocolate with strawberry and black pepper.... I hope that the remaining two eggs will be at least as good. If you want to have a decadent chocolate party with your best friends, this is the choice!



FOOD

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

more chocolate!

CANNOT-HAVE-TOO-MUCH-CHOCOLATE MARTINI

I know this is an unexpected member of this list, but I wanted to show you a super-quick and delicious way of recycling your leftover chocolate and I also wanted to show you that you can enjoy your favourite ingredient – chocolate – and your favourite pastime – alcohol – at the same time. And since this a chocolate themed issue, here we go!

You will need...

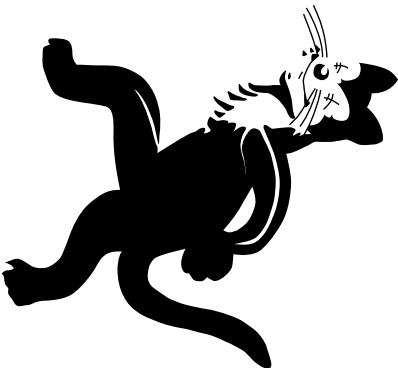
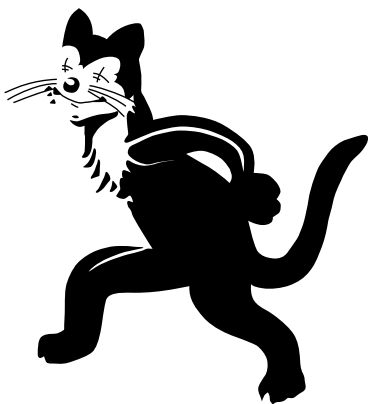
- 50 g chocolate (any cooking chocolate if fine, but I recommend using your favourite brand of chocolate)
- 1 tsp honey
- 25 ml crème de cacao
- 25 ml Baileys
- 50 ml vodka
- Ice

I know you know where this is going, but still....

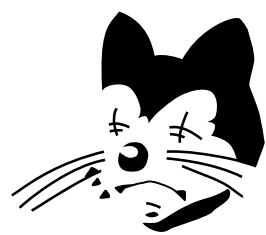
1. Pour the crème de cacao, the Baileys and vodka, some crushed ice into a cocktail shaker and shake.
2. Strain into a glass
3. Add the crushed chocolate on top – or, if you feel like experimenting, add in into the mixture.



Felix is recruiting!



We want you – yes, you! We’re looking for writers, photographers, editors, illustrators, reporters, computer experts and grammar nerds to join our team. No experience needed – we’ll teach you everything you need to know. If you’re interested, send us an email on felix@ic.ac.uk



Hangman



May the pension deficit be ever in your favour // Lionsgate Films

Pension dispute to be solved with *Hunger Games* deathmatch

HANGMAN
Negafelix
Editor-in-Chief

Staff are split over the potential of a deathmatch to decide who will get the biggest pensions.

Industrial action organised by the Universities and College Union (UCU) could be set to end their strike this week, after Universities UK (UUK) brought a new option for pension plans to the discussion table.

UUK, the governing body for higher education

institutions in the UK, last night announced their new proposal for the USS pension scheme: a *Hunger Games*-inspired competition in which the strongest, quickest, or wiliest academics and support staff would walk away with the largest pension pots.

“The strongest academics would walk away with the largest pensions”

Kieran Langley, head of UUK, said the proposals

were “a fair way forward for the future, ensuring the deficit within the pension fund is resolved, while also making sure those who remain behind at the end of the competition will be satisfied with their provisions.”

“We have made it clear that the current pension scheme is unsustainable. UCU have so far rejected plans to reduce their pension size, so now we will have to reduce the number of pensions instead. Organising our own *Hunger Games* allows us to do just this. Staff members who have their pensions completely cut at the end of the competition will be unlikely to complain. Since they will be dead.”

Hangman has also

received exclusive evidence that UUK are currently in talks with Channel 4 about having the competition broadcast live, with Carol Vorderman to host.

One academic seemed

“UUK are currently in talks with Channel 4 about broadcasting”

tempted by the deal. Speaking to *Hangman*, the researcher from the Department of Physics, who is in the early stages

of his career, said: “In the build-up to this action, they were saying those who were the youngest would be set to lose the most from their fund. In this new proposal, however, my youth and fitness will give me a huge advantage over the others, so I’m considering voting for it.”

Others were less pleased with the proposal: “I would be up for some kind of *Crystal Maze* scenario, where we all go into a dome and grab at our pension funds, or even some kind of *Fort Boyard* thing, if they can find the tigers,” one senior lecturer told *Hangman*, “but taking it to *Hunger Games* levels seems too extreme. I would never be able to turn against my fellow

staff. Except perhaps Jim from the Space Physics Group. He keeps using my mug and not washing it up.”

A spokesperson for UCU told *Hangman*: “This is a clear attempt by UUK and university senior management to divide and conquer, turning staff against each other in a literal deathmatch. UUK will need to commit to much more before we open this up to a vote at our next meeting – for example, they need to let us know what kind of weapons we will have in this scenario, and whether teams are allowed.”

In unrelated news, Imperial College Union Rifle and Pistol society this week saw a surge of staff members asking to join.

HANGMAN

negafelix@imperial.ac.uk

Men take a break from issuing death threats on Twitter to celebrate Mother’s Day

HANGMAN

Negafelix

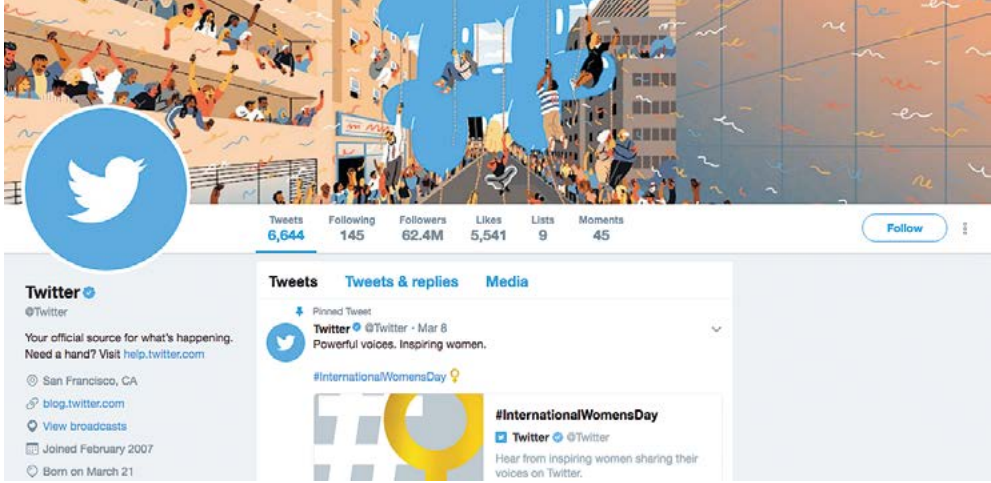
Editor-in-Chief

Death threats dropped by 83% last Sunday, as trolls took time to post pictures of their mothers on Instagram.

Men up and down the country last weekend took a break from issuing death threats to women on Twitter to wish their

mothers a happy Mothering Sunday. Women across Twitter were startled and relieved to find their mentions free of vile misogyny or threats of sexual violence. One user, who goes by the handle @manlyandproud, and has the Twitter bio “classical liberal | humanist | 52% | full brexit now” told *Hangman*: “I had just posted something to Laura Kuenssberg telling her to kill herself, and was halfway through drafting a tweet to Mary Beard telling her why her understanding ancient Rome was completely incorrect, when I realised

it was Mother’s Day. I had to take a break from my computer to give her a ring, dig out an old photo, and post it to Instagram with the caption ‘to my biggest inspiration’.” Statistics from Twitter showed the number of active male users over Sunday 11th March dropped significantly, with users such as Caroline Criado-Perez and Gina Miller receiving 83% fewer tweets than usual. One woman user of Twitter told *Hangman*: “For about three hours there was just a deadly silence; it was quite



ominous really. I’m a professor of particle physics, and I was finally able to have a proper, constructive conversation

without a random man coming into my mentions and telling me how to do my job or live my life.” Normal Twitter service

resumed the next day. Twitter representatives apologised for the interruption.



ARIES

This week you’re the *Felix* Editor, and you’re really going to miss *Felix* over the break. Lol jk going to Tuscany, peace out.



TAURUS

This week all the computers crash in the *Felix* office (again). Luckily the wonderful team still managed to get the paper out. YOU’RE WELCOME.



GEMINI

This week it’s AGM season! You get blackout drunk in the Union Bar and wake up to find yourself President of Swiss Society.



CANCER

This week your lecturers have spent far too long on strike, and you’ve forgotten how to degree.



LEO

This week you’re a sabbatical officer, and you’re finally free! The curse has been passed on!



VIRGO

This week you’re really glad *Felix* is running their sexism survey. Finally, someone is focussing on what really matters to you: discrimination against white middle class men.



LIBRA

This week you lose out in the student elections to be an Officer Trustee. Congrats, you missed a bullet.




SCORPIO

This week you celebrated pi day by consuming a whole chocolate fudge pie in one sitting. I mean, you would have done it anyway, labs were fucking stressful. At least you had an excuse.




SAGITTARIUS

This week you’re a male student, and you manage to complain about the ‘Imperial ratio’ and say women shouldn’t do STEM in the same breath. Congrats, you played yourself.



CAPRICORN

This week you’re a physicist, and you’re sick of explaining the difference between cosmology, astrophysics, and space physics in the wake of Stephen Hawking’s death.



AQUARIUS

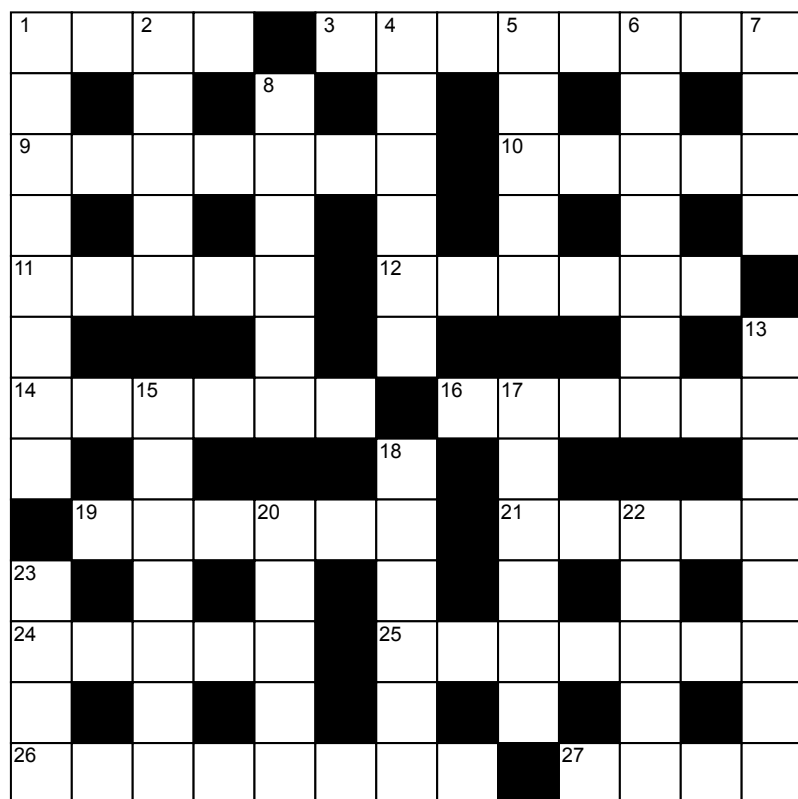
This week you’re still upset about how the elections were run. GET OVER IT NOBODY CARES.



PISCES

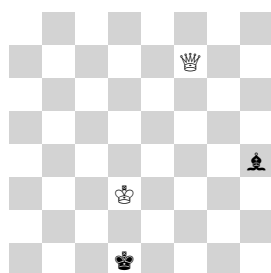
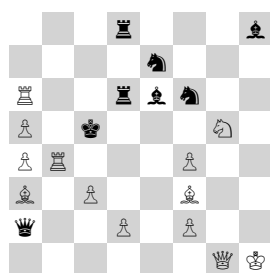
This week you’re the Horoscopes Writer, and you’ve only got to write one more of these this term. You really cba though.

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk



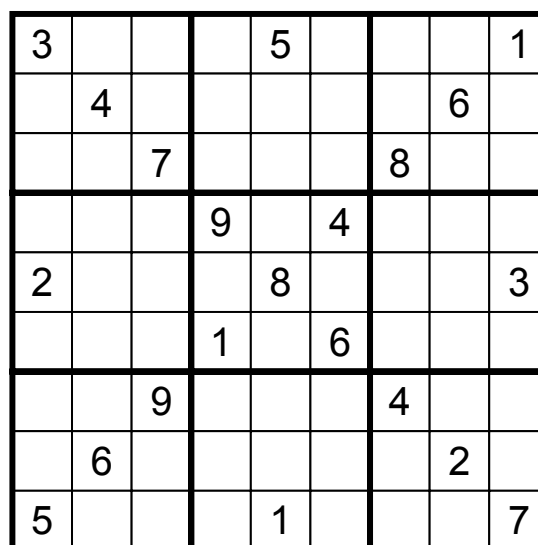
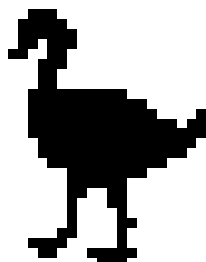
1. Abstain (4)
3. Entreated (8)
9. Erased (7)
10. Wonderful (5)
11. Venomous snake (5)
12. Highpitched and piercing (6)
14. Reply (6)
16. German emperor (6)
19. Entirely (6)
21. African capital (5)
24. Unrehearsed (2,3)
25. Transgression (7)
26. Innocuous (8)
27. Egyptian goddess (4)

1. Disappear gradually (4,4)
2. Substantial (5)
4. Fashionable (6)
5. Defeated contestant (5)
6. Small waves (7)
7. Communal bedroom (4)
8. Die of hunger (6)
13. Black Keys album (8)
15. Student (7)
17. Loose from moorings (6)
18. Stockings (6)
20. Tag (5)
22. Proclamation of intended marriage (5)
23. Ready money (4)



White to move first with a forced checkmate in two moves for both problems.

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

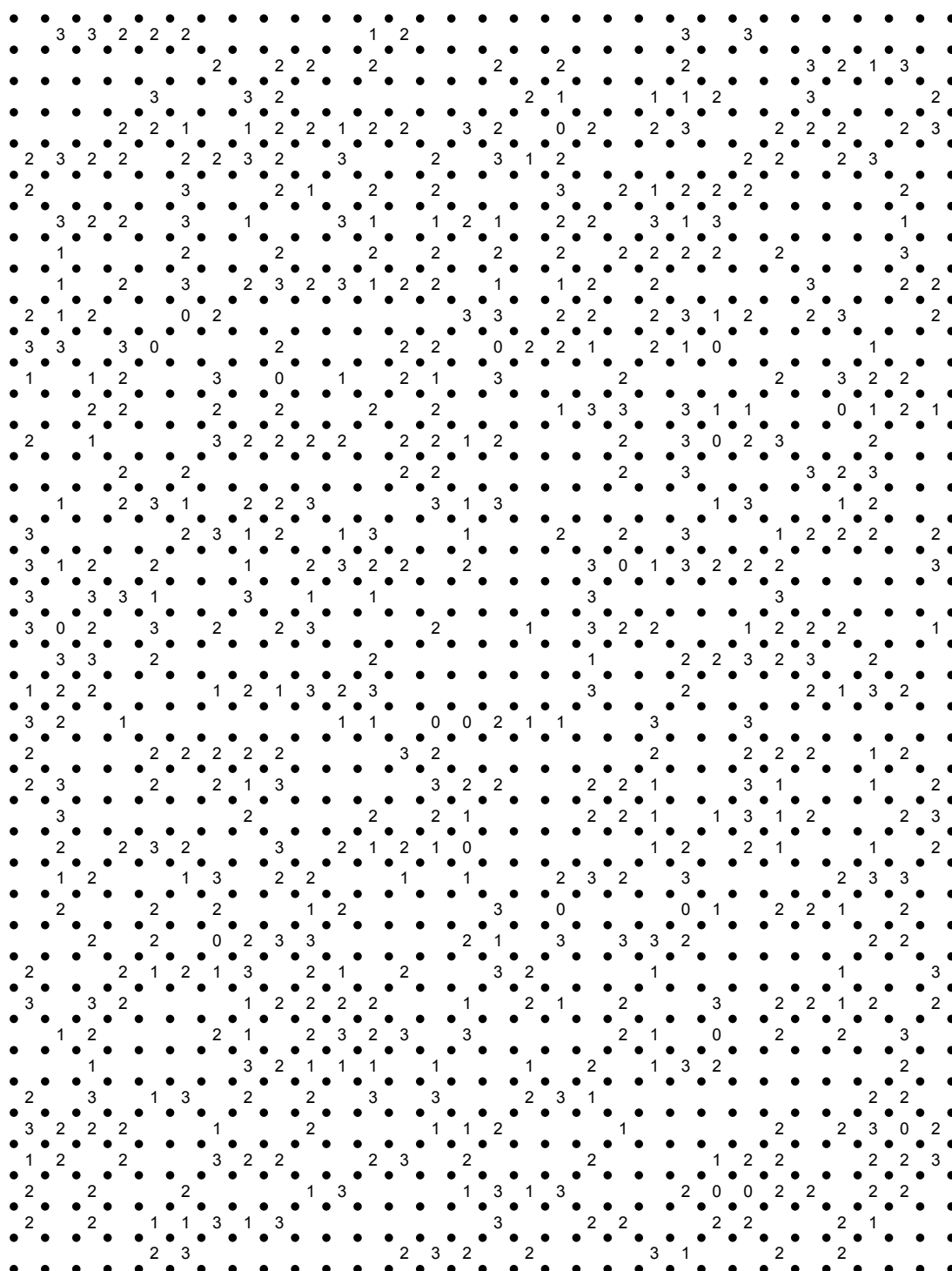


Draw a single, continuous loop through adjacent points. The numbers indicate how many sides of the cells are bordered.

1	Nonogram of Ketamine	323
2	Puzzle Snuggle Cuddle Couple	266
2	Q	266
4	TioUdin	237
5	OK	221
6	Luncheon Pals	149
7	Abelian Grapes	139
13	Maxiane	89
19	yHt	55
20	Konmai	48
25	Hentai Society	28

Send in your solutions to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk before midday Wednesday!

Crossword	4
Sudoku	2
Chess	6
Slitherlink	6
Total	18



SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Imperial Pole & Aerial take national title

SPORTS

Ellie Ellison

*Pole & Aerial Aerials
Officer*

This weekend marks one of the defining achievements of ICU Pole & Aerial Society. In our fifth year of taking part in the Inter-University Pole Dance Competition – the third since regional heats were formally introduced – the Imperial team landed solidly in first place, ranking us 1st of the 49 UK universities to compete.

In 2017, a drama involving miscounted scores and wrongful trophy awarding in the South East UK Regional Heats finally resulted in Imperial being crowned the rightful Regional Champions, granting us the responsibility of hosting this year. In February, the Union Concert Hall was transformed into a pole dance extravaganza for twelve universities from across the south east in the 2018 South East University Pole Dance Competition (SEUPC)

regional championship. Styles of dance ranged widely from contemporary to pole “classique”, complete with fantastic costumes and eight-inch heels. Performers were judged equally according to technical difficulty, fluidity, use of transitions, music interpretation and audience interaction. Due to the focus on dance and the flow of the performance as a whole, it’s not uncommon to see extremely complex tricks placing second or third behind exceptional or unusual performances. We had strong competition and more than one surprise to deal with, but eventually Imperial ran a tight show, finishing exactly on schedule(!) and managed to place 2nd overall behind Sussex, allowing us to qualify for Nationals.

On 10th March, the eight qualifying universities from the South East, South West, Midlands and Northern regionals, sent teams to Newcastle to take part in the national finals against their team. Each university submitted one performer each for Beginner, Intermediate,

Advanced and Group categories, with Imperial once again competing against Sussex. Imperial’s team of five included: President Melissa Lee competing in the group category with Brandon Tsang and Alix Regnier; Brandon also competing in Advanced; Donja Karimlou in Intermediates; and Taylor Lyons in Beginners. The entourage consisted of former President (and superfan we can’t get to leave) Robin De Meyere, who came equipped with his best cheers and lots of love and support. He supported the team from Melissa’s excessive face mask routine the night before to the moment the shield was handed over.

Imperial’s win comes following a string of increasing successes for the society. Imperial’s first entry into IUPDC came in 2014, and the society was absolutely wowed by the quality of performances from across the country. Gradually creeping up the leaderboard, we placed 4th in 2015, 3rd in 2016 and 2nd in 2017, so this year’s win certainly follows the trend! The competitors also managed to score some significant individual wins throughout the year. In London Varsity 2018, Taylor Lyons placed first in London in the Beginners’ category. Donja Karimlou took 2nd and 3rd place in South East Regionals and Nationals respectively (despite creating a brand new routine for finals in only two weeks!) Brandon’s 2nd place advanced routine at SEUPC was awarded 3rd in the country, and lastly the group’s 1st place win at regionals continued to wow at nationals, awarding them 2nd nationally and cementing the title for Imperial.

IUPDC has been occurring in the UK since 2011, first hosted in



L-R: Donja Karimlou, Brandon Tsang, Taylor Lyons, Alix Regnier, Robin De Meyere;
Base: Melissa Lee – Nationals Winning Team // IC Pole & Aerial

Cardiff with fewer than 15 universities competing. As the competition grew, more universities wanted to take part, leading to a first-come first-served admittance system which left many universities side-lined. Following the introduction of National University Pole Association (NUPA) in 2016 to regulate competition rules and judging criteria, IUPDC was able to be expanded into four regional qualifiers with the top two universities in each round heading to the finals, massively increasing the number of universities permitted to take part.

As competitions are more spread out, with fewer competitors per day, the format of the competition has changed dramatically over time: competitors are able to pick their own music, there is now only one performer on stage at a time and the number of poles each performer can use has also increased. Dancers are now able to use both spinning and static poles, and they are judged on how evenly spread a performance is between the two poles, an analogous criterion to

professional competitions like the aforementioned World Pole Sport and Fitness Championships, or the GAISF-recognised IPSF World Pole Sports Championships.

As the championship continues to progress and develop with the increasing popularity of pole sports, ICU Pole & Aerial Society are extremely excited to be a part of the expanding community developed through this competition. We are also

extremely proud to be announced winners this year, when pole dance was officially internationally recognised as a sport by GAISF, showing our true commitment to the athleticism and grace involved in this complex art form. We are looking forward to continuing our tradition of attending and competing, and are thrilled to be awarded this title and the honour of hosting the nine talented finalist universities in IUPDC 2019.



Donja Karimlou – Intermediate performance at SEUPC // IC pole & aerial



Brandon Tsang – Advanced performance at SEUPC // IC pole & aerial

SPORTS

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ICXCAC – overtakes and underpasses

SPORTS

Fergus Johnson
ICXCAC Secretary

Sunday 11th March saw the intrepid ICXCAC runners head to the desolate wasteland of Milton Keynes for its annual festival of running. With the majority of the team choosing to tackle the half-marathon distance, and a couple opting for the more manageable 10K, they all met at the reasonably early time of 7:30am on the concourse of Euston station.

Upon arrival in Milton Keynes the athletes first had to come to terms with the vast number of roundabouts in this derelict ghost town. After a reasonably lengthy walk to the start line by the spaceship-like ski centre,

the squad began the usual pre-race ritual involving team photos, toilet trips, and warm-ups. Before long, the start line was awash with the red and navy of Imperial vests.

The course included

“After the race, the exhaustion was offset by the weighty medal waiting at the finish line”

two laps of some body of water in the middle of Milton Keynes, and despite assurances that the route would be flat, there were certainly a few hills! However, near-perfect

weather conditions and solid tarmac compared to the club’s usual terrain of mud and grass meant that this was a fast race.

A particularly nifty start was made by Kirill Mikhaylov and Fergus Johnson which saw them lead the field of over 1400 runners for the first 200m before settling into the lead pack of around ten.

For many of the ICXCAC runners, this was their first half marathon race, and for others it was the furthest they had ever run! This made the resulting times even more impressive.

Special mentions go to Leanne Lyons for leaving her race shoes on the bus on the way there, Kirill Mikhaylov for coming first Imperial male and 7th Overall in 1:18:04 after an athlete’s breakfast of three doughnuts, a “pastry swirly thing” and several



Kirill was too busy binge drinking energy drinks to be in the photo // ICXCAC

own-brand energy drinks from a discount supermarket.

Shoutouts also go to Thibault Audic for throwing up twice and still having an insane sprint finish, Alex Stuart-Smith for an amazing PB of 1:32, and finally Liv Papaioannou for her support and brownies.

After the race, the exhaustion was offset by the weighty medal waiting at the finish line. Following some recovery by lying on the floor, the team enjoyed spectating strangers – the race numbers had the runner’s names on which added an extra level of humour.

The team then went

for a cheeky Wagas with the chaps before leaving MK to return to the metropolis. Rumour has it some of the team are still having nightmares about the copious amounts of underpasses along the race route...

Many thanks to Women’s Captain Anna for organising the trip.

ICXCAC (again!) – beasts from the South-East

SPORTS

Jack McKeon
ICXCAC member

On Wednesday 7th March, 18 ICXCAC athletes embarked on a journey to running mecca – Iffley Road track in Oxford. It was on this hallowed turf in 1954 that the late Sir Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile for the first time, and where the Imperial athletes would take part in the 2018 Teddy Hall Relays.

The triumphant day-out began with the team congregating in Beit Quad before taking a brisk walk through Hyde Park to catch the Oxford Tube from Notting Hill (other bus services are availa-

ble). Straight to the back of the top deck, it proved to be a buzzing bus ride full of pre-race optimism, eVoting, and breath-taking scenery including multiple sharks – one of which was embedded in somebody’s roof.

They soon left the bus and strolled to Iffley track to be greeted by many other athletes from universities and running clubs listening to loud, upbeat Indie music. The flat, scenic course was approximately 7km and ran along the towpath and through Christ Church Meadow. Imperial’s squad consisted of two Men’s teams and two Mixed teams consisting of four runners, and one Women’s team consisting of three runners, with each runner completing one leg each.

After a swift team al-

location, a short briefing, and a minute’s silence for Sir Bannister, it was a flying start to Teddy Halls for the athletes.

Chris Olley immediately took charge pushing on to run the fastest leg of the day (20:46 – 30 seconds

ahead of 2nd!) as part of the “Imperial Mixed A” Team. He passed the baton onto Sarah Johnson (25:16) who proved to be the 2nd fastest female of the day. Followed by strong contributions from Alex Mundell (29:47) and



Men’s Captain Lewis Jackson takes all his races extremely seriously // Barry Cornelius

Kirill Mikhaylov (24:33), they finished with a silver medal as the 2nd Mixed Team overall. An impressive first leg from Fergus Johnson (24:12), followed by Jack McKeon (25:30), Men’s Captain Lewis Jackson (25:18) and an energetic finish from Duncan Hunter (25:21) propelled “Imperial Men’s A” to 9th overall.

It was a strong performance by the “Beasts from the South East”: Henry Maynard (27:52), Chew Yi Heng (27:52), Ian Napier (27:12) and Alex Baldwin (28:15), who finished 27th. “Imperial Women’s A” comprised of Jenny Lea (31:09), Wendy Lu Chen (35:35) and Anna Fleming (33:28) and continued the success finishing 11th overall. Finally, Heinrich Hummel (27:27) and Maryna

Voloshyna (36:58) drove the baton round for “Hyde Park Gilets” (who finished 12th Mixed Team), before handing it to Fergus Johnson and Jack McKeon to run their second legs of the day. They deserve major kudos.

After soaking up the bustling atmosphere and a quick shower, the squad wandered back through Oxford to St Edmund Hall for a post-race celebration and result announcements. There was an interesting yet vast array of sandwiches ranging from lemon curd to cheese and pickle, cake, fruit, and drinks. Deservedly, the Imperial athletes continued their carb overload in the local Wetherspoons before a late return to London for a much needed rest.

SPORTS

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Imperial attempting to break through the LSE lines.. //ICURFC

LSE retain the City Varsity™

Despite very physical rugby and some great plays, our Imperial team is still hungry for a win in the City Varsity. Chin up and eyes looking forward to claiming the title next year!

SPORTS

Nick Ustaran-Anderegg

ICURFC Press Officer

7

Imperial Rugby 1st Team

19

LSE Rugby 1st Team

V

The City Varsity™ II, held last Friday at Rosslyn Park, was the second annual varsity match between Imperial College London and London School of Economics. This promised to be an exciting match and, after months of hype, lived up to expectations. The match kicked off and immediately proved to be a very physical game, with big collisions coming in from both sides. Early pressure and a dominant

pack from Imperial led to LSE making mistakes, giving Imperial the chance to counter-attack a couple of times. Perhaps too eager to stop LSE behind the game line in defence, Imperial gave away a penalty for offside and allowed LSE’s kicker to make the score 0-3.

“The game proved to be a very physical game, with big collisions coming in from both sides”

After the restart, a turnover from LSE in midfield allowed them to attack down the left wing. Imperial held LSE

off for many phases, but quick recycling of the ball and a missed tackle from Imperial allowed LSE to score under the posts. Imperial were down 0-10 early in the game. Imperial responded strongly and started attacking out wide through Oliver Duffy, Kieran McMorran and Hugo Koide. McMorran was stopped just short of the line, only for Jerome Hallett to bundle over in the next phase for a try. James Field successfully converted from afar, using the wind to curl the ball between the uprights – his hard work during Harry Allingham’s free kicking lessons clearly paying off. 7-10 to LSE at half time. Imperial began the second half determined to score first and take control of the match. Weak penalties from Imperial allowed LSE to exert some attacking pressure and they were soon awarded a penalty

deep in the Imperial half. This was kicked to make the score 7-13. Field made the kick off contestable, but a mistimed tackle in the air from Will Ainsley resulted in him being sent to the sin bin for 10 minutes to contemplate his actions. Imperial did not let their heads drop and gave everything in defence, with the usual suspects Martin Head and Toby Daniels making lots of tackles. Reckless Ainsley was eventually, reluctantly, invited back onto the pitch by the referee and Imperial were back to 15 men. This was an opportunity to get back into the game, and quick play between the forwards gave Imperial attacking territory. Field broke LSE’s line and attempted to offload to Nick Ustaran-Anderegg (who would definitely have outpaced the fullback and scored), but alas this

was intercepted. Imperial scrambled in defence as LSE counterattacked and prevented them from scoring. Keen to uphold

“Imperial began the second half determined to score first and take control of the match”

his bad boy reputation and frustrated after losing the Union Presidency Election earlier that evening, Oliver Duffy put his hands in a ruck and was presented with a yellow card by the referee. LSE kicked the penalty to make the score 7-16. Scrum half Elliot

Quigley and prop Amin Omarouayache were brought on to open up the game more in attack. Imperial now started to look more threatening and a 30m break from Quigley almost resulted in a try. Now back on the pitch, Duffy showed everyone what Imperial had been missing by beating his man on the outside... and then kicking the ball straight into touch. Despite leaving everything on the pitch, Imperial’s efforts did not eventually materialise into points, and the match ended 7-16 with LSE crowned champions of The City Varsity™ II. Thank you to everyone who was involved organising and/or running The City Varsity™ II, we could not have done it without you.

SPORTS

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Imperial's Taekwondo club make it to the Nationals, and come out on top!

ICUTKD are 2nd overall in the UK Student Taekwondo Ranking, 1st place in the UK Indomitable Ranking (best quality of team or points per player), and 1st place in the UK Poomsae Ranking (best UK Student Poomsae Team).

SPORTS

Pilar Zhang Qiu

ICUTKD Publicity Officer

Excitement, honour and gratitude. This is what we, ICUTKD, experienced last weekend at the BSTF Student Taekwondo National Championships. Not only did we bring eight golds, six silvers and eight bronze medals home, but many other surprises awaited us.

Friday, 9th of March. Half past four in the afternoon. After a day of lectures, we were ready for a five-hour trip to Worcester, or that was what we thought. It did not take long until all of us fell asleep in the minibus. Certainly, it had been a long week of training and deadlines.

In the morning of the competition, there was much to look forward

to. However, this time the tournament was not the only cause, but more importantly our reunion with Ilias Konstantinou, our former ICUTKD secretary, who moved out last term. In spite of the distance, he has continued supporting, aiding and taking care of us. At the

“Taekwondo is not about the belt or the medals, but about what you learn and take away from it”

end of the day, Taekwondo is not about the belt or the medals, but about what you learn and take away from it. For me, that is the sense of family in

the club.

The remaining morning, time flew by between rounds and rounds of poomsae, the pattern discipline of this martial art. A noteworthy effort of participants and instructors led to a total of four gold, one silver, and three bronze medals in Individual Patterns and Freestyle, obtained by: Junling Ong (A-class Freestyle), Bryan Chong (A-class Individual), Huey Shan Tey and Joon-Ho Son (B-class Individual) -gold-; Menghan Liu (B-class Individual) -silver- and Junling Ong, Wenbo Chen (A-class Individual); Andrew Bates (C-class Individual) -bronze- and Cynthia Ho, who got 5th place out of 28 competitors. Moreover, all our poomsae pairs/teams climbed the podium, achieving one gold (Junling and Bryan, A-class), two silvers (Huey Shan and Joon-Ho, B-class and Andrew and

Pilar Zhang, C-class) and one bronze (Fatima Khan, Angela Sun and Wenbo, A-class). All these results led ICUTKD to become the National Student Poomsae Champions, with the best team within UK in this category.

However, our thirst for battle didn't end there. The following day – Sunday, 11th – our sparring competitors joined us. We couldn't lose, we wanted to meet the expectations of our instructors and coaches, to make them proud. And so we did. Our fighters did not give up and fought until the referee announced the

“Our fighters did not give up and fought until the referee announced the end of the game”

end of the game. Not even technical issues stopped us. Just ask Huey Shan, who had to fight her final twice, emerging victorious each time. Nevertheless, she was not the only one to win gold. A total of three golds, three silvers and four bronzes were achieved in total. These were awarded to: Simonne Griffith-Jones, Sojin Park (A-class) and Huey Shan Tey (B-class) for gold; Wenbo Chen (A-class), Menghan Liu (B-class) and Sharmila Rana (C-class) for silver;



Bryan Chong brandishing his Master Suh award, a truly great accomplishment // ICUTKD

and Angela Sun (A-class), Ilias Konstantinou, Sophia Ppali (B-class) and Jennifer Wang (C-class) for bronze.

At the end of Nationals, the overall UK Student Taekwondo rankings were released. Our team came 2nd overall in UK, beating teams of more than twice our size, and most importantly: 1st in the Indomitable ranking. The latter evaluates points per player, which is a better measurement of a team's quality.

Prominent amongst these is the Master Suh award, with which our Vice-Chair – Bryan Chong – was honoured for his exceptional and continuous service to the British Student Taekwondo Federation (BSTF) this year. We are proud and thrilled to see his hard work being recognised. Not only is he a tireless Vice-president and Taekwondo Ambassador but is always looking after our

club members.

But of course, achieving 2nd place in the UK overall ranking and becoming UK Poomsae and Indomitable Champions would never have been possible without all

“We might be a small team, but you can be certain that we will grow stronger and stronger each year and reach new heights”

our instructors, coaches, alumni and members. We might be a small team, but you can be certain that we will grow stronger and stronger each year and reach new heights.



Three members of ICUTKD getting excited (little do they know of the success to come!) // ICUTKD