



# Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London

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Smart phones: do they really make us more anti-social?

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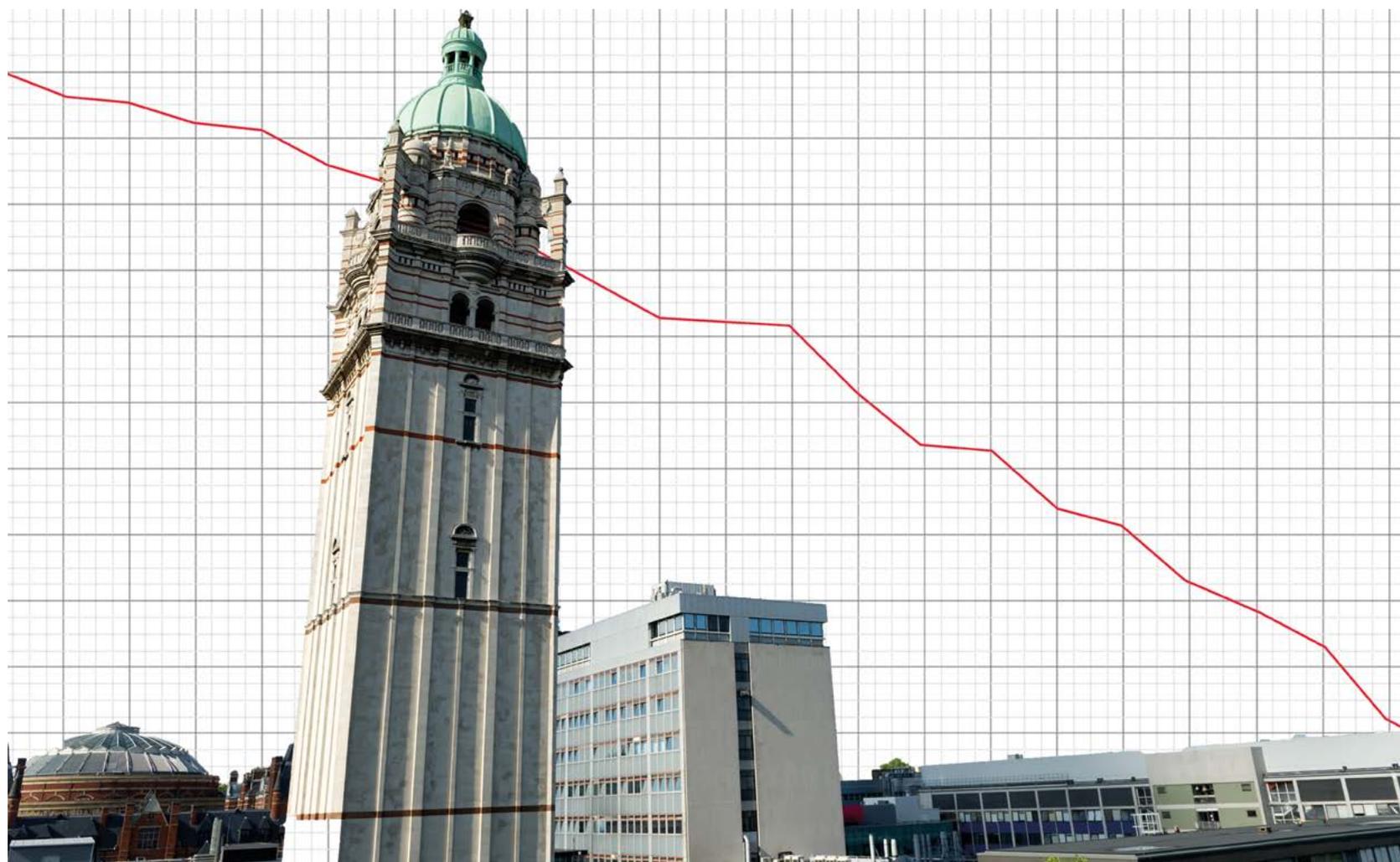
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Wages are falling year-on-year in real terms // Imperial

## Imperial staff pay falling by 1.1% per year in real terms

### NEWS

**Joanna Wormald**  
Deputy Editor

*A pay claim report states salaries have failed to keep up with inflation, while staff are often working more hours than permitted by law.*

**W**ages of Imperial employees are decreasing in real terms despite many staff working longer each week than is permitted by

government regulations.

College spending on staff as a proportion of total expenditure has fallen from 55.2% in 2011/12 to 52.8% in 2016/17. Pay at Imperial has failed to match inflation (currently 2.3%), leading to an average salary decrease in real terms of 1.1% each year since 2005. These figures – published in a pay claim by trade unions Unite, Unison, and the University and College Union (UCU) – do not take into account additional costs associated with living in London. Data from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research suggests that London living costs have

risen twice as quickly as pay at Imperial.

A College spokesperson said: “We are committed to offering staff a pay and benefits package that is equitable, fair and appropriately reflects the College’s standing as a world leading university.” The pay claim will be discussed on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May, and “the College’s response will be shared with staff in the coming weeks”.

A statement from Imperial College Union said: “Imperial College Union has re-emphasised the importance of fairly rewarding academics in providing our members with a world-class experience.

Our students do not want to be taught and supported by demotivated staff.

“We hope that the College uses the pay and benefits review to engage our community in a discussion about how Imperial spends its money and to acknowledge the hard work of our staff across the institution,” it continued.

The unions have called for a salary rise 7.5% or £3,000, whichever is highest, to cover the gap between salaries and London living costs, and “as an installment towards the massive shortfall in Imperial College pay settlements over the past 12 years”. The unions also

want this to be applied to staff who are paid by the hour and say the College should commit to paying at least the London Living Wage (currently £10.20 per hour) at all times.

Although staff have seen their wages fall in real terms, the College’s total salary bill for 2016-2017 increased by 3.2% from the previous year. In the same time period, the payment settlement for most staff was 1.1%. The unions’ pay claim asserts this is due to an “exceptional increase in very highly paid staff”.

The unions state the salary increase for the 111 employees earning more

*Cont. pg 3*

# EDITORIAL

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## The strikes were just the start

**C**ast your mind back to last term. I know it's difficult – you're just reading this as an excuse to avoid revising for another soul-crushing hour – but try. You might remember there was a period of four weeks where our academic and support staff – along with colleagues up and down the country – went on strike in opposition to the proposed changes to their pension plans. The strike came to an end, Universities UK agreed to go back to the negotiating table, and the changes were postponed, at least for the immediate future.

Some may believe the problems highlighted in the pensions dispute have now been solved. They have not. The debate, although on the surface about pension pay, was, for many, about something much deeper: the ongoing privatisation of the higher education sector. And, as this week's lead story shows, the effects this move is having on our lecturers and support staff is immense.

Since 2005, Imperial staff have seen their pay cut in real terms by 1.1% each and every year; at



the same time, many of them are facing increased workloads, a blurring of the work/life boundary, increasingly metric-based assessment of their work, and casualisation of their employment. Staff at Imperial are being made worse off, year on year, and – realistically – this is a situation that cannot last. Universities are institutions that run, at their core, on a sense of good will. Staff will regularly work beyond their allotted hours, or complete tasks that aren't included within their workflow, because they genuinely love

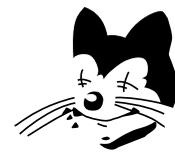
teaching and research; they make a choice to, often, be paid much less than they might do if they went into the private sector, in order to follow their passions for science and education.

When speaking about university jobs, many people will view them as similar to those in the public sector; and they should – Imperial gets vast amounts of money each year from the public purse to fund research that can have a massive impact on the world. But if we are to view Imperial jobs as public sector ones, and

use this to justify a lower salary than in the private sector, then certain trade-offs need to be made. Public sector jobs should have good pensions. That hasn't been the case. Public sector jobs should offer security. That hasn't been the case. Public sector jobs shouldn't demand hellish hours. That has not been the case.

Meanwhile, in senior management, salaries have continued to soar in recent years: 130 staff now earn more than the Prime Minister, with the most senior members of management earning on average £280,000 each. These figures, combined with the fact Imperial made nearly £120 million in surplus last year, are a slap in the face for staff who have been facing real-term pay cuts over the past decade.

This article is the culmination of a trend that is having an impact, not only at Imperial (although the effects are arguably more pronounced here), but across the entire UK. The fight for the future of our education didn't begin and end with the industrial action. It is not resolved. It is ongoing. And we need to continue to fight it.



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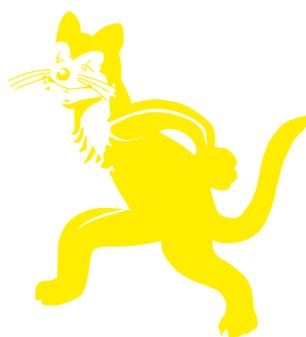
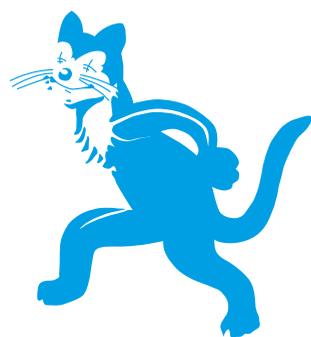
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# NEWS

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## Staff at Imperial working unpaid overtime nearly two days a week

Cont. from front

than £160,000 was greater than the combined annual increase of the remaining 7,489 members of staff. A *Felix* investigation earlier this year revealed Imperial spending on senior staff is greater than that of any other Russell Group university. In 2017, the College spent £5.6 million on 20 key management personnel – an average salary of £280,000 each. At the time, a College spokesperson said pay increases across the board were “weighted in favour of lower paid staff, as has happened for the past two years”.

“Our success depends upon attracting world-class talent and our remuneration reflects that,” they added.

In the pay claim, the unions report: “Last year we were told that the Provost Board thought it best to ‘taper’ cost of living increases to allow a redistribution to the lower paid. The actual very much larger redistribution to the highest paid was not mentioned.

“Affordability has not been an issue as far as the highest paid are concerned,” the unions continue.

Claims over affordability fuelled anger over proposed changes to pension schemes and led to strikes at universities across the country earlier this year.

Tom Pike, vice president of Imperial UCU, told *Felix*: “The strike over pensions shouldn’t be seen as a one-off grumble by staff at Imperial. There has been a long-term erosion of pay, specifically seen against the increase in living costs in London, that has outstripped national figures.

“It’s both the squeeze

on the value of current salaries and the threats to future pensions that have made staff so upset, especially when we’ve recently seen a burgeoning salary bill for the highest paid.

**“The unions stated ‘clearly, the College has chosen to devote its surplus to buildings rather than to staff”**

“This is an unsustainable position if Imperial wants to recruit and retain the best staff,” he added.

At the time, Imperial supported the proposed changes – which could have seen staff lose up to 60% of their pension value – and said they were “necessary” as the shortfall in pension funds (reported to be £7.5 billion) was “not likely to be sustainable”.

Suggestions that Imperial could not afford to continue under the current pension scheme were attacked at the time in light of the College’s extensive property holdings. Earlier this year, *Felix* revealed the College has £179.1 million invested in property and spent approximately £200 million on its estate. The trade unions further report that, while staff expenditure has decreased, Imperial’s capital expenditure has risen: since 2011, Imperial has spent more than £1.42 billion. Up to £928 million is estimated to have stemmed from



Affordability of pensions was a sore point in the recent industrial action. // Joseph O’Connell-Danes

internal surpluses.

“Clearly, the College has chosen to devote its surplus to buildings rather than to staff,” the unions write.

### Working Hours

A survey carried out by UCU in 2016 found Imperial staff work an average of 50 hours each week. The legal maximum working week is 48 hours.

According to the unions’ pay claim: “Overall, academics gave nearly two days of work per week to Imperial for free.” It continues: “Every year members of staff are donating thousands of pounds to Imperial College and risking their health as they do so.”

The UCU survey reports the workloads of almost three quarters of Imperial staff increased in pace and intensity over the previous three years. Almost a quarter of staff said their workload was unmanageable most or all of the time.

The unions have also

criticised Imperial for employing more academics on “unnecessary” fixed-term contracts, which are “out of line” with similar universities, which employ staff on open-ended contracts. In the pay claim they state: “Fixed-term contracts are particularly difficult for members of staff, making it difficult to obtain decent housing, plan ahead or develop careers.” Fixed-term contracts also make it harder for the College to “build successful, stable teams of researchers and teachers”.

Data provided by the unions show in 2015/16 over 55% of academic staff were on fixed-term contracts, compared to 4% at neighbouring Russell Group university UCL.

To improve working conditions, the unions have called for action to prevent Imperial staff routinely working beyond their contractual working hours and “to harmonise contractual hours at 35 [hours per] week”. The unions are also asking for

an “agreement” to reduce the number of staff hired on fixed-term contracts and to convert existing fixed-term contracts into open-ended contracts.

**“55% of Imperial academics were on fixed-term contracts, compared to 4% at UCL”**

### Gender Pay Gap

Female employees are also worse off. As previously reported in *Felix*, women at Imperial earn a median of 9.4% less than men and a mean of 19.4% less per hour. The mean pay gap may be explained by decreasing numbers of women in each subsequent pay band: 70% of Imperial employees in the

highest salary quartile are men (the highest proportion among Russell Group universities); 56% of those in the second-highest salary quartile are also men. Women at Imperial are also less likely to be awarded a bonus and receive half the value of the median bonus granted to men. The College states that this discrepancy because there are “fewer women in senior positions, and bonus payments are proportional to individuals’ salaries”.

At the time, Provost James Stirling said: “We do not consider [the gender pay gap] acceptable. We are committed to addressing this imbalance by tackling barriers to progression.” The joint trade unions have described the College’s response as “complacent” and note that “College has published no plans to take new action”. The unions are calling for a commitment to close the gender pay gap by 2020.

# NEWS

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## WOMENinSTEM@IC group launched to support women in science and engineering

### NEWS

**Hafiza Irshad**

*News Writer*

*The group, part of the Women's Engineering Society, aims to "improve retention of young women STEM graduates".*

Earlier this week saw the launch of the WOMENinSTEM@IC group, which aims to address the gender imbalance in STEM.

The group, part of the Women's Engineering Society (WES), held their launch event on the evening of Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May, attracting many young scientists with an impressive line-up of panellists.

Speakers included Professor Dame Julia Higgins, President of the Institute of Physics, Dr Ozak Esu, electrical engineer and one of the Telegraph's 'Top 50 Women in Engineering under 35', and Professor Joanna Haigh, Co-Director of the

Grantham Institute.

Chiara Heide, Imperial PhD candidate and chair of the group, told *Felix*: "founding this group has been a lot of work with my team, but it is worth it when you see how many people turned up at the launch and want to get involved." Heide said the enthusiasm for the event, which was held in the City and Guilds Building, showed "there is an actual need of our WOMENinSTEM@IC group".

The committee of five aim to "provide a platform for personal and professional growth", and "improve retention of young women STEM graduates."

The event comes amid increasing scrutiny of gender equality in academia, with last month's release of gender pay gap data showing the gap at Russell Group universities is twice the national average. A 2014 report from the government's Science and Technology Committee reported only 17% of STEM professors were women; while encouraging young women to choose STEM degrees



Staff and students attending the event earlier this week // WOMENinSTEM@IC

is worthwhile, data show these students are often 'lost' post-graduation, with higher attrition rates than their male peers.

Professor Stephen Curry, Imperial's Assistant Provost (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion), offered his congratulations to Heide and the committee: "The expert

panel of successful women academics, engineers and entrepreneurs spoke very candidly about their experiences and raised a lot of important questions from the audience. It is my hope that our reinvigorated work at Imperial on equality, diversity and inclusion will be able to provide some

long-overdue answers."

Heide told *Felix*: "This initiative wouldn't have been possible without the work of all committee members and the ongoing support of my academic supervisor, Dr Cleo Kontoravdi, and the Department of Chemical Engineering. Stay tuned for more, and don't let

anyone take away your curiosity, your passion, your determination, or your dreams."

*For more information on the group, you can join their mailing list at <https://goo.gl/forms/OYS-rRSW6wqZE2k8x1>.*

## Imperial among most international unis in the world

### NEWS

**Fred Fyles**

*Editor-in-Chief*

*Over 55% of Imperial's student body are from overseas, according to new data from Times Higher Education.*

Imperial College London has one of the highest proportions of international

students of European universities, according to new data.

An analysis by *Times Higher Education* found Imperial was the seventh most international university in the world, with 55.4% of the student body coming from overseas. London was one of the most popular cities for international students, with six universities within the top 20 ranking; in total, 72 of the top 200 universities for international student

numbers were within the UK.

These results follow on from *Times Higher Education* rankings earlier this year, which ranked Imperial as the best university for international students in the UK, based on reputation, number of students and staff, and international collaboration.

Imperial has increasingly been focussing attention on developing global links in recent years. This February saw

the appointment of Professor Maggie Dallman OBE as the College's first Vice President (International). The College said the role was linked to their strategic aim of "strengthening ties with global partners".

Following her appointment, Professor Dallman said the College had been "purposeful in pursuing international collaborations, working to address global challenges, and recruiting talented staff and students from around

the world."

Data released by the College has shown how the make-up of new student admissions has changed over the past five years: in 2011/12, 59% of the nearly-6000 students admitted were from overseas; by 2016/17 this has increased to 66%, with the number of admissions also increasing by over a thousand. The most common country of origin for new admissions is China, followed by France, Italy,

and Germany.

The most international university within the UK was the London School of Economics (LSE), with 70.5% of their students coming from abroad. The American University of Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates, was the most international university globally, with over four fifths of their students being international.

# NEWS

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## New Dean of Faculty of Medicine announced

### NEWS

#### Frank Leggett

News Writer

*Professor Jonathan Weber has been appointed as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, following on from his predecessor Professor Gavin Screaton.*

Professor Weber has been acting dean since October of last year. He has previously held leading roles in the Department of Medicine, including Vice-Dean for Research and director of the Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC) – a collaboration between the college and different NHS trusts aiming to translate research into practical

solutions – at Imperial.

Professor Weber said that he was “honoured” by the appointment and was looking forward to creating new collaborations during his time as Dean. Imperial’s Provost, Professor James Stirling, said: “Our Faculty of Medicine is at the forefront of advancing biomedical discoveries and translating them into the clinical setting. In addition to being one of our most prominent researchers, Professor Weber has a huge amount of leadership experience both at Imperial and with our NHS trust partners. I know he will drive the faculty forward to new advances and successes.”

A representative of Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union (ICSMSU) told *Felix*: “We were pleased to hear the news of Professor Weber being appointed as the new Dean for the

Faculty of Medicine. We are looking forward to developing a close working relationship with him, to better the student experience here at Imperial.”

Professor Weber has been at Imperial since 1991, when he was appointed Jefferiss Professor of Communicable Diseases and Genitourinary Medicine, and established a new HIV and STI academic department at the college.

Professor Weber has been at the forefront of HIV and AIDS research since 1982. Notably developing combination antiretroviral therapy – the use of multiple drugs to keep the effects of HIV at bay – in the 1990s. He now works on prevention of infection through use of vaccines, running the first European HIV efficacy trial in Uganda, South Africa, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

In 1987, he founded the



Professor Weber has been at the forefront of HIV and AIDS research // Imperial College

peer-reviewed research paper “AIDS”, holding the position of founding editor until 1992, the year when he co-founded the WHO network for HIV characterisation. Professor Weber is a member of a number of different groups such as the Research Advisory Group

for the Department for International Development (DfID) and the University Partnership Board of the Francis Crick Institute.

His career has been heavily focused in the fields of medicine and education, following training as a clinician, he held different positions

from a fellowship in Clinical Training at St Mary’s Hospital Medical School in the early 80s to becoming a senior lecturer of Infectious Diseases at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital from 1988 to 1991.

## Imperial alumnus new Malaysian Health Minister

### NEWS

#### Frank Leggett

News Writer

*Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad was sworn in as the new Health Minister earlier this week.*

Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad has been sworn in as the new Health Minister for Malaysia under Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad’s new government.

Dr Dzulkefly – who completed his doctorate in toxicology at Imperial College London in the early 1990s – is a member of Parti Amanah Negara



Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad in 2015 // Flickr/Khairil Yusof

(National Trust Party) a centre-left party which advocates political Islam.

He previously held the position of Member of Parliament from 2008 to 2013 for the town of Kuala Sengor. The politician is known for his decision to support a

controversial ruling of the Malaysian High Court allowing a weekly Christian publication called *Herald* to use the term “Allah”.

Dr Ahmad stated to Malaysian Press: “To me, I see this as an opportunity to bring all of us closer together despite

our religious differences and submit to the God Almighty. We all believe in God and we call God Allah.”

He joins the newly elected Tun Dr Mahathir for his second non-consecutive term, following the ousting of the then-ruling Barisan Nasional party in the 2018 general elections, which saw his former ally, Najib Razak stepping down from the position of Prime Minister. Barisan Nasional and its predecessor Alliance party have held onto power for over half a century, one of the longest streaks for a political party in modern history.

The loss of the government has been seen as a direct consequence

of the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB)

**“Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad completed his doctorate in toxicology at Imperial in the early 1990s”**

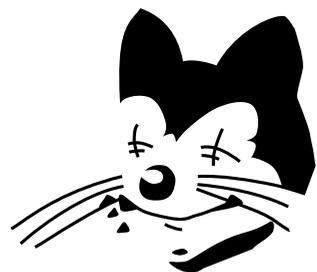
scandal. Set up as a development fund for the capital Kuala Lumpur, 1MDB was misused for personal profit, with Najib being accused of receiving \$700m dollars from the same fund. The

former Prime Minister is also accused of involvement in the murder of Shaariibu Altantuya in 2015, a Mongolian model who was a mistress of a close associate of Najib. She was killed either by gunshot or a subsequent C-4 explosion. Two ex-police officers were sentenced to death for the murder.

*Felix* spoke to Imperial College Union Malaysian Society, who said: “We are proud of Dr Ahmad, an Imperial alumnus who has been appointed as the new Health Minister of Malaysia after the recent historical election. We would like to wish him all the best in executing his tasks and the best of health!”

## COMMENT

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# Free speech at UK universities today is under attack

*Policies designed to prevent harassment or distress are being used across the country to stop debate – a cornerstone of the university experience.*

## COMMENT

James Millett

Comment Writer

Freedom of speech is under attack. University policy must be reversed, and we must do all we can to defend this fundamental human right. As students, we need to understand that everyone has different opinions, perspectives, and political persuasions. Healthy discussion and debate is a great part of the university experience. However, a drive for complete inclusivity prevents and polices subjects deemed offensive from being discussed.

**“Healthy discussion and debate is a great and necessary part of the university experience”**

Students and staff at Cardiff Metropolitan University have faced disciplinary action for using gender specific words. “Forefathers” and “sportsmanship” are included in the list of 34 words that have been banned at the university. The feminist and equal rights advocate Linda Bellos had her speaking invitation revoked by Cambridge University because her views on



The right to debate and protest is vital at UK universities // Flickr/Karney Hatch

transgender rights might have offended audience members. Bristol University’s student union are banning speakers who question the gender identity of trans women. “Safe space” policies at universities up and down the country ensure students don’t hear anything deemed offensive. The National Union of Students and some universities employ “no-platforming” policies that bar individuals or groups that may be deemed offensive. However, students have used this policy to silence legitimate debate, with

victims including the gay vegetarian activist Peter Tatchwell and the feminist writer Germain Greer.

When students leave the safe university bubble and enter the real world we will be exposed to constant offence. These policies will prevent students from having the necessary social tool kit to deal with this successfully. Students have been exploiting university policies to prevent speakers with contrary views from speaking, thus infringing a person’s right to freedom of speech.

Imperial College

Union states that freedom of speech needs to be balanced with their commitment to equality and diversity. What does this mean? Are you not allowed to use gender specific words, debate LGBTQ+ rights, and comment on religious extremism? Or does it prevent you from saying anything at all controversial? Who is the arbitrator (or who are the thought police)?

In accordance with this policy, an Imperial biology undergraduate student is reportedly said to have been criticised

for using the scientific word “hermaphrodite” by a peer because of the offence it may have caused. I fear that the time will come when students are frightened of using other scientific vocabulary like “*Homo sapiens*” because of its perceived offence and subsequent violation of Union policy. Arguably, this will stifle scientific communication. However this policy is interpreted and enforced, it will inevitably curb free speech, and I am worried that free speech at this university and others is being eroded left, right,

and centre.

Imperial College London’s harassment, bullying and victimisation policy (HBV) framework makes “offensive comments relating to a person’s sexuality” unacceptable. Bullying or harassing an individual about their sexuality, race, or religion is unacceptable, and is already illegal under UK law, when distress is caused. However, does the wording of the HBV framework inadvertently prevent a healthy debate about transgender issues?

**“I am worried that free speech at this university and others is being eroded left, right, and centre”**

But why, you may ask, is freedom of speech so important? The right to challenge religious doctrines brought about the development of science. It would be a retrograde step if Imperial, of all places, through its curbing of free speech, takes us back to the dark ages when humans thought the Earth was flat and created in six days. Free speech allows you to think, debate, criticise, and enquire; surely the bedrock of any self-respecting university? If we have to have “safe spaces”, why not have them for freedom of speech?

# SCIENCE

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## Getting down with the kids

*Type 1 Diabetes can be a life-threatening condition that strikes the young. New scientific developments suggest we might be able to look to genetics to see who is most at risk.*

### SCIENCE

**Varshit Dusad**

*Science Writer*

Who doesn't love chocolate? While you and I might enjoy its taste freely, there are 80,000 children each year who are unable to do so. The reason: they suffer from type 1 diabetes, which manifests itself at an early age. Unlike type 2 diabetes, which comes into effect at an old age, due to the pancreas slowly losing its ability to produce enough insulin, type 1 diabetes has genetic origins leaving patients needing to constantly monitoring



Regular tests can be needed in diabetes // Flickr/Alisha Vargas

their food habits from childhood.

The presence of diabetes within an individual can be attributed to a combination of both nature and nurture. However, the genetic causes (nature) far trumps

personal habits (nurture) as the leading cause of type 1 diabetes. This makes the dangers of type 1 diabetes particularly difficult: since its onset occurs in childhood, there can be a high risk of a reduction in life expectan-

cy; and since the pancreas malfunctions, and is unable to make insulin, there is far less tolerance for hyperglycaemic attacks compared to type 2 patients.

Due to its high incidence and mortality risk, it is important to have an early diagnosis, ensuring correct interventions are provided in a timely fashion. The presence of a family history of diabetes is considered a "red flag," and puts children at higher risk of developing the condition. However, it is neither a perfect indicator nor a necessary condition for diabetes to develop. Therefore, to tackle this issue, scientists from Helmholtz Zentrum München developed a

"genetic score" to identify if an infant possess the risk of type 1 diabetes with no family history of the condition. The study was conducted over ten years, with more than 3000 children monitored since their infancy, that were followed up every three to six months.

The researchers used genetic information from multiple sequences of DNA associated with diabetes risks to create a more reliable metric to predict the risk of developing the condition. By using this score, it will be possible to sort infants for early-stage interventions, which could enhance both the quality of life and life expectancy of these children. The scientists

are confident in the real-world applicability of their research and have filed a patent based on this genetic score.

The life of a diabetic patient can be a difficult one, with the slightest negligence having the potential to turn into a life-threatening accident. The lack of a direct causal understanding of the origin of type 1 diabetes makes the matter even trickier. Hopefully, using this advanced genetic scoring, further improvements along this line can forge the way for individualised medicine – where patients can be treated according to their specific needs based on their unique genetic footprint.

## Connect with Conservation: Malta bird massacre

### SCIENCE

**Steve Allain**

*Science Writer*

If there is one group of birds you have probably noticed declining in the British countryside over the past few years, it is the songbirds. Songbirds are a large group of birds, which, as their name suggests, like to sing, filling the landscapes they inhabit with the beautiful sound of bird songs. There is a number of reasons for their decline in recent times, such as the loss of habitats and the use of pesticides, which has reduced the amount of prey available in an area. One factor which you may

not be aware of, however, is that of hunting. Every spring and autumn on the islands of Malta there is a hunt, in which thousands of migrating birds are shot over the Mediterranean islands. This is not the only place where songbirds are at risk: a large number of species have disappeared from the wild in south-east Asia, where birds have been collected to supply the pet trade.

Between spring and autumn, thousands of birds migrate between Europe and their wintering grounds in Africa. The Maltese Islands are a vital point in each bird's journey, acting as a stop-over point, where they can gather food and water; as well as the chance to rest, before or after facing the seemingly impossible task

of crossing the Sahara Desert. Malta opens a hunting season targeting birds en route to (or from) their breeding grounds, at a time when they are most vulnerable. Among the birds that are targeted are species rapidly disappearing in the UK – such as the Turtle Dove – but also birds of prey such as the Marsh Harrier. Despite the fact that rare species are protected in the Maltese Islands, many are illegally shot each year during the hunting seasons.

Recently, Springwatch presenter and avid naturalist Chris Packham was detained by police for trying to learn more about the hunts whilst filming a documentary on the subject. After an altercation whilst filming an interview, Packham was



The Marsh Harrier is one of the species at risk from hunting // CC

detained for more than three hours at a police station, before being later charged. Despite the fact that the aggressors in the scenario were breaking the law by keeping caged birds, the police sided with them. This obviously highlights a significant

underlying issue, one that will be a tough to deal with, as this requires changing the behaviour and lifestyles of not only the hunters, but also the local police to ensure wildlife protection laws are enforced properly. The only way to help prevent

this in the future is to put our foot down and let the Maltese government know that it is unacceptable to carry on like this, both as a nation and as an international community.

# SCIENCE

science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Mobile phones make you hyper-social, not anti-social!

*New research shows the most addictive smartphone functions are those that connect us to our fellow human beings, suggesting they feed our deep-seated drive for communication.*

### SCIENCE

**Rosie Dutt**  
Science Editor

As we grow older, we begin to adopt a routine. This commences from the earliest of ages – from when we learn to brush our teeth in the morning, to sleeping at a particular time at night. With the advent of modern technology, checking our phones has also become embedded in our everyday lives. Many say this is an example of how anti-social we are all becoming. Never is this more evident than on the tube in London, as many travellers stare intently at their phones, as opposed to engaging in conversation. This phenomenon has been described as puzzling by many foreigners, so-much-so that one American man took matters into his own

hands and created a badge labelled, “Tube chat?” to get us talking! As expected, this was not received well at all, with a counter badge marked, “No chat please, we’re British,” being created.

**“It has also been argued that phones have made humans more social – we are able to communicate with those on the other side of the world”**

With reports in the media focusing on smart phone addiction and its links to anti-social be-

haviour, many would say some action needs to be taken. Controversially, it has also been argued that phones have made humans more social, as we are able to communicate with individuals on the other side of the globe – an option previously unavailable to our ancestors. Although the population spends a great deal of time on their phones, this phenomenon may just be an example of how addicted we are to social interactions, further exemplifying the fundamental desire of humans wishing to connect with one another. This can be traced back through evolution: we have developed to become a distinctively social species that requires constant input, not only from our surroundings, but from other humans, to guide appropriate language and behaviour. Consequently, this enables humans to find a sense of identity and meaning, as well as creating a specific



Double-screening is a big problem...//CC

goal!

Following a review of literature on the dysfunctional use of smart technology, using an evolutionary perspective, Moriah Stendel and Professor Veissière from McGill University concluded the following: a mutual theme shared by the most addictive smartphone functions was the ability to tap into the desire of humans to connect with other humans! This is particularly evident with social media, where we wish to watch and monitor others, as well as be seen and monitored ourselves!

### A healthy urge, or an unhealthy addiction?

This hyper-social behaviour which smartphones tend towards is argued to be somewhat important for normal and healthy needs of sociality. However, the pace and scale of this phenomena

can result in an overdrive of the brain’s reward system – leading to an unhealthy addiction! One such example can be seen in our eating habits: following the industrial revolution, where food

**“Use of smart phones can become unbalanced, producing an unhealthy environment”**

was made so abundant, and readily available, individuals began to crave sugars and fats, such that it has resulted in an insatiable overdrive, causing an increase in the rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Thus,

the social rewards that can be attained through the use of smart-phones can similarly become unbalanced, producing an unhealthy environment of hyper-social monitoring.

Consequently, the answer is not found in the renunciation of your mobile phone! If you wish to control or reduce addictive tendencies, it is suggested that you could benefit from switching off push notifications and adopting a schedule of when to check your phone. Furthermore, research has also suggested that the common workplace policies of prohibiting evening and weekend emails are healthy, helping to control these hyper-social tendencies. Adopting small changes in your schedule can ensure you maintain the healthy social balance us humans require!



Are you too distracted by your phone to read this article?//CC

# SCIENCE

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## Solar cells absorb 20% more light with nanoscale coating

*The efficiency of solar cells has received a big boost from a tiny source.*

### SCIENCE

**Lara Bailey**  
Science Writer

Researchers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) have developed a nanoscale coating for solar cells. These are made of thousands of glass beads of sulphur dioxide, each no larger than one-hundredth of the width of a human hair.

The coating creates an optical ‘whispering gallery’ effect around each solar cell. Acoustic whispering galleries are curved structures, whereby a person at one end of a wall can hear a faint noise from any part of the wall. When

light hits the beads, the waves travel around its entire shape, in the same way that sound waves travel around a curved wall. This traps the light, and so creates a more concentrated light source. The light then seeps out to be absorbed by a solar cell composed of gallium

**“Results indicated that coated solar cells absorbed 20% more light and produced 20% more current”**

arsenide.

Results indicated that coated solar cells absorbed 20% more light and produced 20% more current than uncoated cells. As a laser was used as a light source, it is still yet to be seen whether the same results can be produced outside of the lab in solar panels. Nevertheless, this is a crucial step for renewable energy technology.

The development is even more impressive considering that the researchers have prepared the technology for mass production. Previous methods of applying coating to solar cells involved incredibly high temperatures, making the process expensive. Typical methods are also time-consuming as both sides of the solar cell are coated when only one



The breakthrough could pave the way for higher-efficiency cells // CC

is necessary. The new method involves applying the nanoscale coating to only one side of the cell. A wire-wound metal rod is then pulled across the

cell, so that the coating becomes spread out, and so the tiny glass beads are more tightly packed. This can take place at room temperature, lowering

production costs considerably.

This development helps pave the way for high-efficiency and low-cost solar cells.

## Want to get involved with the Science section?



**Felix are looking for people with a keen interest in science and science communication to join our team! If you're interested in editing or writing for the Science section, please get in touch at [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk)!**

**We welcome anyone – no experience required**



## Apply to be a Student Trustee

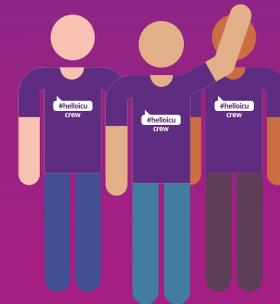
### Become a Student Trustee

There's an exciting opportunity now available for two Imperial students to sit on the Board of Trustees of Imperial College Union and help make important decisions about how our charity is run. You'll make legal, financial and governance decisions as one of four Student Trustees on the 15-member body. Two of the Student Trustees are elected in the Leadership Elections annually, while the others are appointed from qualified applicants.

The Board of Trustees meets six times a year and provides a great development opportunity for successful applicants. To learn about the criteria, responsibilities, time commitment and Board configuration, visit [imperialcollegeunion.org/studenttrustee](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/studenttrustee).

Deadline for applications is 5 June 2018.

Join our  
**#helloicu**  
crew



### Help welcome new students

Sign up to be part of the Crew that welcomes new students to Imperial College Union next term. We're looking for volunteers to help students move into halls, operate stalls, run events, and provide general guidance to First Years during Welcome.

We'll provide training, a t-shirt that identifies you as part of our Crew, and anything else you might need to be a great source of support for new students.

You'll meet people, gain new skills and the reward of knowing you've made a difference.

Volunteer at [imperialcollegeunion.com/helloicu](http://imperialcollegeunion.com/helloicu)

You decide which entrepreneurs win £2,000 funding



### Register to attend Act Now Showcase

Tickets are now available for the exciting Act Now Showcase - sign up to help decide which Imperial entrepreneur walks away with the top prize of £2,000 funding for their social enterprise project.

On Wednesday 13 June 2018, fellow students who have signed up will pitch for funding before a live audience of their peers and if you are present, you will help decide who gets it. The annual event is hosted by the Imperial Enterprise Lab, Sherfield Building, South Kensington Campus. The event runs from 17:30 - 19:30.

Register to attend at [imperialcollegeunion.com/act-now-showcase](http://imperialcollegeunion.com/act-now-showcase)



### Apply to be a paid Student Trainer

The deadline is fast approaching to apply for the position of Student Trainer at Imperial College Union. You have until Tuesday 29 May 2018 to submit your application.

The Union is looking for organised, reliable and confident communicators who would like help others. You'll be running workshops and training sessions for Student Development programmes such as Imperial Plus, Imperial Award, and Student Activities. In return, you'll be trained, paid, and gain loads of new skills.

Apply before 29 May 2018 at [imperialcollegeunion.org/student-trainer](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/student-trainer)

# ARTS

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## Artists at Work – the original selfies

*This new display of drawings at the Courtauld Gallery highlights some technical aspects of how artists work, but reveals much more about how artists really view themselves.*

### ARTS

#### ARTISTS AT WORK



**Where?** Courtauld Gallery  
**When?** Until 15<sup>th</sup> July  
**How Much?** Included within entrance to Courtauld Gallery; adults £8; students free

**Fred Fyles**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**A**rtists at Work, the title of the small collection of drawings currently on display at the Courtauld Gallery, is appropriate in more ways than one. While curators Deanna Petherbridge and Anita Viola Sganzerla undoubtedly chose the name to

reflect the content of the drawings – artists leaning close into their easels to better capture their subjects; cluttered ateliers devoid of people; allegorical self-portraits of artists plying their trade – the artists collected are far more often working on something more important than the canvas or oils: their self-image.

Those visiting the exhibition in the hope of technical details on how exactly artists created their works will be left slightly disappointed. Those entering the Gilbert and Ildiko Butler Drawings Gallery with no preconceptions, however, will get an insight into the psyche of the artists themselves.

A number of works are classically allegorical,

such as David Kandel's Renaissance drawing of a representation of virtue shielding the hard-working artist from the rains of professional envy. Jean Honoré Fragonard's chalk and ink image showing an artist, head bent in creative crisis, as ideas and fantasies swirl around him, is similarly po-faced, and teeters on the edge of ironic camp.

**“Those visiting hoping for technical details on how exactly artists created their works will be left disappointed”**

Luckily, the works are balanced out by a number that show the skewer this sense of artistic pretension: the Dutch genre painter Cornelis Dusart contributes a drawing of an elderly artist, sitting at an easel, and peering at the world around him through bottle-thick spectacles, undermining the idea of the artist as unfiltered observer of the world. George Grosz's self-portrait-cum-caricature similarly subverts the notion of the artist at work, balancing on the knife-edge of the grotesque: sitting at his desk, Grosz seems oblivious to the destructive nature around him, as an eagle clutches at a rat and beetles majestically scuttle across his drawing tools. The 1940 drawing evokes confusing

emotions, which belie the inner state of the artists, who has been forced to flee his home country in the advent of war.

A similar conflict between beauty and terror can be seen in the Egon Schiele work on display; a rare still-life, it depicts the bleached interior of the POW camps in Mühling, where Schiele was conscripted in WWI. While there are none of Schiele's tortuous, fleshy bodies on display, the absence of people manages to make the image all the more startling, with the unsettling lines instantly recognisable as his. The drawing highlights the brutal tension at play; his studio doubled as his office, becoming simultaneously a source of artistic expression and part of the vast machinations of war.

The exhibition is at its best when invoking this kind of austere naturalism, which still manages to contain emotional charge. Many of the drawings lack this, instead favouring a constructed, carefully-curated reality: an artist dwarfed by a giant statue of Jupiter in a set of non-existent Roman ruins; a deer leaping across the painter as he works en plein air, both amazing and shocking him; an empty studio where clutter still manages to be artfully arranged. If the exhibition shows anything about how artists work, it shows they sure can be controlling.

The stand out drawing in the collection more than makes up for some of this treacherous fair: Horst Tamsen's 1972 drawing of the atelier of the sculptor Reno Rossi, in Locarno, shows a squalid, rotting studio, less sky-lit than



Office at the Mühling Prisoner-of-war Camp, Egon Schiele // Private Collection

sky-assaulted, with a thin beam all that seems to be keeping the decaying

**“Schiele highlights the brutal tension at play, as he completes his work in a prisoner of war camp”**

roof up. It's as majestic and melancholic as any works from the period of 'ruin lust' that captured

Romantic Europe. Sculptures are picked out against the gloom and the collapsing ceiling: a large figure in rusty-red on one side; a glowering bust described in glowing pastels above a dark beam; and, at the centre, a ghostly blue apparition draws the eye. It's unclear what exactly is leaking out from the murk to meet us – the artist, or his work?

And so, while *Artists at Work* may tell us something about how artists do indeed work – drawing implements abound, with mahl sticks aplenty – it shows us much more about how they think, both about themselves and the world.



Studies of a man painting, Adolph von Menzel // Private Collection

## ARTS

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

ENO and the Gate Theatre: *Effigies of Wickedness*, Le Gateau Chocolat // Helen Murray

## A night of wicked cabaret takes us back in time

*The collaboration between ENO and the Gate Theatre brings together a set of songs banned by the Nazis for being 'un-German' – it's a fantastical evening, which deserves a bigger setting.*

## ARTS

## EFFIGIES OF WICKEDNESS



**Where?** The Gate Theatre  
**When?** Until 9<sup>th</sup> June  
**How Much?** From £15

**Vaishnavi  
 Gnananathan**  
*Arts Writer*

This new collaboration between the English National Opera and Gate Theatre brings together a collection of songs from Weimar era Germany, banned by the Nazis for being 'un-German'. The title itself is taken from a Nazi document produced for propagandist Hans Ziegler's 1938 exhibition of these banned songs, intended to highlight their

degeneracy and justify their banning. Many of the songs were by Jewish and black musicians, as well as containing themes that ran counter to Nazi ideals. *Effigies of Wickedness* features a selection of these songs, performed in order of chronology, effectively creating a journey through time, starting in 1920 with songs celebrating Weimar subversion, through to 1938 and the advent of the Second World War. It combines elements of opera, musical theatre, and cabaret in an ambitious effort to combine the genres.

The production stars opera singers Peter Brathwaite and Katie Bray, alongside actor/performer Lucy McCormick, and cabaret star and drag performer Le Gateau Chocolat. Whilst they all deliver excellent performances, their

different backgrounds are clear from the beginning. Whilst Bray and Brathwaite are clearly amazing singers, their lack of cabaret experience is clear in their audience interactions. Bray is brilliant in her duet of 'Best Girlfriends', a 1928 ode to lesbian love by Misha Spoliansky, but fades into the background outside of her song performances.

Lisa McCormick is almost the very opposite: she starts out uneven – there is even a remark following her duet with Bray in 'Best Girlfriends' that this 'isn't her strongest number' – but as we progress further in time, towards the 1930s and darker subject matter, she really comes into her own. Her performance of the song 'Paragraph 218 (Abortion is Illegal)' about a young woman being denied an abortion

despite being almost destitute, is one of the most haunting and powerful performances of the night. The clear star of the show, however, is Le Gateau Chocolat, who stands out in almost every performance, transitioning effortlessly from comic to saucy, and, towards the end of the night, to tragic figure. Its almost impossible to focus on any of the other performers when Le Gateau Chocolat is dominating the stage.

The staging of the show is in some ways the weakest link in this production. The Gate Theatre is an unusual location, notable mainly for its small size and somewhat claustrophobic seating arrangement. This is referenced by the stars on more than one occasion, with remarks comparing it to a 'cupboard' and Lisa McCormick's joke on it

being a far cry from the ENO's usual home at The Coliseum.

What the jokes say are true though, and the production really is rather let down by its venue – the stage is small, and limits what the cast can do, especially as they are joined by their musicians on the stage.

Its shiny black design, and the jumble of props at centre stage, are a brave choice, but one that doesn't pay off. If the aim was to capture the air of a location in 1920s Berlin, it fails miserably and comes across more like the stage of an amateur performance. It has one advantage though: it creates a sense of intimacy with the performers, enhanced by the performers' interactions with the audience. The interactions with the musicians does also go towards capturing

what might have been the atmosphere of a 1920s Berlin bar. Even so, you can't help but think that such an ambitious collaboration is worthy of a larger venue.

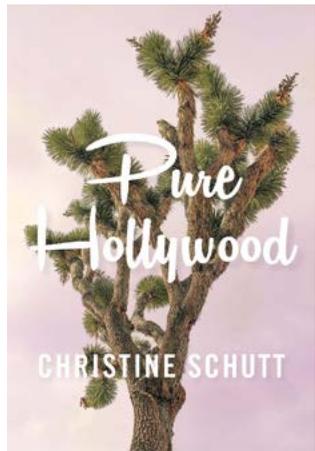
Overall, I wasn't sure what to make of this production. It combines opera, cabaret, and dramatic theatre together to create something almost wholly new. This feels like a mishmash, but an intentional one, and the combination of genres and artforms perhaps adds to the spirit of subversion it is trying to capture. It's a bold endeavour and one that pays off: it succeeds in combining the genres into one enjoyable evening. If you're a fan of cabaret, opera, or just fancy something different, then a trip to this production at Gate Theatre is definitely one worth taking.

# BOOKS

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## *Pure Hollywood*: a long-anticipated UK debut proves to be worth the wait

*Christine Schutt's short story collection is unsettling and haunting, with her mastery of language used to perfectly portray her lonely, isolated subjects.*



### BOOKS

#### PURE HOLLYWOOD

by Christine Schutt

And Other Stories. 120 pp.

#### Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

California, despite its associations in popular culture with dreaming and love and soul, can be an inhospitable place; the beauty of the sunshine that gives the state its nickname is tempered by its power – to dessicate, oppress, and crack open, like asphalt rutted open by an eternal summer. In her seminal essay ‘Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream’, Joan Didion, whose acuity in portraying the hollowness of the everyday is deeply unsettling, writes of a California buffeted by the Santa Ana wind, which “comes down through the passes at 100 miles an hour and whines through the eucalyptus windbreaks and works on the nerves.” It’s a land where “every voice seems a scream”, caught in “the season of suicide and divorce and prickly dread, wherever the wind blows.”

These words by Didion are what come to mind when reading the pieces contained within *Pure Hollywood*, the latest collection of short stories by American writer Christine Schutt. Despite the fact that Schutt’s tales zip all over the American landscape, they remind me, at their heart, of the emptiness commonly associated with cities like Los Angeles, of ripeness curdled into rot, of the unsettling power of the Santa Ana wind.

**“Christine Schutt’s stories make me think of ripeness turned to rot, and the Santa Ana wind”**

The stories, which range greatly in length, from several dozen pages through to a couple of paragraphs, are concerned with lonely, maladjusted individuals, struggling to make their way through life. A horse trek through mountainous terrain sees a woman plagued with uncertainty; a young actress goes to the stage lot while her older husband has a cardiac arrest in the swimming pool; a widow sinks into a slumber of anger and fear and drink.

Schutt writes with a detached prose style, keeping her subjects at arm’s length, making use of this distance to create a sense of the uncanny.



Schutt’s stories are dry and ironic, keeping a distance between reader and subject // Wikimedia

It’s a deeply unsettling technique, one aided and abetted by her skill in creating a sense of bodily horror to rival Cronenberg.

In ‘Species of Special Concern’, for example, an unanticipated TSA search takes a couple by surprise – “They hadn’t expected a pat-down at security, and tried to explain what was inside Nancy that made the machines beep”. Or in the two-page ‘Where Do You Live? When You Need Me’, which takes place one hot New York summer in the 1980s, a season “when little parts of little bodies turned up in KFC buckets in dumpsters in the city...weeks of record heat and brown air”.

This neutral horror is perhaps most brilliantly explored in ‘The Hedges’, in which a wealthy couple take their two-year old child to a holiday resort. From the start, Schutt sets up a delicious tension: with the child suffering from an unspecified illness, she describes the

“clotted, green-sound of her little boy’s breathing, an unwell honk that did not blend in with the sashaying pants and beachy-wet breeze of the island.” The family drift around the resort under a cloud of frustration and resentment, with the mother Lolly, only interested in the answer to the question “how long did motherhood last?”. The son is described in a way that makes the gorge rise in the throat: “cereal stuck to him, as it would to anything that oozed.”

And, of course, things inevitably come crashing down on the family, and – likewise – on the reader. There is an existential threat lurking in the corner of all of Schutt’s stories, a sense of inevitable tragedy, slick with cold sweat, that inhabits her pages. Planned picnics are suffused with a migraine aura of resentment – “the food they ate was too salty or too dry: no tastes to speak of” – while characters are assailed by the world outside

the bubbles they have constructed: “muted new flickers on the flat screen: gaudy mayhem.” And while Schutt’s characters may have “pooh-poohed the ominous signs”, the readers cannot.

Schutt’s prose style is a thing of wonder and frustration: she constructs her sentences full of interjections and meanderings, drawing the reader in a circuitous route towards their destination. Frequently dry and curt, Schutt will sucker punch the reader with a series of barbs, before delivering sentences of lyrical beauty and grace, which stand out like sharp cacti in a flat desert. The end sentence to her story ‘The Lady from Connecticut’, for example:

*“Cars pass, several in a row, from a party, perhaps, following each other home – sober drivers, she hopes, soberer than she, yet she moves back in the ditch, which isn’t a ditch so much as a broad rut filled with fallen leaves and broken branches,*

*fieldstone and mist rising over a landscape pierced as quaintly as a quilt, and the lady from Connecticut, a loose stitch in it.”*

**“Schutt writes with a detached prose style, and body horror to rival Cronenberg”**

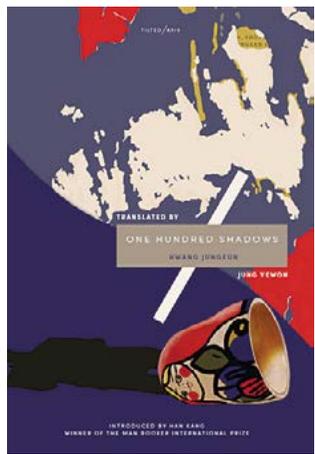
The stories in *Pure Hollywood* are prickly things indeed. Schutt’s vision is flat and unflinching and unforgiving, like a photo taken with too much flash. Like a flash, however, the collection lingers in the mind, imprinting itself upon my closed eyelids long after I put it down. The Santa Ana wind runs through Schutt’s pages, rattling skeletons, kicking up dust, and, always, turning the page.

## BOOKS

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## One Hundred Shadows leaves us in the dark

*This short novel from Hwang Jungeun promises a magical exploration of post-industrial Korea, but falls short when it comes to giving us answers.*



## BOOKS

**ONE HUNDRED SHADOWS**

by Hwang Jungeun  
(translation by Jung Yewon)

And Other Stories. 120 pp.

**Bayan Al-Bulushi**  
Books Writer

**T**his ethereal short novel seamlessly weaves elements of fantasy with reality, producing a work of fiction that is as bizarre as it is engrossing. Author Hwang Jungeun affords us a small glimpse into the lives of Eungyo and Mujae, two friends working at electronic stores.

During a day out, Eungyo is inexplicably following a shadow in the woods, and the temptation is too great to turn back until her friend Mujae asks her what she is doing. Only in describing the shadow she is following does she realise it was her own. Mujae warns her, that no matter what happens, she should never follow her shadow again if it rises.

Mujae and Eungyo work in two different electronic stores, in the

**“The nature and significance of the shadows are ambiguous: they appear to draw their strength as their owner weakens”**

slums of Seoul. Their livelihood is threatened as the buildings in which the

stores are housed in are to be demolished, following the ever-growing trend of gentrification. The rise of Eungyo’s shadow draws the attention of her employer and Mujae, each sharing their experiences with the physical manifestation of shadows, almost always leading to tragedy.

The relationship between Mujae and Eungyo develops, as the hardships they experience bring them closer to each other. This culminates in the final scene of the novel, in which Mujae impulsively buys what he deems to be a car, and drives with Eungyo to an island for the day. Taking in what the island has to offer in scenery and culinarily, they miss the last ferry off the island. As

the sun sets, and darkness overwhelms the island’s inadequate streetlights, Mujae’s shadow begins to rise. Eungyo wakes Mujae from his trance and they walk into the night with the shadow trailing, fearless of what its presence foreshadows.

The nature and significance of these shadows are ambiguous: they appear to draw their strength as their owner weakens, slowly overcoming them and their lives. Why do these shadows rise? Do they only afflict the poor or are they simply a metaphor? These are questions left unanswered. Frankly, that confused me rather than piqued my curiosity. I confess that it was difficult to put down the novel as I sought to

glean more knowledge of the shadows, but was left disappointed when it was not forthcoming. The novel does touch on the least advertised aspect of the South Korean miracle economic revolution: those left behind by its inequality. It was this element that drew me most upon reading the synopsis. However, these were not explored to any substantial depth, which was unfortunate as I believe it would have added a greater dimension to the novel. While its fantastical nature prompted comparisons to *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang, who wrote the introduction to the book, its impact fell far short of Kang’s masterpiece.

## Philip Roth: Mourning the loss of an American literary giant

## BOOKS

**Fred Fyles**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Y**ou’re looking, as you begin, for what’s going to resist you. You’re looking for trouble. Sometimes in the beginning uncertainty arises not because the writing is difficult, but because it isn’t difficult enough.”

These words were spoken by the late American author Philip Roth, who died earlier this week, at the age of 85, in an interview for the literary magazine *Paris*

*Review.* The interview took place in the mid-1980s, well into his long career, but before he published some of his most critically-acclaimed work.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1933, Roth grew up in the neighbourhood of Weequahic, at a time of great change. The son of first generation Jewish immigrants, he came of age during the Second World War, and later saw the incredible demographic shifts occurring in New Jersey, as ‘white flight’ from Newark to the suburbs accelerated.

After graduating from the University of Chicago, Roth served for two years in the US Army, before

beginning his writing career with the publication of *Goodbye, Columbus* in 1959. Between then and today, Roth published 27 novels and novellas, spanning the range of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century American experience.

Roth’s most celebrated work was perhaps his ‘Newark Trilogy’, which was comprised of *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998), and *The Human Stain* (2000). The historian Michael Kimmage said the trilogy showed Newark’s “twentieth-century decline from immigrant metropolis to post-industrial disaster [completing] the motif of

history and its terrifying power over individual destiny.”

*American Pastoral*, which was the first of Roth’s books I read, details the life and times of Seymour ‘Swede’ Levov, a Jewish-American businessman, living a successful life in mid-century Newark, a lifestyle that is upended by the social and political turmoil of the 1960s and ‘70s, with his daughter rejecting her father’s middle-class lifestyle in favour of political radicalism.

It was one of the books I took with me when I went interrailing with friends, in the endless summer before universi-

ty; we took turns to read it, passing it between us, and marvelling at the way Roth managed to capture a whole generation of the American experience.

Within his work, Roth was unusually prescient about what was going on around him, and, indeed, what might happen in the future. His 2004 work, *The Plot Against America*, details an alternative history, in which the isolationist Charles Lindbergh beats Roosevelt in the 1940 election, leading to a rise in antisemitism, and a refusal to intervene against Hitler. Lindbergh, as many have pointed out, serves as a sort of proto-Trump, supporting the

America First Committee. In *The Human Stain*, too, in which the protagonist – a white-passing mixed race academic – is accused of racism, Roth manages to eerily predict how identity would become a defining feature of modern politics.

Roth remains one of the titans of modern American literature, up there with Saul Bellow or Toni Morrison. His passing leaves the literary world just that bit darker.

*Philip Roth, 1933 - 2018*

# FILM

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## *On Chesil Beach*: A strained drama that loses it in the last act

*In Dominic Cooke's directorial debut, he sticks closely to Ian McEwan's original book, but it's clear he's more comfortable with the theatre, with many aspects of the film resembling a stage play.*

### FILM

#### ON CHESIL BEACH



**Dir:** Dominic Cooke. **Script:** Ian McEwan. **Starring:** Saoirse Ronan, Billy Howle, Emily Watson, Anne-Marie Duff. *110 minutes*

**Fred Fyles**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**O**n *Chesil Beach* has perhaps the longest sex scene I've ever seen in my history of cinema-going. We encounter newly-weds Florence (Saoirse Ronan) and Edward (Billy Howle) right at the beginning of Dominic Cooke's film, and – shortly after sitting through the post-wedding dinner from hotel hell – they start to get it on. Or, at least they try. Things don't reach a climax – both physically and emotionally – until about eighty minutes later, by which time the film, and the audience, has lost any sense of excitement.

Interspersed between this fumbling and tugging and stalling is the story of two lives, slowly but surely coming together; through flashbacks, we follow Florence and Edward as they make their way towards each other from radically different backgrounds. Florence is the upper-class daughter of an academic (played with haughty excellence by Emily Watson, who manages to deliver lines like "I heard her on the phone to Iris Murdoch" as if it were the most natural thing in the world) and a

factory-owner; she's just graduated from the Royal College of Music, wants to make it big with her string quintet, and – for the standards of the time and milieu – is a bit of a radical, attending CND meetings in her spare time.

It is at one of these meetings that she meets Edward, a bright man from less well-off backgrounds, who has just finished at UCL ("But that's London. For sons of tradesmen," Florence's mother cries). His mother, played by the brilliant Anne-Marie Duff, is an artistic, eccentric woman, whose life is upended when she's hit by a moving train door, leaving her 'brain-damaged'. It's a moment of shocking violence that has repercussions throughout the film, although Cooke doesn't go far enough in exploring the impact it's had on Edward.

**"The screenplay creates a three-part structure out of a film that can only sustain a single act"**

The two meet, fall in love, get married, and then... an inability for Florence to have sex drives a wedge between them, leading to a shouting match on the shingles of



A stock photo of every family beach holiday ever // Lionsgate

Chesil Beach. The reasons behind this refusal, which Edward terms frigidity, are hinted at throughout the film, although in the process it seems to insist the behaviour necessitates an explanation, and that this explanation must be traumatic.

The film sticks closely to the original book, with Ian McEwan even serving as the film's screenwriter. It's understandable, but a pity, since it creates a three-part structure out of a film that realistically can only sustain a single act. While the film has a natural cut-off point, leaving the couple alone and isolated on the beachfront, it instead follows them up through the decades, as Edward and Florence lose their youthful joie

de vivre, and gain heavy ageing prosthetics. The result is a film which falls apart in the last half-hour, undermining the careful sense of time and place created at the beginning of the film. It also serves to dampen down the emotional poignancy generated in the beach scenes, instead replacing it with something much more close-ended and hackneyed.

The cast give it their all, however. Ronan is, as usual, excellent in the film, perfectly capturing the mid-century British accent of the upper crust, all clipped vowels and restraint. Her Florence is hesitant and unsure of herself, particularly in the excruciating sex scene, which reportedly took a

week to film, but Ronan is able to turn on a dime, switching from emotional vulnerability to hard steel. It's difficult, however, when comparing it to her last performance, in Greta Gerwig's majestic *Lady Bird*, to not miss the impressive naturalism of the film's screenplay; *On Chesil Beach*, in comparison, seems stilted and disjointed. Howle manages to hold his own against Ronan, although he on occasion oversells the blustery, impulsive nature of his character.

Cooke's main experience is in directing for the stage, and it shows here: the action is frequently stilted, with numerous sections appearing more like a televised play than an actual film. While

cinematographer Sean Bobbitt, who is best known for his work with Steve McQueen, manages to capture the majestic beauty of the English landscape, things all too often veer away from naturalism and into a more formalist style of film-making.

It seems apropos that, from a book all about frustrated desires and containment, we get a film that is itself frustrating and contained. *On Chesil Beach* seems to waste its brilliant cast on a drama that is lacking in emotional power, and weighted down by a turgid ending; while there are moments where it manages to hit the mark, they're few and far between in the over-long film.

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# TELEVISION

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## Nailed It!, Netflix, and the death of modern TV

*Netflix and other streaming services have brought with them a new raft of options for TV enthusiasts, but as they spread their resources thinner and thinner, hoping to get another hit, the viewers are losing out, lost amid a increasing pool of crap.*

### TV

**Fred Fyles**  
Editor-in-Chief

In 1978, the author and activist Jerry Mander released a book entitled *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*. Mander, who had worked in the advertising world for 15 years before turning his attention more fully to activism, argued television was not a neutral technology, but rather contained within it an intrinsic power to misinform and control populations. “What is revealed in the end,” Mander wrote, “is

that there is ideology in the technology itself. To speak of television as ‘neutral’ and therefore subject to change is as absurd as speaking of the reform of a technology such as guns.”

I would like to propose a fifth argument for the elimination of television: the existence of the TV show *Nailed It!* The series – which must be the first example of a television series being inspired solely by a meme – sees three amateur bakers attempt to construct complicated culinary creations while host Amanda Byer provides gently sarcastic commentary. The emphasis is on ‘amateur’,

rather than ‘baker’: unlike *The Great British Bake Off*, where contestants can knock up a dozen perfect macarons in their sleep, the people brought on in *Nailed It!* are home cooks through and through. Cakes are iced warm, tiers collapse, and the sugar sculptures look like something from *House of Wax*.

*Nailed It!* is, as you may have guessed, a Netflix original – one of the roughly 700 films and TV programmes the streaming giant plans to release this year. The cost of bringing this sheer amount of content to the provider’s 104 million global subscribers is no small feat: their

content budget for this year currently stands at around \$8 billion, roughly equivalent to the GDP of Haiti. A large proportion of this money will go on the service’s flagship productions, such as monarchy-based drama *The Crown*, whose first season cost a reported \$130 million to make.

This growth has another cost, however, and that is the deluge of trite, dull, trashy shows that are currently flooding our screens. Series like *Bojack Horseman* and films like Alex Garland’s *Annihilation* are like pieces of flotsam amid a tidal wave of mediocrity, and, as Netflix is increas-

ingly aggressive in its pursuit of original content, it seems likely things will only worsen.

How did we get to this position? Just a few short years ago, Netflix seemed to be the salvation for TV in the modern age, a platform that could fund and promote high quality content to fill our screens. Netflix’s first breakthrough – six years after they began offering streamed content – was with the release of the first series of *House of Cards*, which was their first original piece of programming. While they had previously been satisfied with merely being a platform for the work of others, with *House of Cards* they began to shape their image as major television producers.

**“Netflix’s growth has led to a deluge of trite, dull, trashy shows flooding our screens”**

They swiftly followed this up with *Orange is the New Black*, an ensemble drama about incarcerated women that married showrunner Jenji Kohan’s bold, colourful vision with intersectional feminism. Those two shows, alone, garnered eleven Emmy awards, and two Golden Globes for Netflix.

At the time, these shows seemed to mark a turning point for the tel-

evision industry coming along just as we were beginning to reach the end of the golden age of TV. The series of tragic prestige dramas, most notably embodied in *The Sopranos*, had their final hurrah with AMC’s masterpiece *Mad Men*, which remains a reference point for high-quality, slow-burn television. As we bid farewell to Donald Draper and Peggy Olsen, however, there was concern over what might come next, and streaming services stepped in to fill the void. Indeed, going back to a little under a decade ago, we seemed to be on the precipice of a new cultural landscape: water cooler discussions were being replaced with binge-watching, Twitter provided a new platform for real-time critiquing, and the phrase ‘Netflix and chill’ entered into our shared lexicon. In 2015 and 2016, the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism was awarded to TV critics, seemingly cementing the central role TV was having on the entertainment landscape.

There is no doubt that this second wind can be attributed to streaming services; while Netflix planted the flag, becoming most closely associated with the new generation of prestige dramas, Amazon Studios and Hulu were quick on its heels, with series like *Transparent* and *The Handmaid’s Tale* picking up accolades left, right, and centre.

What *Nailed It!* shows, however, is how this relationship has soured, and the promised golden age has become an ever-receding dream.



How did we get from *Mad Men* and *The Sopranos*... // AMC/HBO

# TELEVISION

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As Netflix increasingly pivot to self-produced content, works of true quality are becoming harder to make out: in return for *The Crown*, we have to have *The Get Down* (cancelled after a single drawn-out season); for every *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* there is a *Girlboss* (described as ‘so unrelentingly tone-deaf to the human condition it’s hard to know where to start’); and meanwhile good quality shows like *Midnight Diner: Tokyo Stories* get pushed off the landing page.

## “The main question Nailed It! prompts is why does such a show exist in the first place?”

*Nailed It!* isn’t a particularly bad show. It’s well-meaning and warm, wearing its game show format lightly. But as a piece of programming, the main question it prompts is why? Why does such a show exist? Who pitched it to Netflix, and why was it funded? Buoyed on by the success of their early shows, Netflix seems desperate to replicate the success of its early days, but rather than channeling their ever-increasing reserves into a few choice projects, they are spreading it among as many things as possible, hoping some will make it big on the off chance. The result is chaotic. With new shows and films being released every week, it’s paradoxically more and more difficult for the viewer to find stuff worth watching; we’re like Buridan’s ass, trapped in front of an endless sea of choice, but paralysed into indecision.



...to *Girlboss* and *Nailed It!*? // Netflix

And this isn’t even beginning to consider the impact streaming services are having on the film industry. In particular, the Cannes Film Festival has been waging a war against Netflix, last year announcing all films screening in the festival would need to have a theatrical distribution in French cinemas; in response, Netflix pulled all their entries from this year’s festival, including those that didn’t fall under the distribution rules. David Sims, staff writer for *The Atlantic*, has called Netflix’s corporate strategy “aggressive and unusual even for a streaming company”, but has predicted Cannes will soon cave in, facing the sheer glut of Netflix releases, which is consistently growing.

This mania isn’t helped by the lack of comprehensive data on what exactly people are watching, which can make it increasingly difficult to decide what to watch. Netflix has been notoriously secretive

about what exactly its customers are watching – Nielsen previously announced a new service to measure how many people were watching episodes of individual TV shows on streaming services, but Netflix were quick to point out the data were “not accurate, not even close, and do not reflect the viewing of these shows on Netflix.”

It is unclear whether Netflix wants to hide these viewing figures in order to gain a competitive edge over the competition, to help hide which shows are performing poorly, or for any other reason. Earlier this year, a report was released by 7Park Data, which claimed Netflix originals only made up about 20% of viewing figures on the platform, with the remainder being people watching licensed content, which Netflix has purchased from other producers. Netflix refused to comment.

What this secrecy does mean, is that it’s increas-

ingly difficult for the average viewer to decide what to watch. Previously, TV addicts could look to the ratings to see which shows were getting the largest audiences, and would be worth their time – of course, popularity doesn’t directly correlate to quality, but it can be a good proxy, allowing us to know what we should see to keep up with the changing cultural landscape. Today, viewers need to rely on positive write-ups in papers or on websites, or on recommendations through social media, to know what they should be tuning into. This, combined with the sheer quantity of programmes now available, puts the viewer in a vulnerable position, with ever-increasing choice and an ever-diminishing ability to tell the wheat from the chaff.

Netflix has exploited that gulf: as soon as you navigate to the Netflix website, you’re greeted with an advert for

whatever Netflix Original they’re currently plugging (at the time of writing it’s *Dear White People*, the satirical college series, based off the slightly-shaky film of the same name by Justin Simien).

## “Streaming services are channeling their resources into making sure every click is directed towards self-produced content”

Scroll down, and you’re presented with another raft of Netflix Originals to pick from; as you keep on scrolling down, and the categories get more complex, you’re almost

always guaranteed to see the little red ‘Netflix’ denoting original content at multiple points on the screen.

The question that this brings us back to, then, especially when considering that quality of shows like *Nailed It!* is whether or not the programmes Netflix are pushing are because they’re suited to us, or simply because they’re made by Netflix. In an effort to stay ahead of the tough competition, the streaming services are channeling their resources into making sure every click, hit, or view is directed towards content they produce and own. And the result is diminishing returns for us – the consumers.

Netflix needs to take a break, and decide what kind of platform it wants to be, rather than trying to be all things at once. But, with Barack Obama currently in talks to produce shows for Netflix, it seems unlikely the stream of content will ever stop.

# Your Union events

Friday 25 May

**BPM x GOOD FORM**  
*Summer party*  
Friday  
**1 June**  
12:00 - 02:00  
12:00 - 18:00 - Beit Quad  
18:00 - 02:00 - FiveSixEight & Metric  
Join us for a splashtastic end of exams **all-day party**  
Themed Cocktails  
Outdoor Bar  
Inflatables  
Music Tech DJs  
£2.50 on the door  
£1.50 on Facebook guest list  
imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on

**h**  
**PGI FRIDAY**  
EVERY FRIDAY  
in the h-bar  
16:00 - 23:00  
FREE ENTRY  
Take a well-deserved break from the research and lab-work to spend the night relaxing with friends at the h-bar! Get two luscious cocktails for £7.20 from our bespoke cocktail bar and enjoy the laid back vibe!  
TWO SELECTED COCKTAILS FOR £7.20  
TWO BOUTIQUE BEERS FOR £6.50  
SIX SELECTED SHOTS FOR £14.00  
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## COCKTAIL NIGHT

Choose from our range of classic, modern and signature cocktails  
**£4.50 each or 2 for £7.60**

Every Friday from 17:30

imperialcollegeunion.org/food-drink



## Coming up in our bars



### Super Quiz

Every Tuesday  
20:00 - 22:00

### Cocktail Night

Every Tuesday  
18:00 - 23:00

### BPM x Good Form

Friday 1 June  
12:00 - 02:00

#### Find us on Facebook

fb.com/beitbars



### Cocktail Club

Every Tuesday  
19:30 - 23:00

### Pub Quiz

Every Thursday  
19:30 - 23:00

### PGI Friday

Every Friday  
16:00 - 23:00

#### Find us on Facebook

fb.com/hbarpub



### Free Pool

Every Day  
17:00-23:00

### Pub Quiz

Every Tuesday  
18:30-23:00

### Sports Night

Every Wednesday  
18:00 onwards

### Cocktail Night

Every Friday  
17:30 onwards

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# GAMES

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## Preconceived notions: reviews and sales

*How the anchoring effect changes the way we look at games and makes us spend extravagantly.*

### GAMES

**Saad Ahmed**

*Games Editor*

We may not realise it, but our opinions of certain games, films, and TV shows are usually formed, even before we get to experience them ourselves. This is due to all the reviews we see, hear, or read about before or straight after a product's release. Our brains are more likely to think something is good if we're told that it is good beforehand. This is something that's been called the anchoring effect.

In a study done after the release of *Plants vs. Zombies*, different groups of people were told that the game was either reviewed well or poorly by critics. After playing the game themselves, the volunteers who were told it got good reviews gave it a higher score than those who were told it got

negative reviews.

According to the anchoring effect, we base all our opinions on the first piece of data we hear about something. If we play a critically acclaimed game, we're more likely to ignore its flaws and glitches and focus on its more positive aspects. Consequently, we're more likely to recommend it to friends or write good reviews about it. The same is true in the exact reverse, if we play a critically panned game, every fault and error serves to add to our view of it as a 'bad' game.

This is why game developers are selective about who they get to review the game before release. They try to make sure that their game gets played by the more 'friendly' reviewers of the community so that early opinions will be more favourable. This causes a ripple effect where the later reviewers will also be favourable and positive, and, by extension, more people will end up buying the game

they hear so many good things about.

**"We want to make sure we get our money's worth"**

Sometimes it might not always be like this. A really critical review of a game from a long-running franchise may be dismissed by its fans as being biased or unfair. For the most part though, reviews do have a role to play to how we go about deciding which game to play or buy. And it makes sense. Games aren't exactly the cheapest form of entertainment there is, so we want to make sure we get our money's worth. What's the point in investing in a product that we know is going to disappoint us? So we read reviews to find out for ourselves whether a



**Steam sales drain gamers' wallets faster than Imperial drains happiness // Valve**

game is worth buying and playing.

With the reviews, we already form a notion of what the game is going to be like and use it to shape our actions forward. However, this behaviour doesn't just apply to reviews but also to things like Steam sales and game bundle deals. If a game is on sale for a price between £40-60, we're only likely to buy it if we're massive fans of the series or if we know for sure that this is a

game we're going to play and don't want to wait for.

However, if a £50 game was on sale for £10, a lot of people would see this as a good deal and buy the game, even if they might not have had a very strong interest in it beforehand. The original price forms a preconceived notion of the game's value in our heads. So when we see the reduced price and statements such as "75% off!", we rationalise buying the game as us making good on a deal, on a price that was already formed in our head.

But was buying the reduced price game really a good deal? A lot of games we buy from Steam sales usually just lie around in our games library. In the same way that it's not a good deal to buy a fully priced game and not play it, it's not a good deal to buy a game on sale if you're not going to play it or experience it yourself. It's like buying a movie ticket but never going to see the movie. It's a trap so many of us fall into time and time again.

Game developers use these preconceived notions to their advantage. Just like how they're stra-

tegic about which reviewers they let play the game first hand, they're also usually strategic about how they price the game. Sometimes they price a game or its bundles and DLC higher than it should be, so more people buy it during a sale. They also make a point of showing how much you save by buying different or larger bundles of the game; that's them setting a preconceived notion in your head for how things are.

**"It's not a good deal to buy a game on sale if you're not going to play it"**

This phenomenon is everywhere, it affects your gaming experience, it may drain your wallet and it helps form review scores. Knowing it exists might not be enough for you to be immune to it, but if you keep your eye open, you just might be able to spot it in action.



**A good review makes all the difference // Mr Seb**

## MUSIC

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## Breaking: R. Kelly is still a revolting human being

## MUSIC

## Henry Eshbaugh

Music Editor

This article is sensitive, and discusses extreme violence against women. Reader discretion is advised.

R. Kelly is back in the news – as in, he’s being sued for sexual slavery. His conduct is deeply immoral – sick and hideous behavior. And it’s been going on for 20 fucking years.

Those familiar with R. Kelly’s fantastic lack of care for fellow human beings may recall his monstrous treatment of Aaliyah, then a rising teen star. Her debut album, produced by Kelly, was titled *Age Ain’t Nothing*

*But a Number*. They met when she was 12; her debut album was released at 14; they were illegally married when she was 15. The marriage was in 1994.

Knowledge of this marriage was widespread in the music industry. Kelly’s been quoted – “I can tell you I loved her, I can tell you she loved me, we was very close.” Other than this, neither have spoken about the marriage publicly (besides her court motions).

For the record, the marriage was annulled when Aaliyah’s family found out in 1995. She attempted to have the records expunged in 1997 (these motions being the smoking gun proving the marriage happened). At the time, another woman was suing Kelly for having sex with her when she was

15; he was 24. The case was settled for \$250,000. Aaliyah tragically passed in a plane crash in 2001. She was 22.

That’s not all, folks. In 2002, a tape surfaced of R. Kelly having sex with and urinating on yet another teenager. Police seized his camera and found twelve pornographic pictures of underage women. He was indicted on 21 counts of child pornography; the case was dismissed over a technicality relating to the search warrant – “lack of probable cause.” The trial related to the tape was postponed over and over again by R. Kelly’s legal team, citing whatever would push the date over the horizon; eventually, in 2008, a jury cleared R. Kelly, The Human Delay of Trial, of all counts.

And now, the new

allegations. Three sets of parents have come forward, alleging that R. Kelly is holding women, their childre, in a “sex cult”. One has come forward accusing him of purposefully infecting her with an incurable sexually-transmitted disease and refers to her case as “sexual enslavement.”

Horrid? Yes. Shocking? No. The man’s 51 – this is a well-established pattern of behavior, whispered in the media, and legible on his fucking Wikipedia page. These are Weinstein-esque patterns of turning a blind eye to the kinds of toxic behavior that keep capable women out of music. Thank Christ for #MeToo – it’s only too easy to imagine this behavior continuing into perpetuity. Hopefully the winds of change will



R. Kelly has demonstrated a sick pattern of behaviour // Wikimedia

blow R Kelly right into prison – or wherever else his miserable ass will get some comeuppance.

From the *Felix* Music staff, from deep within all our hearts – R. Kelly: *fuck you!*

## Courtney Barnett trades barbs for guitars

## MUSIC

TELL ME HOW YOU REALLY FEEL

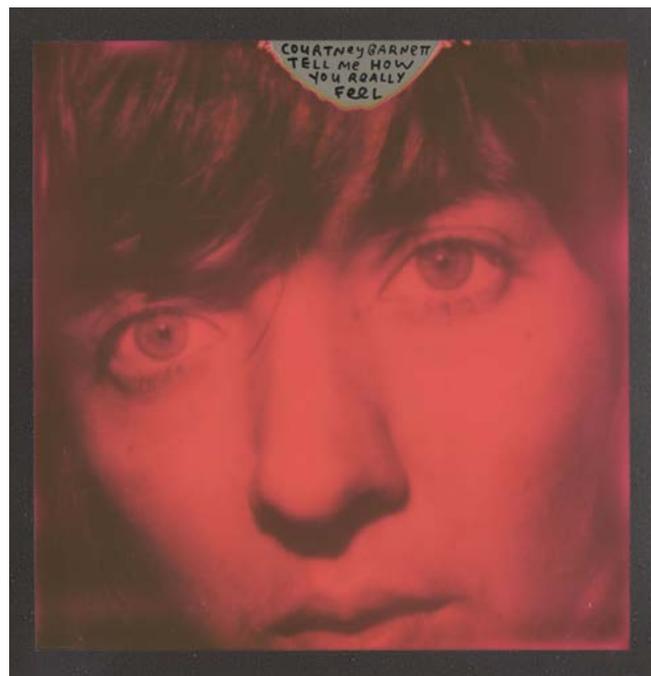


**Artist:** Courtney Barnett. **Label:** Milk!. **Top Tracks:** City Looks Pretty; Nameless Faceless. **For Fans Of:** Kurt Vile; Angel Olsen; Parquet Courts. *37 minutes*

## Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

On first listen, *Tell Me How You Really Feel*, the long-anticipated new album from Australian slacker-rock queen Courtney Barnett couldn’t seem more different from her breakthrough *Sometimes I Sit and Think, and Sometimes I Just Sit*. ‘Hopelessness’, the opening track, is a



Yeah, but how do you really feel though? // Milk!

guitar-led dirge, with Barnett’s flat vocals peering out from behind waves of distorted strumming that reaches an apex in the song’s conclusion. It’s a sharp contrast from

her last album’s opener – ‘Elevator Operator’, a sparky, upbeat tune that displayed all the usual qualities we’ve come to expect from Barnett: smart, witty lyrics;

intricate guitar riffs; and a knack for catchy melody.

With the next track, ‘City Looks Pretty’, however, we’re back into familiar Barnett territory, as she sings-speaks about day to day mundanities. This classic formula is repeated several times during the album, although there is definitely a sense that, with this album, Barnett released all the best tracks as singles, meaning the remainder of the songs simply don’t measure up. The bouncy rhythms of tracks like ‘City Looks Pretty’ and ‘Charity’ are intercut with heavier tracks, such as the down-tempo ‘Need a Little Time’, in an album that is more introspective.

The album in general has a much darker, more layered sound than her previous work: the guitars are scuzzier, the riffs

meatier, with a heightened focus on melody over lyrics. This marks an important development for Barnett, but does seem to detract from the qualities that attracted so many of us to her in the first place: her wicked sense of wordplay, and ability to craft a slick lyric.

To be sure, there are some classic lines to be found on the album: Barnett is particularly adept at ironic juxtaposition (“Meditation just makes you more upset” on ‘Charity’) or canny metaphors (indecision “rots like a bag of last week’s meat” on the punchy ‘Crippling Self Doubt and a General Lack of Confidence’). And, despite a general sense of vulnerability on the album, she’s not afraid to deliver a kiss-off line, like “He said ‘I could eat

a bowl of alphabet soup/ and spit out better words than you’/but you didn’t” on the incredibly boppy ‘Nameless Faceless’.

‘I’m Not Your Mother, I’m Not Your Bitch’, which marks the mid-point of the album, is a significant sonic departure for Barnett, her trademark drawl replaced with something more akin to a sneer. It also marks a turning point for the album, which is front-loaded with catchy tunes. From the mid-point onwards, the tracks become increasingly forgettable, closing out with a bizarre fade-out on ‘Sunday Roast’, which suddenly segues midway through from a rambling track to a sing-along chorus. It’s a choice that doesn’t quite work, but still leaves us looking forward to what Barnett will bring next.

# TRAVEL

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## Los Angeles, I'm yours: five days in Pacific paradise

*Los Angeles, or the City of Angels, is one of the largest and most famous cities in the world, but tourists can struggle to find things to do there. Travel Editor Edita Pileckyte spent five days there last September – here are some interesting places and activities for the full LA experience!*

### TRAVEL

**Edita Pileckyte**

*Travel Editor*

#### Day One

**O**n the first day, we visited the beaches, starting from Santa Monica. It's a separate city with lively streets, full of shops and diners to choose from. The beach is enormously wide and separated from the streets by tall cliffs. The Santa Monica pier offers a breath-taking view of the Pacific Ocean and is the end point of Route 66, the famous road going all the way from Chicago across eight states. We also took a bus to Malibu, but the beach there wasn't as nice as we'd hoped – not really suitable for swimming and mostly used by surfers.

Back in Santa Monica, we managed to catch a

fiery sunset behind the cliffs, and then walked along the ocean to Venice Beach, where we visited canals similar to the ones in Venice, Italy. Unfortunately, it was already dark, so we couldn't appreciate the area in all its beauty, and it felt a bit dodgy. Also, despite the weather being very hot in LA, it was at least 10°C colder at the beach, and got really chilly in the evening. So my advice is to arrive at the beaches earlier to see everything before sunset.

#### Day Two

We began this day by hiking to the Hollywood Sign. We started from the Griffith Observatory and took a path which was meant to lead us to the sign in around 90 minutes. On our way, we noticed signs warning hikers about rattlesnakes. Being mesmerised by the views of LA around us,

we somehow managed to take the wrong turn which steered us away from the main path. We realised that a bit too late so the only option was hiking up and down every hill on the way to the sign, using narrow mountain paths, and holding onto stones in the ground to avoid falling over. There were no tourists – just a couple of fit locals who clearly used this route for training. Only then did we realise what we'd got ourselves into – but it was well worth it when we finally reached the sign! The highest spot is just above the letters, guarded by a tall fence – don't even think about climbing over and sitting on them as it will result in a fine and possibly imprisonment!

**“You have the Hollywood Hills around you with Lake Hollywood and the cityscape at the bottom – a perfect interplay between natural and urban environments”**

We opted for finishing our difficult hike with yet another challenge – climbing the last hill to reach the Wisdom Tree,



Los Angeles with the Hollywood Sign under my tired feet // Edita Pileckyte

where you can enjoy the panorama of LA for the last time and appreciate the greatness of the city. You have the Hollywood Hills around you with Lake Hollywood and the cityscape at the bottom – a perfect interplay between natural and urban environments. Overall, our unexpected detour took us around three and a half hours (all in 35°C) – the struggle was real, but this was one of the most amazing things I've done in my life. Finally, we finished the day by heading to Hollywood Boulevard to see the Walk of Fame.

#### Day Three

Day three was spent at the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park. The ticket includes not only rides and live shows but also a tour of movie sets. You can also purchase a pint of butterbeer or Marge-Simpson-style cotton candy. After exiting the Studios, don't leave just yet – a nearby place called Universal CityWalk is buzzing with

shops, cafes, cinemas, and street performances, making it a perfect way to end the day.

#### Day Four

The day started with the trip to Beverly Hills, where we walked along the main street, Rodeo Drive, lined with designer shops, and visited the Beverly Wilshire hotel featured in *Pretty Woman*. Besides that, you can take a guided tour of celebrity homes but it's quite pricey. However, we spent the rest of our day on Hollywood Boulevard again since we had won tickets to the filming of the *Jimmy Kimmel Live* show. Many famous talk shows give away free tickets, you just need to enter a competition a few days in advance – this will give you a taste of how such shows work behind the screen, and will definitely be a memorable part of your LA visit.

#### Day Five

Our last day was spent in Downtown LA, with

majestic skyscrapers and the beautifully-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall. We also visited City Hall, a high security institution offering panoramic views of the surrounding area (doesn't top the Hollywood Hills though!), and Little Tokyo, home to Japanese shops, museums, and gardens. Finally, before departing to our next destination, we explored the area around the bus station, where LA was founded in 1781.

#### Last points

Even in mid-September, the weather is very hot (~35°C) so make sure to bring something to cover your head, and plenty of water. Also, whilst LA is infamous for traffic, we didn't have any problems with using public transport – going places took time because it's a huge city but it wasn't nearly as bad as we expected. Finally, if you have even more time and run out of things to do, you can drive to San Diego, a city south of LA, or visit Disneyland in Anaheim.



Fancy palm trees of Beverly Hills // Edita Pileckyte

# FOOD

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## Think you can take the heat? Read on!

### FOOD

**Zhihang Li**  
Food Writer

If you have ever heard about my hometown Szechuan, there is a 99.9% probability that you would relate it with spicy food. Apart from the famous Szechuan Hotpot, with loads of chilli floating on the surface, Mapo Tofu is irresistible if you fancy spicy food. It is also a perfect vegetarian or vegan choice if you add no mince into it. There are several variations of Mapo Tofu, including a Japanese version, which is well known as one of the spiciest meals there.

'Mapo Tofu' is named after an old lady, nicknamed 'Mapo' ('an old woman with pockmarked face' in Chinese) in Szechuan who owned a small and inconspicuous restaurant. She cooked extremely delicious tofu with chilli and beef, which then became popular by word of mouth, and is now well known all over the world.

In my hometown, Mapo Tofu is famous for the 'numbness' feeling

in your mouth, instead of 'spicy'. This special feeling, which is coincidentally referred to as 'Ma' as well, is caused by Szechuan peppers. According to Harold McGee in *On Food and Cooking*, "they produce a strange, tingling, buzzing, numbing sensation that is something like the effect of carbonated drinks or of a mild electric current". Anyway, you will discover the mystery if you have a try!

The red colour and spicy taste mainly comes from Pixian bean sauce and chilli powder, which can be easily found in Chinese supermarkets in Chinatown. Pixian bean sauce is widely used in Szechuan cuisine. It is a spicy and salty paste made from fermented broad beans, red peppers, and various spices.

For me, rice is without question the best companion to Mapo Tofu. (It's even better to mix this dish in with rice). Don't worry if you can't handle spicy food very well, simply add as much or as little Pixian bean sauce or chilli powder as you like and you'll get a personalised edition of Mapo Tofu.



Szechuan peppers. Try eating one whole. Go on, I dare you//Flickr/Guilhem Vellut

### Mapo Tofu



The final product//Flickr/Craig Dugas

#### Ingredients

- Oil
- 500g tofu
- 2-3 spring onions
- 15-20g Pixian bean sauce
- Chilli powder (as much as you like)
- 3g Szechuan pepper
- 50g beef mince (you can substitute pork mince instead)
- Starch (ideally potato starch)
- Water

*These amounts are for reference, but you can alter them as you like to your personal taste.*

#### Kitchen Utensils

- Frying pan (deep enough to contain the tofu)
- Wooden spoon
- Kettle

#### Preparation

1. Cut tofu into small cubes, around 2cm in length.
2. Chop the spring onions into small segments.
3. Chop the beans and chilli skins in the Pixian Bean Sauce (to make the dish look better).
4. Add a pinch of salt into the mince, stirring the mince to make sure it's well blended.
5. Dissolve 25g of starch into water, normally 1:1.5 starch to water by volume. (You may need to remix it again before addition since it is an unstable turbid liquid.)

#### Method

1. **Add oil to a frying pan and heat it.** Add enough to cover the base of the frying pan, more according to your personal liking. With too little oil, the mince will not be fragrant and crispy enough. Too much may make it greasy and unhealthy as well.
2. **When the smoke of the oil rises, add the mince.** Stir fry the mince until the colour turns golden brown. Make sure the heat is not too high and stir it frequently.
3. **Add in Pixian bean sauce and Szechuan pepper.** Stir fry the mixture. Check the colour of the oil – hopefully it will turn red!
4. **Add in the tofu, chilli powder, and the boiling water.** Enough water is needed to cover 3/4 the height of the tofu. Boiling water in the kettle saves lots of time!
5. **Wait until only half of the tofu is submerged in water.** Pour in half of the starch water. You can do this by slowly pouring the starch water along the circumference of the pan. Wait for another five minutes and add the remaining starch water.
6. **Taste the tofu and sprinkle over the green onions.** It's up to you when you want to stop heating. Personally, I would turn off the heat early and utilise the surplus heat for a minute or two.
7. **Done! Get your rice, mix them up, and bon appétit!**

# LIBERATION

icu-interfaith@imperial.ac.uk

## Ramadan: What is it? What does it mean? And how do you balance it with exams?

*Last week saw the start of the month of Ramadan, during which time Muslims focus on inner reflection and spirituality. Students give their thoughts on what Ramadan means to them, and how to fast during the summer.*

### LIBERATION

**Adil Ali**

*Interfaith Officer*

For most people on campus, last Thursday was largely unremarkable – aside from the weather deciding to behave itself.

But for some students, and for 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide, Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May marked the start of the month of Ramadan. For the uninitiated, Ramadan is one of the biggest events in the Islamic calendar, as Muslims fast daily from dawn till sunset. Whilst fasting is commonly perceived as simply giving up food and drink, it extends far further – Muslims are encouraged to abstain from bad thoughts and actions, and instead focus on inner reflection and spirituality.

Above all else, the Ramadan experience is unique to every believer. Below, we've collected some insights and tips from Muslims across campus on what Ramadan means to them and how they balance fasting with student life.

### What is Ramadan?

Whilst avoiding food and drink between sunrise and sunset is partly to empathise with the poor the main purpose of the month is about spirituality: becoming closer to God, giving up bad habits for the entire month, and more. Ramadan is a time filled with big get-togethers and family



Nightly prayers held on campus for staff and students // Hafiza Irshad

reunions. Repairing old relationships and forming new ones all for the blessings of Allah. This is a blessed month of reflection aimed at strengthening the bond between creator and creation. Ramadan teaches you about self-discipline and feeding your soul rather than feeding your desires. After all, we are spiritual beings in a physical body which will ultimately be left behind. On that note: Happy Ramadan! And yes, not even water!

– Rajib Haque

### Advice for students fasting

With the auspicious month of Ramadan coinciding with exams or projects, this month is a time of managing multiple goals and multitasking. Below are some tips to maximise spiritual and academic benefit.

1. *Get into a routine.* Revision benefits from consistency. Setting, and

maintaining, a regular routine will benefit your work and your body. You can choose to either drastically change your routine or attempt to keep it as normal as possible. Just bear in mind what time your exams are.

**“Ramadan teaches you about feeding your soul rather than feeding your desires”**

2. *Notice when you feel most productive.* This is usually after eating before dawn or at sunset. Capitalise on these times and use them to do tasks that require the most attention, such as essay practise or problem questions. Use other times,

like the last few hours of the fast, for simpler tasks.

3. *Timetable in your Islamic goals with as much importance as academic studies.* Setting goals is important, but slotting in the time to achieve them is essential.

There are many things we can do in order to make the month pass with more ease, although it's worth remembering that Ramadan isn't meant to be a month of comfort. Remember every action in can be a form of worship with the correct intention – even revising!

– Hafiza Irshad

### Ramadan@Imperial

As Ramadan coincides with exam season, many students will be in a state of stress and anxiety, with the feeling of being short on time. The Ramadan@Imperial programme prevents any student making the tough choice between their religion and

studies, facilitating a convenient on-campus opportunity to break their fast with fellow colleagues, without them having to spend time out of the library to prepare a meal. Nightly prayers are also held, allowing students to stay in spirited faith during the holy month, without them having to travel to local mosques. It generates a sense of community with average total attendees reaching 60+, while also providing downtime to unwind, which is crucial during this stressful period. With many students associating Ramadan as being with family, Ramadan@Imperial has truly become a #HomeAwayFrom-Home.

– Shoaib Nasim

### Personal experience of Ramadan

Whilst observing the month of Ramadan is prescribed by God and is an integral aspect of being

a Muslim, every Muslim has their own personal experience of Ramadan.

**“While Ramadan is an integral part of being Muslim, everyone has their own experience”**

For me Ramadan means, of course, gaining closeness to God, and reminding myself of my love of my religion. It also means time spent with family and friends, working on any bad habits of mine and gaining new, better ones. The month is spent both within the community – such as breaking the fast with ISoc at Ramadan@Imperial – and also in solitude, admitting any faults I have within myself and rectifying them. It's a month of relative hardship when compared to the other eleven months in the calendar. Despite this I look forward to each Ramadan and whilst Eid (the celebration to mark the end of the month) is celebrated there is always a bittersweet feeling left behind.

– Sunia Ahmed

*We hope Muslims and non-Muslims alike have found this page both informative and comforting. Love from your Muslim brothers and sisters on campus.*

# CLUBS & SOCIETIES

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

## ICSEDS SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH HIGH ALTITUDE BALLOON

The members of the IC Students for the Exploration and Development of Space Society (ICSEDS) headed out on 21<sup>st</sup> April to Elsworth, near Cambridge, to launch a balloon from an open field up to 30km into the atmosphere. On board we had our Arduino powered tracker transmitting its GPS coordinates to us on the ground packed in a livid orange box, and a 360° camera sticking out from the bottom on the end of a metre-long selfie stick. The weather was excellent for a high-altitude balloon launch, with only somewhat mild wind (anything stronger would have carried our precious balloon into the middle of the North Sea). The sky could not have been clearer, letting us capture some clear shots and keeping us warm as we prepped the payload for launch.

After filling the balloon with helium up to a pre-calculated weight, testing our tracker a few times, and double checking the camera was recording, we let go of the balloon, and it drifted off into the blue sky. We set

off in a van, following the balloon across the English countryside. Soon, as the balloon rose to a few kilometres in altitude, amateur radio stations in the area started also picking up our beacon, helping map out the balloon's trajectory as it sped off at 18m/s to the north east.

Then, in an unexpected turn, at an altitude of about 15 km, we started losing telemetry. The radio signals from our two independent trackers remained strong, but the data we received was all 0s. There seemed to be some fault with the onboard GPS equipment.

Determined not to lose track of our balloon, we drove to the point on the map above which we had earlier predicted it would reach the apex of its trajectory. Since the atmosphere thins out rapidly with altitude, the air currents above ~20 km are far too weak and the balloon went directly up above us. Using a metre-long directional radio antenna we determined the rough angle between us and the balloon, and were able to confirm that it was indeed above us. At that point we had about half an hour to wait, during which time the balloon would rise to its peak altitude, the balloon itself would burst,



The High Altitude Balloon group with the recovered payload. Featuring our chase van // High Altitude Balloon group

and the payload would fall rapidly towards the ground with a small parachute. As the payload falls below around 15 km, the air gets thick enough for the parachute to slow it down, and for atmospheric currents to start carrying it laterally. At this point, we would need to chase it once more in our van, and track where the payload touches down.

We got lucky, however, and one of our GPS trackers resumed transmitting accurate data before our payload passed back below the 15km line. As we later found

out, the malfunction was likely due to the oscillator crystal getting too cold on the GPS chips, as temperature dropped sharply with altitude, causing their internal clocks to be too inaccurate to make sense of the GPS signal. As the payload fell back down into warmer atmosphere, and the oscillator warmed back up, the chip returned to its intended function with no ill effects. (You may have heard that GPS chips are designed to stop functioning above a certain altitude, but ours were designed to not have this limitation so they

could be used in a high altitude flight.)

With our telemetry signal restored, first on one, then on both trackers, we could easily follow the payload's descent as it was getting traced out automatically on a map, and followed it to its landing spot on the Great Massingham Airfield, Norfolk. We called up the airfield owner, who helped us recover our orange box. The trip back to London was spent looking over the footage from the camera, and hoping not to get stuck in Saturday evening traffic (which we

did).

Overall, the balloon drifted for over two hours before bursting as we had planned, at an altitude of around 30 km. The all-important payload descended on our parachute, which proved to have been the right size for the job. Our tracking had worked during the most crucial part (descent and after landing), and arguably the most fragile part of our payload (the 360 camera with its two exposed fisheye lenses) had been protected sufficiently to survive a landing at over 4 m/s. All valuable data for our future launches, which will involve more serious scientific experiments.

We would love to collaborate in future launches with those interested in sending a payload up to an altitude of 30km. With most of the atmosphere below, we can get excellent views of space, accurate atmospheric data, and, depending on the weather, a clear view of the ground below. We are always looking for new collaborators to expand the size of our projects. Do not hesitate to get in touch!

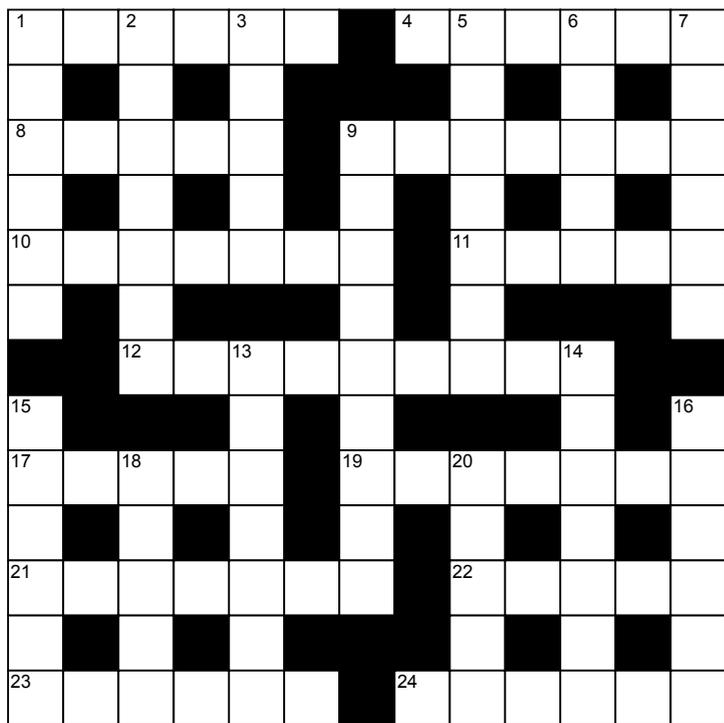
– Ignaty Romanov-Chernigovsky



A view from above // Source: High Altitude Balloon group

# PUZZLES

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

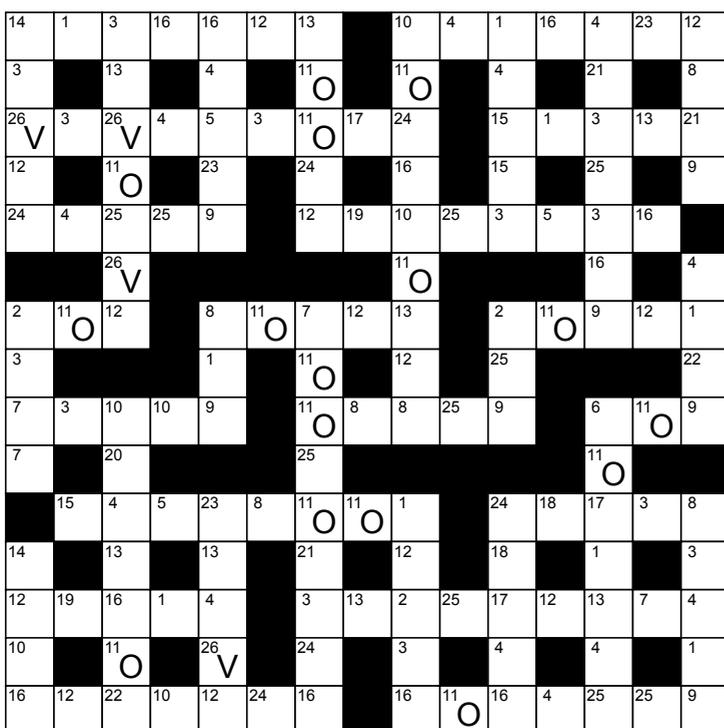


**Across**

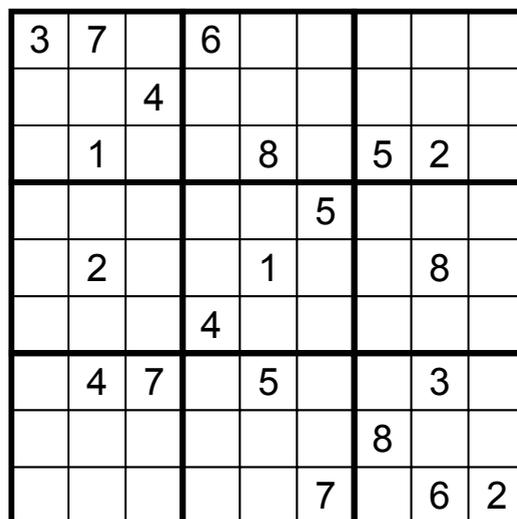
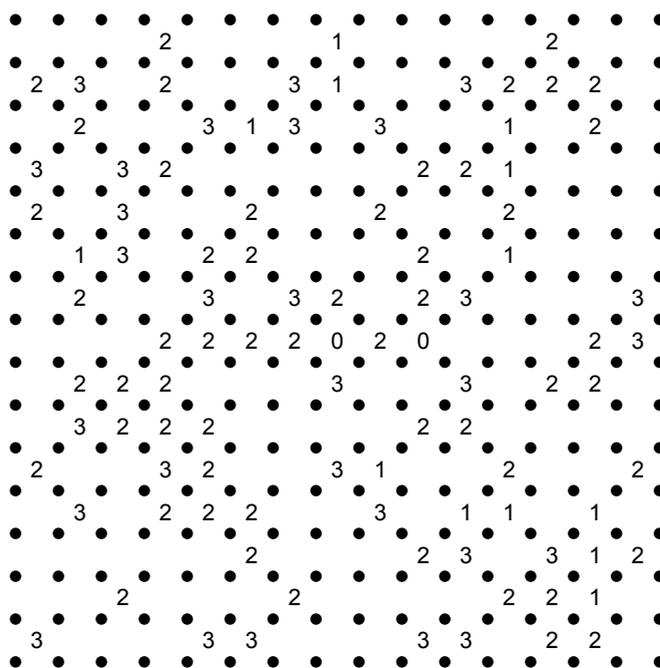
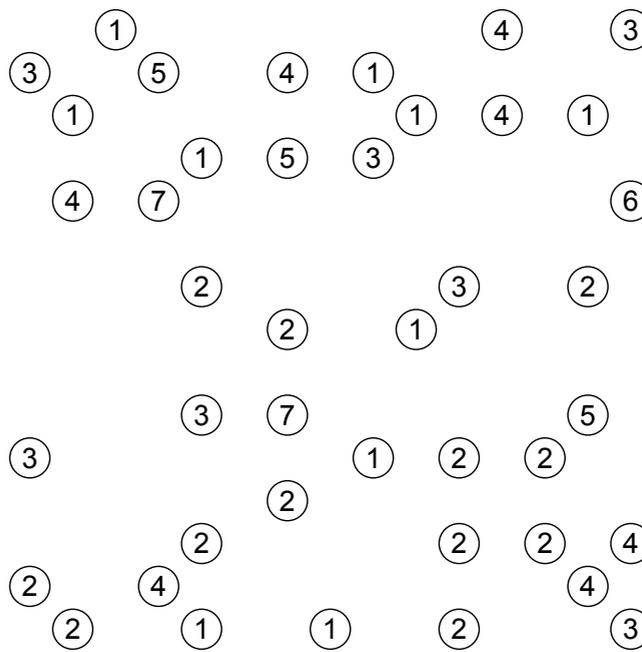
- 1. Ornate architectural style (6)
- 4. Debated (6)
- 8. Acute (5)
- 9. Woodwind instrument (7)
- 10. Brother or sister (7)
- 11. Additional (5)
- 12. Asked for (9)
- 17. Fine coffee (5)
- 19. Fiasco (7)
- 21. Unnatural-sounding and over-formal (7)
- 22. Larceny (5)
- 23. Barren area (6)
- 24. Picked (6)

**Down**

- 1. Stand up to (6)
- 2. Compartment (7)
- 3. Isle in the Bay of Naples (5)
- 5. Stories (anag) (7)
- 6. German sub (1-4)
- 7. Concerning teeth (6)
- 9. Conceited (3-6)
- 13. US coin (7)
- 14. Titled lady (7)
- 15. Diverted (6)
- 16. Substance used for setting jams and jellies (6)
- 18. Fries (5)
- 20. Female dog (5)



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26				
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**FUCWIT**

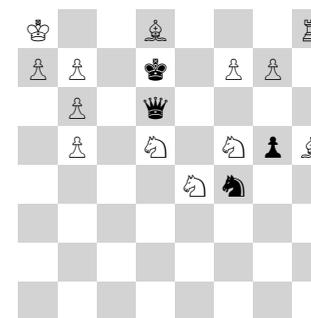
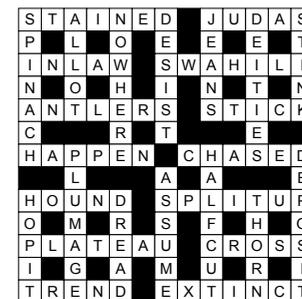
1	Nonogram of Ketamine	349
2	Q	316
3	Puzzle Snuggle Cuddle Couple	304
4	TioUdin	295
5	OK	245
6	Luncheon Pals	194
7	Abelian Grapes	183
8	Maxiane	167
10	The Indoor Sundial	122
16	Straight outta Skempton	75
19	Snails	61

Send in your solutions to [fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk) before midday Wednesday!

**Points Available**

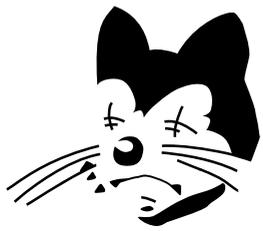
Crossword	4
Bridges	2
Slitherlink	4
Codeword	4
Sudoku	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

**Solutions**



**Chess**

White to move in both problems. Forced checkmate in two moves (above) and five (below).



# Hangman



You can't breach data protection laws if you've got no data // CC

## Imperial deletes all student data as GDPR comes into force

### HANGMAN

**Negafelix**  
Editor-in-Chief

*College management have finally admitted they have no idea what's going to happen when GDPR comes into effect, and have destroyed all data on campus.*

Imperial College London have decided to destroy all their data, in light of new data protection regulations coming into force today.

The General Data

Protection Regulation (GDPR), a new set of regulations designed to protect the data privacy of EU citizens, has led to a mass panic at all levels of the College, as staff members try to understand what the regulations are, and how they'll affect their work practices.

In a shocking turn of events, a few hours before the regulations came into force, the College announced they were planning on destroying all information in their possession, going right back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Owen Rathbone, the hastily-appointed Vice Provost (Do You Still Want To Hear From Us?), told *Hangman* the move

was the right action to take: "we were erring on the side of caution, but it got to Thursday morning, less than 24 hours before the regulations came into effect, and we realised we still don't really have any idea of what the fuck any of the new rules mean for us. Instead of running the risk of being hit with the new fines, we just decided to delete all data we hold."

While the new regulations mainly cover personal data, the College decided to enact 'Project Scorched Earth', deleting all email addresses, student and staff registry data, and financial information. The College say they will now "begin again from scratch,

creating a new institution in the mold of these regulations."

The move has had a number of knock-on effects, however: earlier this week, students were

**"Students were informed their previous exam records has been deleted, and they would need to retake them"**

informed their previous exam records had been deleted, and they would need to retake all their examinations again. Florence Mayhugh, a third year physicist, told *Hangman* how it had affected her: "I really didn't do that well in my first few sets of exams, and I always said I'd love the chance to redo them, but that was a load of bullshit. Let's be honest: I didn't know the topics then, and I don't know them now."

The College Archive has also been hit by the destruction of data. Poppy Estby, the College's archivist, had her office ransacked in the early hours of Friday morning: "I kept getting these

emails asking whether my archive was GDPR compliant," Estby told *Hangman*, "and I just presumed they were spam, so I ignored them. But then I came in on Friday, and the archive was just gone. Completely empty."

Rathbone confirmed the archive had been destroyed, but was unable to tell *Hangman* what the space would be used for: "There are currently a number of options for what we do with the space; we're aware that the counselling service is in need of more rooms, but re-generating the College's data from scratch is going to be a big job. We'll probably just move some faculty staff there."

# HANGMAN

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## Deliveroo drivers to be banned on campus

### HANGMAN

Negafelix  
Editor-in-Chief

*The frequent crashes have led to spilled food across the campus, creating a health and safety nightmare.*

Deliveroo drivers will be banned from campus, in a new effort to battle the exam-season multi-bike pile-ups occurring around College.

Earlier this week, after two Deliveroo drivers crashed into each other outside Central Library,

the College issued new guidance on the topic, permanently banning all takeaway deliveries from College property.

Adam Rigley, Vice Provost (Millennial Communications), told Hangman: “We strongly value our students’ welfare, and we understand they want a supply of hot food while they study in the library, but the sheer number of delivery drivers around College is becoming a health hazard for staff, students, and visitors.”

“We’ve become used to seeing fixie bikes swarming around campus, making it nearly impossible for people to get around. The number of

accidents has also been increasing – last week campus security reported close to three dozen incidents, leading to several students being taken to the hospital, and nearly £500 worth of food being spilled. I don’t think we’ll ever get rid of the smell of chicken katsu curry from the main entrance.”

The move has shocked and dismayed some students. Eloise Hitchins, a third year materials student, had been relying on Deliveroo for between two to three meals each day: “it started out just occasionally,” she told Hangman, “I’d get the odd dinner here or there. But as exam season has hit, I need to defend my seat

in Central Library at all times – it’s one of the only ones with a working plug socket, so I regularly have to fend off other people. Deliveroo allowed me to leave my seat for around a minute, but if I’ve got to go and queue up at an Imperial outlet my seat is gonna be nicked for sure.”

Harry Jacobson, a second-year mechanical engineering student, said the move impinged on his rights as a student: “We’re not children, we’re adults,” he told Hangman, “and I’ve got the absolute right to have food delivered straight from a restaurant to my computer lab by an underpaid, precariously-employed cyclist because I’m too



Won't be seeing these around // CC/Shopblocks

lazy to bother cooking anything for myself. This is an infringement of our civil liberties.”

In a statement for Hangman, a College representative said: “We understand the banning of food deliveries has caused concern on campus, but

it was done to protect student and staff safety. We recommend students purchase food from one of our many outlets across the South Kensington campus. But not after 6pm. They’re all closed then.”



**ARIES**

This week you’re the Felix Editor, and your Horoscopes Writer has too many exams to write for the paper. I’m sorry guys this is the best I can do.



**TAURUS**

This week you finally complete your slow-descent into exam-induced madness, and run naked across campus. Nobody notices, they’re too busy studying.



**GEMINI**

This week you complete so many problem sheets they’re all you can see when you close your eyes. Your nights are haunted by advanced quantum mechanics. Makes a change from exam anxiety dreams.



**CANCER**

This week you find the questions on your physics paper pretty difficult. You’re not sure whether you don’t know the topics, or whether whoever wrote the paper has a tenuous grasp on basic English language.



**LEO**

This week you double-down on your efforts to sneak hot food into Central Library, and manage to hide a whole cheese fondue set under your jumper. You get a seat because people think you’re pregnant.



**VIRGO**

This week you celebrate your last exam by getting Euler’s identity tattooed on your arm, but the tattoo artist gets it wrong. You manage to look like a nerd and an idiot.



**LIBRA**

This week you’re an underpaid academic, and you’re sick and tired of the massive costs of living in London. BRING FUSION PRICES BACK DOWN.



**SCORPIO**

This week you get the chance to chronicle all the people you’ve let down since you came to uni. That’s right, the Felix Sex Survey is open! (bit.ly/felixsexsurvey)



**SAGITTARIUS**

This week you’ve eaten so much instant ramen, your body just can’t process normal food any more. Looks like it’s a lifetime of MSG for you!



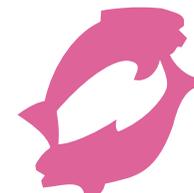
**CAPRICORN**

This week the Union has been handing out energy bars and water in Central Library. You’re disappointed your suggestion of ‘vitamin shots’ wasn’t listened to.



**AQUARIUS**

This week you offer your seat to a pregnant woman in the library. Shortly afterwards, she starts chopping up cheese for her fondue. Man, exam season is weird.



**PISCES**

This week you’re the Horoscopes Writer, and you wonder why you spent so much time writing this shit, and so little time doing your work. Still worth it.

## SPORTS

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

## WTF is Futsal? Felix sport's guide to little known high-

*In early February 2018 Sports Editor Imraj Singh went to try out Futsal with Imperial's own squad.*

## SPORTS

**Imraj Singh***Sports Editor***Harry Lanz***Futsal correspondent*

Futsal is a bit of a rogue sport: one of the rare beauties with a cult following. Relatively unknown in the UK, it has larger audiences in Argentina, Brazil, Spain, and Portugal – countries which have spawned some of the best football players in the world. That is no coincidence. The likes of Pelé, Neymar, Ronaldinho, Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Xavi,

**“The likes of Pele, Neymar, Ronaldinho, Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Xavi, and Ronaldo all have their roots entwined with futsal”**

and Ronaldo all have their roots entwined with futsal. Ex-Barcelona star Xavi has said: “In futsal, you see whether a player is really talented. In normal football you don't necessarily identify talent as easily because it's so much more physical. But with futsal, you notice the small details in quality, class, and tactical understanding.” Futsal separates the wheat from the chaff.

It's like normal football but with distinct differ-

ences. For a start the ball is different: it's smaller, with a size 4 ball used as opposed to the size 5 used in football. Additionally, a Futsal ball has about 30% less bounce than its counterpart, and is also heavier. This means that it's both harder to kick and to control, and players must exhibit more skill. In addition, teams are five a side, the pitches and goals are smaller, the playing surface is solid – a basketball court rather than a football field – and the rules are designed to speed up game play. Like a condensed version of football, where things happen faster, with futsal you are constantly moving, and must shift, flow, and ebb with your teammates synchronously and at high speed. At least that was my experience...

For a heavy-footed, under-exercised Sports Editor the prospect of Futsal was rather daunting. I knew I would be bad, it was just a matter of how bad. I played football through primary school, and, with coaching from my brother, even managed to score a hat-trick whilst playing for our school's third team.



Dramatic scenes at the Imperial futsal varcity //ICU

These experiences left me ill prepared for my time with Imperial futsal. The captain kindly allowed me to give the sport a go, despite the fact one of their most hotly anticipated games was just around the corner. IC futsal were top-of-their-league and in contention for promotion; their players were at the height of their season, playing better than ever. If there was ever a time to be publicly humiliated this was it. Sheepishly moving through Ethos at the heels of my Aero husband (Harry Lanz, the most uncoordinated man alive, who has played

Futsal throughout his time at Imperial), I joined the squad in the changing rooms. Quickly my nerves relaxed. The casual chat, friendly faces, and welcoming demeanour of all the bois was lovely. Actually that's a bit wet: it was just normal. Just the bois looking forward to kicking a ball about for the next two hours. I began to realize I was unnecessarily stressing.

Around 25 people came along to the training session, which was held in the Ethos sports hall – about average for the team. Prior to warm-up we took some shots at goal

and I entered a circle of folk playing a keepy-ucie game. Naturally I was the liability and allowed the ball to touch the floor whenever it was given to me bar once... The few 'fans' looked down from Ethos' gym in disappointment. I was ready.

After warm-up, the team would normally go into a skill-based training, shooting, passing, and ball control drills, but this time it was decided that we would all split off into teams and go straight into games. Terrified, I was handed a yellow bib and Harry was put in the unfortunate situation of being my teammate. Prior to the game, all players were given a demonstration of some tactics. As there are only four outfield players (and one goalkeeper) these are different from football, with the team loosely divided into two offensive and two defensive players. I say “loosely”: after watching other teams play I noticed the fluidity of the game, a side-effect of the small pitch. The ability to have very fast counterattacks means that there is constant running for the duration of the five-minute games we played. Players

had to be very well-rounded; defenders were found shooting, and offensive player defended. When I did play I found I fully appreciated the pace of

**“You are constantly moving, and must shift, flow, and ebb with your teammates synchronously and at high speed”**



IC futsal battling for possession //ICU

the game. It's the sort of blink-and-you'll-miss-it of attack, counter-attack, AND hat-trick speed of play. But those who play aren't super human. I was given advice by my peers throughout the matches. I felt I was getting better from game to game. I can imagine if I had started playing at the start of the year I may be mediocre, instead of just terrible!

I spoke to our Futsal correspondent (Harry

# SPORTS

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## velocity, quick-paced, team-orientated Spanish sport

Lanz), for his insight:

“I’ve played 11-a-side football throughout my life, and when I started at Imperial I was immediately interested in trying out for the team. Football trials were fun but they were very far away and would end up taking over four hours out of my day. Due to convenience, I turned towards futsal – taking place in ethos for two hours once a week with matches most Sundays – it was a lot less time consuming but still got me my football fix.”

“I had played futsal a few times at school, but it still took a while to get used to the strange rules compared to football. However, once I got used to them I found the game to be a lot faster and more volatile than regular football. Futsal also lends itself to the technical side of football,

frequently rewarding well executed skills with gained ground and goals. With no strict positions a good futsal player must be able to adapt on the fly

**“Players must perform well on their own in attack and defence but more importantly they must be team oriented”**

and perform well on their own in attack and defence but more importantly they must be team oriented. Picking the right pass in offence or defence could

be the difference between a goal or a turnover or a successful counter attack versus a conceded goal. You have to think on your feet and be ready to play with a hugely variable team with substitutions happening every four or so minutes.”

“The team has developed quite a bit since I first joined, coming dead last in the league in my first year, albeit with a team of mostly freshers, to placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the league this year; narrowly missing out on the top spot in a critical playoff match. I look forward to even more progression as a team and hopefully more success.”

“As a subset of the football club we’re (a small part) of the social events that they hold and are usually there with our futsal ties. Our captain Alex always does his best in Bola Bola and I’m sure



The varsity team posing in front of goal //ICU

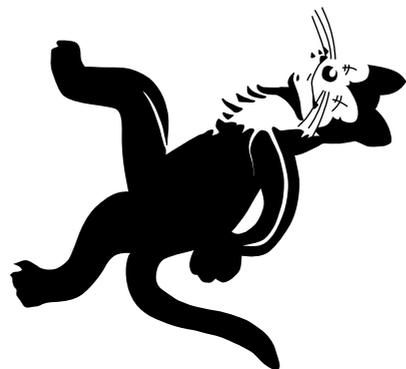
he’ll gladly accept any pint race challenges if you find him at sports night.”

Futsal is a condensed and concentrated form of football, where all aspects of football are developed and more. Each game is pretty much twenty minutes of sprinting which helps to trim the

waistline, and since it is played indoors you avoid chilly weekday training evenings on the permafrost at Fort Harlington. With one game and one training session (and one sports night) a week it is hardly a time sink too. Finally, after this year’s success there will

be a 2s team forming, and the club is looking to expand! No prior experience is needed! So get in touch, drop a line, shoot a message to the captain (Alex Godfrey) at [ag6215@ic.ac.uk](mailto:ag6215@ic.ac.uk) if you’re interested in joining next year.

## *Felix* is recruiting!



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