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### Finding a supercure

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### Something fishy

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### The oval ball

Four rugby reports in our extended sport section, page 22



# Felix



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#### Exam overhaul

A review of the British examination system suggests replacing the current public examinations with a diploma, but the Government does not seem to support the recommendations in full.

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#### Money matters

“Education will always have a price tag on it, as everything does – it’s a question of who pays, how they pay and when they pay. So how should it be done?”

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#### Freshers fortnight

A slightly hazy recollection of the introductory goings-on at Silwood Park.

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#### Nancy boys

New albums from Placebo and The Dears, plus a live review of the annoyingly named !!!

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#### Raining supreme

In a full-scale downpour, Imperial’s first men’s football team opened their 2004 campaign with victory last week.

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The 2003-4 football first team

## Students secure place on College governing body

By **Dave Edwards**  
Editor

It was agreed on Friday that students will retain their place on the main governing body of Imperial College.

Last month, Dr Eileen Buttle, the acting Chairman of Imperial College Council, outlined her recommendations for sweeping changes to the governance of the College, as reported in *Felix* 1299. Among these recommendations was the proposal that the present student representative, the Union President, be removed from the Council. However, students have been

successful in lobbying against this change, and at Friday’s Council meeting it was decided that the President would remain a member after all.

Mustafa Arif, the current President of Imperial College Union, told *Felix*: “Our efforts in lobbying the key players were successful, and it’s a victory for student representation. Dr Buttle agreed to amend her proposals to include the Union President as a member of Council.”

Various other changes to the governance of the College will still go ahead, including the downsizing of the Council itself, which will in future con-

tain only one elected academic staff member. There are currently six of these on the governing body, and although Dr Buttle’s initial proposal was to remove them all, a

**“It’s a victory for student representation”**

concession has been made allowing a place for one of the Deans.

Mr Arif was keen to point out that, because the Council will now have less members, the level of student represen-

tation has actually increased – instead of there being one student member out of 25 (plus several observers), there will now be one out of 19. He commented: “From a student perspective, we’ve gone from potentially zero representation to something that’s better than the present situation.”

The new, smaller Council will now discuss issues that were previously covered by committees which no longer exist. This will give students a direct input into these areas for the first time.

The Council was widely expected to endorse the

original proposals, and the amendment has been greeted by many as a pleasant surprise. When asked how he and other student officers had managed to convince Council members of the need for student representation, Mr Arif replied: “The important thing was to influence the key decision-makers... the most important people were the Rector and the Council Chairman. We had lively discussions, but they came round to it in the end, and the Rector was very supportive.”

► **State of the Union, page 6**

## Record turnout for Union elections, but only 15 of 40 posts are filled



Mustafa Arif, President of Imperial College Union (third from left), announces the results of the recent elections to Union Council and various other committees, in which record numbers of students voted. However, many voters were so unimpressed with the candidates that ‘Re-Open Nominations’ was particularly successful. As a result, there will now be new elections for the remaining 25 positions. Full story: page 2

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# Felix

Issue 1302

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## NEWS

# 'Re-Open Nominations' proves unexpectedly popular as record numbers vote in Union elections

By Dave Edwards  
Editor

A record number of voters participated in the recent elections of Imperial College Union Council members, ULU delegates, academic representatives, Faculty Union officers and members of other Union committees. However, only 15 of the 40 posts were filled as voters expressed their dissatisfaction with the candidates by choosing to 'Re-Open Nominations' (RON).

The results were due to be announced at Monday's meeting of Union Council. However, the counting software in use was only designed to count 1000 votes, and there were 1093. Consequently, the meeting was delayed for 40 minutes as staff, who had already been counting the votes by hand throughout the day, tried to complete this arduous task.

16 people were to be elected to Union Council, but only Omar Abbara, Lucy Abbott, Henry Chan, Amanda Clarke and Morten Olesen finished ahead of RON, so there will be a new election for the remaining 11 places.

Daniel O'Connell, Tom Tibbits and Henry Chan were elected to the Trading and Retail Committee, with RON in fourth place, leaving one vacancy.

Daniel Carrivick was the only student elected to Services Committee, which now has three vacancies. Pranati Joshi was the only one elected to the Student Development Committee.

RON triumphed in the elec-

tion to House Committee, so four vacancies remain. RON was also victorious in the election for ULU delegates.

Several people suggested that the remaining positions should be filled by electing from the floor at the meeting, "for the sake of pragmatism" and because they believed that far fewer people would vote in any new election. These suggestions were rejected, as it was deemed unacceptable to have certain members elected by cross-campus ballot and others chosen by "40 people in a room".

The Union constitution states that new elections to the remaining positions must be held within ten College days of the results being announced. The President's interpretation of this is that nominations must close by Tuesday 2 November at the latest.

This year, for the first time, elections to the posts in question took place online by cross-campus ballot. Previously, they took place at the first Union Council meeting of term, meaning that the only people voting were those present in the room at the time. The new system has obviously led to a huge increase in turnout, giving those elected a far larger mandate than their predecessors. The recent 'VOTE' publicity campaign appears to have been particularly successful in persuading students to exercise their democratic right.

Mustafa Arif, Union President, said: "It's a long time since we've had a good RON turnout. I'm just glad



It's back: the elections took place online, but that wasn't going to stop us from using our beloved ballot box photograph

the students are voting."

When asked whether RON could also win the new elections, he added: "It obviously is a concern, but this is what democracy is there for. If people don't have confidence in those standing for election and want to vote RON, then that's what they're entitled to

do. What I hope will happen now is that others will see fit to stand who didn't, and that those who failed to inspire the electorate this time around will try a little harder to campaign for votes."

● Meanwhile, also at the Imperial College Union

Council meeting on Monday, Mustafa Arif survived a vote of confidence in his presidency. Having offered his resignation last week and then changed his mind the following day, Mr Arif felt it necessary to seek the backing of the Council, which he duly received.

## Confusion over changes to British exam system

By Emily Gwyer

This week, the long-awaited review of the British exam system was published by the former head of Ofsted, Mike Tomlinson. Making radical new proposals, he suggested scrapping the endless public examinations and arduous A level system, replacing it with a diploma system that allows more leeway for both the more and less academically gifted pupils.

The diploma would replace all secondary school exams, running from ages 14 to 19, and the pupils would be allowed to take it at their own pace. The brightest students would complete A level-style exam questions, including some questions closer to degree level, and would complete a long dissertation

aimed at allowing universities more opportunities to choose between students at the admissions stage. In addition, all the grades the pupil had ever achieved would be available to universities, so students would not be able to repeat a module several times and only report the best score, as is the case now.

Other students would be able to take more vocational qualifications, but no-one will be able to graduate with the diploma without reaching basic standards in literacy, maths and information technology. Students will be able to choose a number of modules, either a broad range for more able pupils or a series that add up to a complete diploma in, for example, leisure and tourism.

Some of the more radical

suggestions involve including students' after-school activities, voluntary work and hobbies in the diploma, and there being an oral exam to test students properly and ensure all the work is their own.

There was widespread approval of the plans when they were announced, with headteachers welcoming the changes. Parents were also expected to approve, particularly those worried about over-testing children – the diploma would involve no coursework other than the extended dissertation.

However, the brief but welcome moment of unity was broken when, confusingly, the Prime Minister gave a speech in which he appeared to suggest that the diploma would not replace but rather 'strengthen' GCSEs and A

levels. Mr Blair and Charles Clarke, the Education Secretary, appeared not to wholeheartedly support the ideas, despite lobbying by teaching groups. They may have been worried by reports that business leaders were not convinced that the advantages brought by the new system would be worth the disruption and difficulty caused by introducing it. Businesses have long complained about the decline in literacy and numeracy in trainees, and on Monday they suggested that the diploma would not do enough to improve them.

It may be that further tweaking of the plans are necessary to satisfy all sides, although with a ten-year introduction timetable, there is plenty of time for that.



Exam overhaul: many students will spend less time in examination rooms like this if new proposals are adopted

# Business

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## Latest from the Square Mile

**Numaan Chaudhry** presents an update on the proceedings of the past week

Ever wondered if there would be a week in which the world would just be 'normal'? No bombs, no elections, no defrauding, no takeovers. Dream on... and read on!

### Crude Oil

Crude oil continued to misbehave as it reached new record levels of \$55 per barrel, an increase of \$2 from this time last week. Brent Crude Oil Futures, the 'cheaper' version of that traded in the US, also rose in line with its past performance to reach \$51.50. However, the effects of escalating oil prices have not only struck down company profits but also affected the commodities markets in general, with clear evidence of unsettling patterns at the International Petroleum Exchange.

Copper, aluminium and lead rose to new highs and then dropped to levels seen a decade ago, providing irrefutable backing for the suggestion that crude oil has sent the market into turmoil. Furthermore, many of the airlines will respond to the crude oil price spike by raising their fuel surcharge by up to \$2 and \$8 for domestic and international flights respectively. Personally, I don't see the logic behind travelling by air when you can go just as quickly by Scaglietti.

### Bush-Kerry Affair

With just over two weeks to go until the 44th US presidential election, it's a race for the two prime candidates to convert as many citizens' votes to their favour as possible. It appears as though both candidates have a 50-50 chance of victory. In the last few weeks, there

has been an extensive campaign by both parties to convince the public of the correctness of their stance on issues such as healthcare, pensions, economic and security concerns, education and of course the Iraq war. As for the latter, Kerry has a decidedly strong stance that seems to be winning over the public *en masse*. Take, for example, the debate on Wednesday last week, where Kerry beat Bush hands down, mainly due to his stance on political and ethical issues.

Bush doesn't have a particularly strong foundation, especially since he has had four years to correct the state of the economy, and all that is evident after his term in office is that countless jobs have been lost, many more companies are now outsourcing, and in comparison to Kerry's productivity in the Senate, not much has been achieved.

### Abbey National

The much awaited sell-out of Abbey National to Santander Central Hispano (BSCH), one of Spain's largest commercial banks, was finalised this week after months of speculation and discussion. The £8.9bn acquisition will supposedly make the bank a 'stronger and a more competitive force on the high street', according to Lord Burns, the much jeered and heckled Abbey chairman.

As for the intricacies of the deal, they are very much similar to most mergers or acquisitions; it has been decided that the name Abbey will stay, 3000 staff will be shown the door, the chief executive will be replaced and the pleas of resistance of many investors



**All change at Abbey: the multi-million pound bank is set to be taken over within two weeks**

will be ignored. The final stages of the deal, which involve an approval by Spanish shareholders and the go-ahead by city regulators, are expected to be completed by 16 November. Upon completion of this deal, being overlooked by Morgan Stanley, Abbey can look forward to being in the list of the world's top 10 largest banks with an increase in

its consumer dealings and a much wider client base.

For those of you who have a stake in Abbey, the date for your diary is 15 November, the final day of trading of Abbey shares and the issuance of new BSCH shares. It should come as no surprise that Abbey shares have been the most active recently, with 40m of them changing hands at the close of business last Friday on the Dow Jones industrial index.

### Enron again

Three British bankers will appeal against the decision made by a judge at Bow Street Magistrates court to extradite them to the US to face litigation on charges of fraud and deception. David Bermingham and two of his colleagues will now await a final decision by the British Home Secretary. David Blunkett's decision will probably be based on whether there is an actual need for extradition, if their human rights are being breached and if there is a proper basis for which the US can charge the bankers. The stakes are very high indeed for the bankers, who face up to 30 years in jail,

a declaration of bankruptcy and a fine of \$1-2m.

Enron began life as an innovative trader of gas, electricity and other commodities, with stock the most favoured on Wall Street. Its problems began in January 2002 when former Enron executive Maureen Castenada was questioned about the shredding of various documents. The SEC investigated and David Duncan, chief Enron auditor, pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice with regards to the documents shredded. Enron's subsequent collapse in 2001 left liabilities of about \$80bn and workers with nothing in their retirement accounts after the company filed for bankruptcy.

In 2002, Anderson Consulting was prevented from performing auditing work despite Joseph Bernardino, CEO of Arthur Anderson, explaining the situation on NBC, and thus suspended many thousands of employees. Former Enron vice chairman John Clifford Baxter committed suicide, and George Bush called for tougher penalties for corporate criminals and a crackdown on boardroom scandals.

The culture at Enron was

that of bright graduates being given more than enough rope to hang themselves and free reign of how they managed their business and clients. What ensued was a group of power-hungry, money-making under-30s who felt ready to take on the world. The organisation was later found to be full of corruption and rife with false company statements that claimed Enron to have millions of non-existent assets, such as a \$250m gas reserve and thousands of megawatt hours.

### And finally....

The EU has saturated its membership and the addition of proposed states, including Turkey and Ukraine, will lead to the eventual degradation of governance, predicted Frits Bolkestein, the EU's internal market commissioner.

After the recent addition of 10 new member states, bringing the total to 25, the EU's goal of surpassing all the world's economies to be the number one in 2010 seems to be fading after every member state's addition, despite Bolkestein's continuous prodding at European companies to converge to best practices.



**Frits Bolkestein expresses his concern at the addition of new states to the EU**

# Science

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## Death of Jacques Derrida and the hidden dangers of television



**DARIUS NIKBIN**  
SCIENCE EDITOR

Jacques Derrida was reputedly the world's greatest living philosopher, but his death ended up causing more con-

fusion than grief.

Many thought that the news of Derrida's death symbolised something completely different. Perhaps a hoax, an attempt at post-modern humour by the old man. Derrida was the father of a school of thought that became very fashionable in the sixties and seventies, known as 'deconstructionism'. This week, a whole host of websites have popped up trying to 'deconstruct' the announcement of his death in terms of its actual social significance and meaning.

Some deconstructionists have concluded that Derrida

is not actually dead, but is very much alive. In the sense that his death symbolises a form of rebirth into the new social construct. According to deconstructionist thinking, every piece of text has multiple or even infinite meanings. So 'Jacques Derrida is dead' can even mean 'Jacques Derrida is alive', given the right context. You also have to remember that death itself, according to some deconstructionists, symbolises certain culturally ingrained prejudices against those who can no longer breathe. Forget *Felix* for a minute, even *The Times* found it difficult to

write Derrida a fitting obituary:

"Can there be any certainty in the death of Jacques Derrida? The obituarists' objective attempts to place his life in a finite context are, necessarily, subject to epistemic relativism, the idea that all such scientific theories are mere "narrations" or social constructions".

There was also a story this week about the 20-year-old Oregon student who owned a Toshiba flat-screen TV that was accidentally emitting an international distress signal. This signal was picked up by satellite and led to a res-

cue operation involving local police and civil air patrol centred around his flat in Corvallis, Oregon.

This is very disconcerting. You could be relaxing at home watching a film and suddenly have a crack commando squad smash through your windows, storming the house looking for the HMS Invincible. Hopefully, the authorities in the UK have the skills to distinguish between a submarine distress signal and the faint buzzing of a TV monitor.

Could a TV monitor really emit a signal that would be picked up, relayed and

interpreted by a satellite as an SOS signal? Even if the signal was at the right frequency, what are the chances that it would match an SOS signal? I have my doubts about this story, but the likes of CNN and Reuters obviously do not.

This week, Science goes interactive. The Felix Science team want to hear your views on controversial topics – the issues that confront us as scientists. So if you have a minute, drop us an email and let us know what you think about the issues raised in the feature articles (see below).

## On the brink of finding a Supercure?

Christopher Reeve lived with the hope that one day stem cell research would enable him to walk again. **William Gates** investigates a science that promises so much to so many

Christopher Reeve became an instantly recognizable hero as the invincible Superman. His death last week, after years of suffering from paralysis caused by broken cervical vertebrae (the vertebrae at the very top of the spine), has focused attention on the possible cures for such an ailment. Reeve himself was an adamant campaigner for research into such cures, never losing hope of finding the "miracle cure" that doctors assured him did not exist.

Towards the end of his life, Reeve had become increasingly interested in a form of therapy involving human stem cells. This field has undergone rapid metamorphosis from being speculative and fantastic into being a very realistic and tangible prospect; it is now promising to deliver the 'miracle cure' Reeve had hoped for. Yet, despite his hope, there are still many potential pitfalls associated with the therapy, hidden snags that could yet derail progress in this field.

A stem cell is an undifferentiated cell that occurs in the blastocyst, the human embryo that is three to five days old. The stem cell has the potential to, when subjected to certain conditions, specialize into a specific type of cell, such as a heart muscle, red blood or nerve cell.

Embryonic stem cells are obtained from surplus egg cells that have undergone in vitro fertilization, with the consent of the parents. These cells are then sub-cultured

to form embryonic stem cell lines amounting to thousands of cells. The concept is to cause these cells to specialize by replicating certain conditions, forming the desired cells which are then transplanted into the body in the area of damage. In the case of Christopher Reeve, neurons would have been cultured for transplant into his spinal cord in order to repair the damage and allow him to fulfil his dream of walking again.

This, however, is a still a theoretical form of treatment. The barriers that have prevented further development in this particular field are numerous. Ethical problems exist in that each embryo that is taken apart to access the stem cells themselves is, arguably, still a developing human being. What are its rights? What if it has a soul? These what-ifs, and many more, have caused many countries around the world to ban stem cell research. The cultured cells may also have genetic abnormalities that

**"Do we deny the needs of those who suffer, and condemn them to further suffering, by upholding these idealistic beliefs?"**

could manifest themselves in the patient who receives the cultured transplant.

Cancer may cause a problem, as may tissue rejection. There are also license problems – gaining access to the



**Superman: actor Christopher Reeve died last week, seven years after being paralysed in a horse riding accident**

stem cells from the embryos created by in vitro fertilization is a long and costly procedure.

In response to these ethical concerns, it is often said that the idealistic concepts of what the embryo is, and what rights it has, are preventing the progress towards saving the lives of millions of people around the world who could benefit from such research. Do we deny the needs of those who suffer, and condemn them to further suffering, by upholding these idealistic beliefs? We ask if we have the right to access the cells of embryos, but do we also have the right to say to the millions

of Christopher Reeves in the world: we cannot liberate you from your condition because the means by which we would are reputedly unethical?

Yet before we lament the ethical and medical drawbacks of this research that may prevent the full realization of its potential, an alternative method has similarly excited research scientists.

Until recently, it was widely believed that human cells, once specialized, are then permanently so – they cannot then be used to culture other types of cells. This, however, has been proved false. If treated with certain gene activators that occur in

### YOUR SCIENCE VIEWS

**Q. Do YOU think that the ethical objections to embryonic stem cell research are justified? tell us what you think**

**Comments to science.felix@imperial.ac.uk  
Email heading 'stem cell'. Your views next week**

the embryo, adult cells, for example skin cells, can regain their multipotency (ability to grow into any type of human cell); that is to say that they revert to an embryonic condition that causes them to be undifferentiated in a similar way to embryonic stem cells. Therefore, by the activation of the desired genes (bear in mind that every cell in the body which possesses a nucleus also possesses the complete human genome, ie a copy of every single gene in the body), the adult cell can be used to grow the desired specialized cells needed for treatment.

This form of treatment dramatically reduces the ethical and medical drawbacks associated with embryonic stem cell technology. Since the adult cells would be taken from the patient who needs the cultured cells, the cells are already 'theirs'; they would not be augmenting their own body cells with those of another. There is no risk of cancer and no risk of tissue rejection. An undeveloped human being is not being sacrificed for their benefit. No 'souls' are being tampered with; no complex licenses are needed to access the stem cells as

they would be for accessing embryos. The benefits are countless: Parkinson's disease, diabetes, heart disease, vision and hearing difficulties, as well as the traumatic spinal cord injuries such as that which affected Christopher Reeve, can all be treated using this form of therapy without too great a leap of the imagination.

It seems that medical groups around the world are on the brink of a major breakthrough that can make all this realistic. Reeve was a dreamer; a Superman as much before his death as after. His bravery in the face of inevitable and permanent disability was heroic. Yet we may be approaching an era where the scope for such bravery will be diminished, as those who suffer from these horrific ailments will be able to access the resources which will cure them.

Reeve was a pioneer in campaign for the finding of the 'miracle cure'; it may be that such a cure is not as distant as it may seem.

**● The Christopher Reeve paralysis foundation: www.christopherreeve.org**

**Felix Science is looking for regular and occasional contributors. Email science.felix@ic.ac.uk for details**

# Organic farming under the spotlight

## New study questions whether organic is better for the environment

By James Berry  
Biochemistry department

Organic farming does more to enhance the countryside's wildlife than conventional farming, claims a report published last week in *Science*.

The rapid expansion of the organic food market in recent years, with growth rates increasing between 30 and 50% per annum, is partly due to the favourable effects the public perceives organic farming to have on the environment.

Last year, sales of organic foods in the UK exceeded £1 billion for the first time. The industry's environmentally dependable image will soon be further strengthened, in terms of legislative and financial assistance, after recommendations from the Government's recent Commission on the Future of British Agriculture are carried out.

Although the benefits of eating GM and pesticide-free food are not in question, big business and environmental awareness are often not seen as compatible. The expansion of conventional agriculture over the next 50 years is expected to challenge climate change as the key threat to global biodiversity [1]. So can the billion dollar organic food

industry continue to trade off its environmentally responsible image forged during its smallholding past? A report published last week by the RSPB and English Nature [2], may help allay consumer fears that ecological concerns aren't being bought off with organic labels.

The study has taken data from Europe, North America and New Zealand, and reviews the impacts on field biodiversity by organic and conventional farming practices. The majority of the 76 studies found that both species richness and abundance were improved under an organic farming regime. Of the 99 sub-studies, examining various taxa, 67% were in favour of organic farming, with only 8% against.

Skylarks, greenfinches and blackbirds were found to be more prevalent on chemical-free organic farms; their numbers supported by the boosted invertebrate populations. Linnets, by comparison, who feed from oil seed rape seeds common on both types of field, showed no discernible difference in population. Also, although organic farming was not generally shown to affect small mammal populations, clear differences in bat activity suggested organic farms were



Image © Living Countryside Ltd (ukagriculture.com)

Is there any room left for biodiversity amongst this wheat?

preferable. In fact, two bat species, the greater and lesser horseshoe bat, have been found to only visit organic farms.

It's not just the absence of pesticides that leads to greater biodiversity, but the recognition of the inter-dependency between living organisms. For example, the use of manure instead of fertiliser encourages soil microbes and earthworms, who not only provide a link in the food chain, but enrich and aerate the soil. Minimum tillage modifies the floral community by favouring annual plants rich in nectar, as oppose to slow growing perennials, benefiting the pollenating insects

and their predators, and also improving the field's aesthetic appeal. A holistic approach optimises all aspects of the field's ecology, and aspires to benefit both yield and sustainability in contrast to the continual human intervention required to optimise yields on conventional farms.

There are, of course, consistency problems for a review of this size. For example, no account is made for well-meaning conventional farmers with a disposition towards environmentally responsible management practises, or for farms on which an organic transition has only recently been made. But although organic farm-

ing clearly has the potential to support the myriad of multi-networking organisms that is field ecology, the economic realities of the marketplace ensure that it will always rely on the support of the consumer.

### References:

- [1] Tilman, D. et al. (2001) *Forecasting agriculturally driven global environmental change. Science* 292, 281-284.
- [2] Hole, D.G. et al. (2005) *Does organic farming benefit biodiversity? Biological Conservation* 122, 113-130.

● James Berry is the editor of [www.plantnews.co.uk](http://www.plantnews.co.uk)

## Science in brief

By Alex Antonov  
Mathematics department

### Changeover at ISS

A crew of three arrived successfully at the International Space Station (ISS) on Saturday on board a Soyuz spacecraft. They will spend the next six months studying plant growth and experimenting on possible AIDS vaccines. Since the Columbia shuttle disaster last February, Russian spacecraft have provided the only means of travelling to the ISS.

### FDA approves microchip implants

A Florida-based company, Applied Digital, has been given the go-ahead to implant microchips in humans for the purpose of storing an individual's medical records. The makers of the grain-of-rice-sized chip say it will carry details of blood groups and allergies that can be used in emergencies.

### Critical QC component built

A team of physicists at Purdue University has created a device that can perform spatial spin separation of the 'holes' in gallium arsenide. This is thought to pave the way for producing 'spin-polarised' streams of electrons. With further development, the device might play a key role in a quantum microprocessor.

### Surgery rebuilds patient's face

Doctors in Tokyo used a single flap of skin from a patient's back to perform the first full face reconstruction, including the nose. The skin on the patient's back was stretched using a silicone tissue expander for six months, which caused the skin to grow with its own unique blood supply.

### Magnetic stars puzzle solved

Scientists at the Max Planck Institute have discovered the magnetic field configurations behind the strong magnetic fields observed on the surfaces of magnetic A-stars and white dwarfs. The results support a hypothesis proposing that the magnetic fields are remnants of the magnetic field in the gas clouds from which stars are born.

### Draft of bovine genome released

An international team based in Houston is in the process of reading through the cow's life code. The cow genome is similar in size to the genomes of other mammals. Scientists believe the study could help understanding of human genetics and disease, as well as improve the health of cattle.

## Russia signals willingness to ratify Kyoto treaty

By Gemma Buckland  
Biomedical sciences

On 1 October 2005, the prospect of reducing soaring greenhouse gas emissions was made a reality when Russia signalled that it is ready to ratify the Kyoto protocol and become the final country to join the climate change treaty.

Now 30 industrialised countries have been legally bound to this agreement. First initiated in 1997, it states that by the year 2012, member countries need to collectively cut their emissions of six major greenhouse gases to 4.8% below 1990 levels.

The agreement is set to create a multibillion pound carbon trading market, whereby countries will be able to buy and sell 'saved' carbon. So in exceeding targets, a country will be in the position to sell its saved carbon credits to countries who have failed to meet theirs.

The EU has been set an overall target of 8% reductions and the UK 12.5%, which we are currently on target to exceed by 3%. However, plans to sell the UK's saved carbon will not go ahead as it will apparently be required to meet the more stringent 2012 plans.

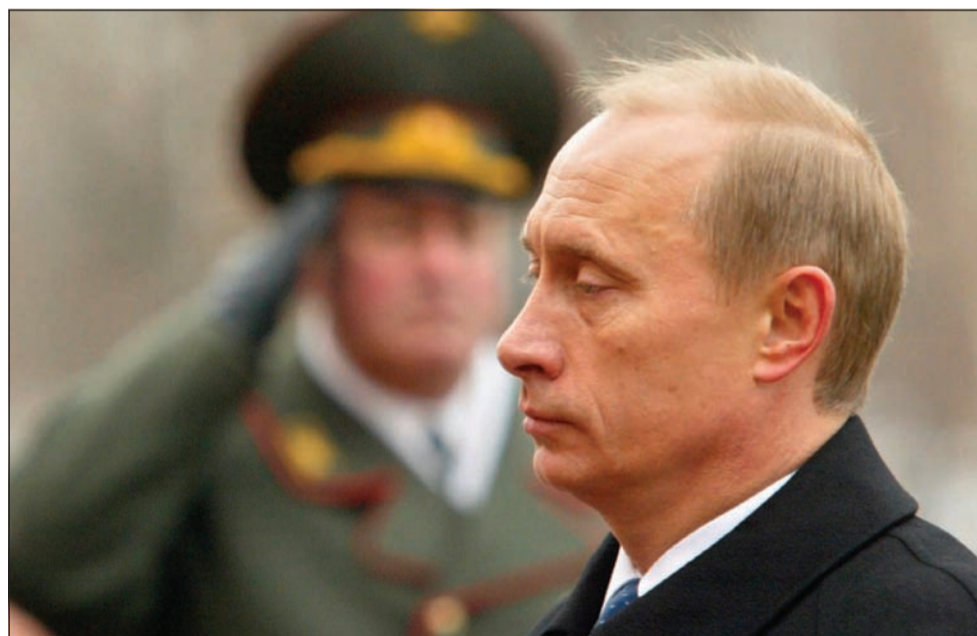
Is this agreement enough? Although 'tougher targets'

are scheduled for 2012, to be met by 2020, it is unclear how rigorous these will be, and a complete plan for future emissions has not been mapped out. Scientists claim that a 60% reduction across the world is essential in order to lower runaway climate change possibilities, mass extinctions, and the severe rises in sea levels feared.

Of course, the US still has not changed tact on this issue and refuses to sign the treaty. It is not hard to see why, given the current administration's well-documented financial links with the multinational corporate giants of America, who just happen to be the companies contributing the most to the world's carbon dioxide problem. Take for example the Texan oil giant ExxonMobil, selling petrol under the Esso name, which produces more

**"This agreement is set to create a multibillion pound carbon trading market where countries will be able to sell 'saved' carbon"**

than twice the CO<sub>2</sub> pollution of Norway, with the company's own figures citing its 2003 emissions as exceeding 135million tonnes of carbon



Putin: directed his ministers to sign up to Kyoto "as soon as possible"

dioxide. The annual profits of this company reached a modest \$17billion last year. With no plans to implement reductions, ExxonMobil is one of many US opponents of the Kyoto agreement. So considering this and the fact that the US is the world's largest polluter, will the protocol have any effect?

For a significant decline in global CO<sub>2</sub> levels, all countries will need to commit. However, developing countries and large polluters such

as China and India do not have to comply with Kyoto. So on its own the protocol will not have any major effect and, according to scientists, if emissions start rising again after 2012, the treaty will prevent less than 0.1°C of the warming expected by 2050.

The Bush administration claims that premature expensive measures, such as those being used for Kyoto implementation, are not as important as research into better emission-reducing technolo-

gies. However, whether they maintain this stance when they are left out of the multimillion carbon market remains to be seen.

The Kyoto agreement is a step in the right direction, but climate scientists want to see a global cap of critical gases put in place. Deciding upon the individual quotas is a difficult job to tackle, and implementing these quotas will prove expensive, but this is an expense that cannot be spared.

# Comment

felix@ic.ac.uk

## Election blues

Last week we held a cross campus ballot election for members of Union Council and its Committees. Council is the Union's "parliament". It sets Union policy and holds Officers (like myself) to account. It is incredibly important that we have a full, elected Council, so that it has legitimacy in acting as the representative voice of students.

One of the absurd aspects of Union Council is that in the past it has been "elected" by the people who turned up to the first meeting – typically no more than about 50 or 60 students – out of a population of over 10,000. I took the view that this had to stop and this year instigated the online cross-campus ballot. It wasn't perfect but it was the first time that the vast majority of students had had a genuine opportunity to elect their Councilors. As you will have read elsewhere in *Felix*, the result was

a very large victory for RON (Re-Open Nominations). So there will be a new set of elections.

### Why?

Why did so many of you vote for a new election? Why, in so many cases, as a result of second or third preferences after your first choice candidate? Various Union 'types' have made representations to me requesting that I remove the RON option from the new set of elections. (I can't actually do this, by the way, without first getting approval from the College Council to suspend our regulations). Whilst I am prepared to contemplate getting rid of RON it makes me deeply uncomfortable and I am loathe to do it.

What is RON there for? It is an opportunity for the electorate (in this case, you, the students) if you

### STATE OF THE UNION



**MUSTAFA ARIF**  
UNION PRESIDENT

believe that it is better to have a new election than to have any of the (remaining) candidates elected.

That option should always be there but it should never be taken lightly. Did you really think the candidates were that bad?

Did you understand the Single Transferable Vote (STV) voting system? Did you realise that you are supposed to list candidates in order of preference until you have no further preference? Did you realise that voting RON as number 2 does not in any way increase the chances of your first choice candidate of being elected?

### Where now?

There will be a new election for the majority of posts that were contested in the last set of Union elections. I was very pleased with the turnout of 1093 compared to about 50 last year. However, I need people to not vote RON and elect a full set

of Councilors. How do we make this happen?

Would more incentives for voting really help? Do you need more information about the candidates? Do you want information in different ways?

Should the Union better promote elections and what they are intended for? Do you appreciate the responsibilities associated with the positions that you are electing? Should we make it easier for candidates to stand (if you were genuinely worried about the quality of candidates)?

Basically, I can't read your minds (most of the time). And ultimately I'm here to serve you. Elections are fundamental to the democracy of any students' union and we have to make them work. If you have any ideas please, please suggest them to us. Pop in and chat, or email elections@ic.ac.uk.

## Feedback for your Union's future

Feedback is an interesting word which we believe can really make sure that the Union is serving you across all our commercial and non-commercial services, including support for clubs and societies.

This week sees the launch of a series of initiatives to improve the feedback we receive from students and enhance our response to your views.

We start with 'Your Say', which builds upon the existing system but aims to provide greater clarity and easier participation. You will see simple feedback forms placed around the Union building and campus. We welcome your comments and look forward to receiving them and acting on them. When a student completes a feedback form, we

guarantee that a response will be available online at [www.union.ic.ac.uk/yoursay](http://www.union.ic.ac.uk/yoursay) within seven days. In addition, responses will be posted on the notice boards in the Union foyer and the Student Activities Centre. As well as filling in a feedback form, you can also contact us on [yoursay@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:yoursay@imperial.ac.uk).

So please do use 'Your Say' as an opportunity to provide constructive feedback. Your views are vital to us in ensuring that Union services respond to your needs and wants. Feedback will also allow us to explain why things are done, and either allow us to change them to better reflect what you want or at least let you know why things you want can't happen, due perhaps to legal or financial constraints.



**SAMEENA MISBAHUDDIN**  
DEPUTY PRESIDENT  
(FINANCE & SERVICES)

In addition to the 'Your Say' programme of regular feedback, this term we will also be embarking

on College-wide market research – professional surveying of students' opinions. This will form part of our submission to the Quality Assurance Agency's audit of the College (more on this in coming weeks) as well as gaining valuable input from you to the strategic review that will be undertaken by the Union this term.

The strategic review will be looking at the future strategy of our Union and how best we can channel our resources to deliver high quality services and make the Union work for you. Through this, we hope to develop a plan of how the Union will evolve over the next few years, and put us in a strong position for extra recurrent funding and capital investment.

The strategic review will also help us develop a masterplan for the Union building. We have an excellent spacious building, but it needs refurbishment and changes in order to serve our students better. For this, the relevant committees and those using the building will be called upon to work, together with the results of our market research, on what the Union plans for the future.

● Sameena Misbahuddin is the Deputy President (Finance and Services) of Imperial College Union. Her remit is to oversee the financial aspects of the Union, including club and society finance, as well as the Union's services, including its commercial services.

## The joy of... buddies

"Hey, buddy! How's it going?" A familiar and friendly form of address, perhaps, but what is a buddy? Hours of meticulous research revealed that a buddy is "a good friend; a comrade", but why am I talking about buddies here?

Well, the Buddies Scheme at Imperial is a system of pairing up freshers with continuing students. It's as simple as that! But how does it work? Well, each Faculty Union runs a slightly different scheme. For instance, Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union calls its buddies 'Mums' and 'Dads', and pairs them up with a fresher of the opposite sex. For entirely innocent reasons, I am told. In certain Engineering departments, on the other hand, precisely the opposite approach is taken, as females are in short supply.

Most departments stump up some cash for a Buddies' Lunch in Freshers' Week, presumably under the assumption that most of Mum's

hunger relief packages have been eaten by the end of the week. The Buddies' Lunch is a good opportunity for freshers to meet their buddies, alleviate some of their initial concerns, learn a few things about the course, and obtain some inside knowledge. Departmental Societies usually exploit such occasions to publicise their existence and plug their events.

Some Faculty Unions are running follow-up buddies' events, which range from parties to milkshake and doughnut giveaways. Sometimes they work well, although this very much depends on the relationships that exist between freshers and their buddies. The most successful way of getting students together appears to be by offering free food. I guess we are all united by the fact that we have to eat!

Whilst some Faculty Unions take care to match freshers to buddies who have similar interests or backgrounds, others leave it to chance,

### UNCLE SAM



**SAM RORKE**  
DEPUTY PRESIDENT  
(EDUCATION & WELFARE)

and in any case, it is never possible to ensure that buddies and freshers will actually get along. In the best case scenario, the relationship will be a constructive one which will help the fresher to settle in more easily, and may even develop into

a friendship.

Well, what am I getting at? I think the Buddies Scheme is a good idea, which generally works well, but needs to be built on in the future. I am going to be getting the organisers together to discuss ways in which we can make it even better, so if you have any suggestions, please get in contact. To open another can of worms entirely, should postgraduates have buddies? Let me know!

On a personal note, if you are a buddy and have not been in contact since Freshers' Week, it might be a nice idea to remind your freshers that you still exist and are there to help if they have any concerns.

### Elections

I could not let this week pass without mentioning the E-word. As many of you will know, we held some elections last week for positions on Council, various committees, and

some Faculty Unions [see News, page 2]. We put a lot of effort into the publicity of what became known as the "VOTE" campaign, because we wanted to achieve a higher turnout than ever before.

I am delighted to report that more than 1000 people made the effort to vote, about thirty times more than last year. Throwing myself into this project has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience, and I'd like to thank all the members of staff and part-time officers who helped, and, of course, all of you for voting!

● Sam Rorke is the Deputy President (Education and Welfare) of Imperial College Union. His remit is to oversee academic affairs, welfare, accommodation and student development, and ensure that students' views on these issues are effectively communicated to the College. If you have any comments or questions, please contact him on [dpew@ic.ac.uk](mailto:dpew@ic.ac.uk).

COMMENT

# Who pays, how and when?

## The major political parties' views on university funding

It has been almost two years since the row over top-up fees erupted. Buried beneath news that Imperial was entering merger talks with UCL (which subsequently collapsed, largely due to staff and student pessimism) were disturbing mumbblings from the Rector, Sir Richard Sykes, that he was interested in raising tuition fees to up to £3000 per year. So where are we two years later?

Not so long ago, students received a maintenance grant to help pay their living costs, with student loans covering the gap. Fees didn't enter into the equation. The explosion in the number of A-level leavers entering higher education in the mid-nineties necessitated a change in tack, and the current system was born in 1998. The maintenance grant was abolished, student loans increased accordingly and tuition fees of £1000 (now £1150) per year introduced, payable up-front. Means testing reduces the burden of these fees on students from poorer backgrounds – currently only 48% of students dependent on their parents pay the full amount, with 35% paying nothing at all.

Collectively, students now owe £14bn, and that doesn't even include "hidden" student debts on credit cards, overdrafts and other borrowing. Then there's the interest, which is supposedly just to cover inflation – the current rate is 3.1%, but the consumer price index recently fell to 1.1%. Something fishy is happening there.

For better or worse, this system is on the way out, so let's move on to the Labour government's new idea. Loans stay as they are with "modest" increases, but tuition fees become variable – instead of the flat £1150 fee, universities become free to charge anything between zero and a top rate of £3000 per year. Crucially, the payment of fees is deferred until after graduation – in effect, it adds to the student loan burden, and is repaid in a similar fashion: 9% on earnings above £15,000 per year.

Attacks on the proposals take multiple forms. Firstly, variable tuition fees inevitably create an education market, where price becomes a selection criterion for university

entrants considering where to go and what to study. The knee-jerk reaction to this is disdain – students shouldn't be basing their education choices on cost. On the other hand, price variation introduces another element of competition into the system, perhaps boosting the incentives for universities to improve teaching quality to everyone's benefit.

The universities themselves aren't keen on a price war – those charging low rates may be seen as second rate, and admissions to more expensive institutions could drop if students start checking their bank balances when filling in their UCAS forms. In a recent BBC survey, 83 universities in England were asked if they would charge the full £3000 in fees, with 64% saying yes. Only 10% would rule it out at this stage.

The exact amounts aside, should we (as students) be paying at all? Whenever fees are debated, groups like the NUS immediately start telling about student poverty, how none of us can make ends meet, how we must work 40 hours per week to the detriment of our studies and so on. Unfortunately, all these arguments against the new fee proposals are void thanks to deferred repayment.

In fact, by removing the current up-front fee, access to university should become easier for those on a low income. Critics argue that the prospect of debt in the longer term will still deter those whose income is low now. However, since repayments only begin when the debtor can afford them, is it really fair to expect someone else to foot the bill for irrational thinking?

I also believe that tuition fees act as a useful deterrent to higher education – now before you spit your coffee all over your *Felix*, hear me out. Not everyone needs or wants to go to university. Some people are at university simply because their parents want them to be. If there's one thing that fees achieve – especially up-front fees – it is to make A level students (and their sometimes pushy parents) think more carefully about whether continuing their education at university is actually going to be worthwhile for them.



JAMES ROBINSON

Don't get me wrong – we should encourage people from all backgrounds to seek their educational goals. Where appropriate, grants should be offered (the only point that all the main political parties can agree on), but perhaps not spread as liberally as some would argue. For example: student comes from a poor background and receives significant grants during education. After graduation, they convert their university education into a high earning job, perhaps earning more than someone from a wealthier background. So why should they repay less?

For some time, the Conservatives have proudly boasted that they would scrap all fees, much to the rejoicing of the NUS and students in general. Unfortunately they then blew it by revealing exactly how they would fund higher education – by pushing up interest rates on student loans to commercial rates, capped at 8%. Currently the rate would be around 6.5%.

Control of the loans would pass to the universities themselves, so the cash raised from loan interest would pay for teaching. The Conservatives estimate that this will raise £20bn over a 20 year period.

It's easy to see right through this cynical scheme – not only do they get to grab the headlines with "Tories pledge to scrap tuition fees", but they satisfy their middle class roots by taxing the poor to pay for the rich. Think about it – richer families won't take out the loan, so don't pay the higher interest, and simply benefit from having no fees to pay. Effectively they get a free education

paid for by those of us supporting ourselves on loans.

Let's not forget that there are also graduates who don't exploit their assumed graduate earning potential. Sticking with relatively low-paid jobs, be it by choice or otherwise, rewards you with a debt mountain that grows at an unmanageable rate.

What the Tories have inadvertently done is agreed with Labour, saying that students, not taxpayers, should pay for their education. All they disagree on is the nitty-gritty of how and when they should pay.

There is one redeeming quality of their plans, in that they want to allow students to take out greater loans to cover their living expenses. There is definitely an argument that the current loans are insufficient. I receive the full loan of £5050 per year. Supposedly, this should cover my expenses for the whole 12 months, which works out to just over £97 per week. A little more room to manoeuvre in the form of higher loans wouldn't hurt.

Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats are the only party that will stand up and declare that all taxpayers, not just graduates, should pay for higher education. They propose to scrap all fees and foot the bill by creating a new top rate of income tax of 50% on earnings above £100,000. Currently the top rate is 40% on earnings above £40,000. As with the other two parties, their proposals include grants of up to £2000 per year to help with living costs for the poorest students.

This plan deals neatly with the problem of graduates not achieving their supposed earning power, since they won't reach the higher tax rate. Supporters agree that taxpayers in general should shoulder the cost, since education benefits the entire economy.

The problem is that a large number of taxpayers will resent paying for other people's education, especially when students have a reputation for getting up just in time for *Countdown* and then going drinking until chucking-out time. This stereotype will only get worse as the Government continues to insist that 50% of school

leavers should go to university.

While we're on the subject of the 50% target, what does the Government think will happen to graduate salaries when the labour market is flooded with university leavers in the next decade? Supply and demand, anyone?

It's easy to say "scrap fees, bring back the grant", but life isn't that simple. Education will always have a price tag on it, as everything does – it's a question of who pays, how they pay and when they pay. So how should it be done? Here's my eight point guide to solving this situation to (almost) everyone's satisfaction:

- Keep tuition fees capped at around the £1,000 per year mark, but defer payment to post-graduation.
- Abandon the 50% target, and provide more information about non-university alternatives after A level.
- Increase the available student loan by around £1000 per year; ie give people enough money so they can actually live off the loan.
- Drop the interest rate on student debt to more accurately reflect the current inflation rate.
- Increase the earnings threshold before loan repayments start to £20,000 per year.
- Scrap all means testing – since fee repayment is linked to graduate earnings, no differentiation is needed. Loans need to be available to all, regardless of what their parents should contribute, since not all parents are willing to do so. Removing means testing will also reduce the administrative workload in the student finance system – we all know the dreaded forms!
- Cover the funding gap by introducing a new top rate of income tax of 45% on earnings above £100,000 per year (the precise percentage and threshold should be adjusted to make the numbers add up!)
- Encourage business to pay off their employees' student debts with tax incentives.

So students pay a bit when they can afford to, taxpayers pay a bit when they can afford to, and nobody should be hard up during their education. There, sorted. Next week I'll tackle world peace.

# Letters to the editor

## Bike racks: no 'joy'

Dear Dave,

I am writing to express my disappointment at the Deputy President (Education and Welfare)'s column ["The joy of... Bike Sheds"] in last week's *Felix*. Let me put my opinion in perspective with a few facts:

Fact 1: The new bike "cage" can't be rejected out of hand. Some people want secure bike parking and so it's not a bad thing.

Fact 2: Most cyclists would much prefer the convenience of parking near their department to the safety of parking in the cage. If you don't believe this, take a stroll down to the cage some afternoon and count the number of free spaces in the bike rack outside it – I guarantee it'll be less than five. Even when they are physically there, people choose not

to use the cage.

Fact 3: The "strategic concentration of bike parking" means the removal of much-used and convenient bike racks that caused no hassle to other users of the college. It means a reduction in real terms of the number of bike space available to students. Apparently the Rector ordered a cleanup of Imperial College Road and hence the racks were removed. Maybe I've missed the point but isn't the Union meant to protect the students from exactly this kind of facetious nonsense?

I challenge anyone to explain to me how the overall situation for bike users of this College has improved over the summer. There is no way the College has done this with the students' interests in mind, and there is no way our union should have supported this event.

I voted for a president whose cam-

paign posters advertised "600 new bike parking spaces for College". I voted for a DP(E&W) who I thought would put student needs first. I can accept that they have been outmaneuvered by College on this subject, but to then turn around and support college's actions in *Felix* is unacceptable.

To paraphrase our president's recent column, "Elected student officers hold a position of trust. What is trust?". Trust is not letting the college push through a policy which inconveniences the students when they're not even here to defend themselves, and trust is certainly not publishing a defence of those very actions after it's too late to reverse them. Well done to Sam for organizing a meeting, but take it from me and my six years at this College, I guarantee you those bike racks will never reappear in College.

We had our chance to stop this and we missed it.

Yours,

Philip Bates  
PhD student, Physics

● **Sam Rorke, Deputy President (Education & Welfare), replies:** *The initial impetus for the College's new secure cycle parking facility came directly from the students, represented by the Union, as the high incidence of bike crime has been a longstanding concern. I think this is what you are alluding to in "Fact 1". Two ways of doing this were identified as providing secure facilities, and concentrating parking in locations that could be better monitored.*

*In response to Fact 3, you don't always get what you want in life.*

*We have fought hard to get a solution that bike users and College are happy with. We have more spaces now than a year ago. The Rector has decided that he wants bike racks to be removed from Imperial College Road and located elsewhere on the College Estate; Mustafa has spoken to him about this, and the only way he is going to change his mind is if we can show that there is now insufficient cycle parking space. He won't have much sympathy for cyclists who consider it a divine right to park outside their building, and will now have to walk for an extra couple of minutes.*

*The fact that people park their bikes outside the Faculty Building is entirely their own business. If they do not want to use the facilities that have been provided, then that's not a problem.*



# alex fineart exhibition



photography by alex holland

the blyth gallery  
level 5 sherfield building

ends 29 october 2004

[www.alexfineart.co.uk](http://www.alexfineart.co.uk)



[www.shell.com/careers](http://www.shell.com/careers)

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# Careers

felix@ic.ac.uk

## Making the most of recruitment season



**CASSANDRA ALDRICH**  
CAREERS EDITOR

October can be rather hectic, trying to find time for your studies while running around to all the corporate presentations and recruitment fairs and filling out those time-con-

suming application forms.

Although final year and penultimate year students are the targeted audience for these presentations (and certainly the big companies usually only open internship applications to these years), all students should take advantage of this annual merry-go-round. It's a good way to start forming ideas about what you might like to do when the time comes to find a job. Knowing what interests you is a big help, as you can then set about gaining the appropriate work experience and developing the relevant skills so that, come application time, you're a star candidate. Employers will want examples of the situ-

ations from which you gained such skills, so organising extra-curricular activities is vital.

The real value of company presentations and recruitment fairs is in meeting the people and making contacts, and thereby getting a better feel for the organisation. You should be able to find most of the necessary information on their website and by researching the company and sector. In general, not too much is said at the presentations that you won't already know if you've done the research.

Even if you won't be applying this year, attending these events can help you discover what you want to do (or what

you definitely don't want to do) and it may also make you more aware of how the recruitment process works and the level of competition. Big employers hardly need advertise themselves and actually use presentations and workshops as a way to start finding potential recruits. They will often take down the contact details of students who have made the right impression and may even invite them to a smaller, select gathering. So, if you're planning on applying, think of some intelligent questions (not already answered in the brochure) and introduce yourself.

It's also useful to observe the networking that goes on at

these events, what impresses the company representatives and what doesn't. You will often see them trying to make a quick getaway from the know-it-alls, the numbingly boring types and the clueless types who start with 'well, I'm not really sure what I want to do'. Try to 'click' with them – at the end of the day, they want to employ people they get on with.

Unfortunately, the recruitment events tend to lack diversity and are dominated by the large financial/business institutions. For those who don't see themselves in an office in the City, you may have to step off campus and take the fair elsewhere.

Hot on our heels, *The Times* has brought out a new Careers section (every Thursday) which covers pretty much everything in bite-size pieces, one of which last week was entitled 'Be discreet if your aim is to become a spook'. MI5 is number 63 in *The Times 2004 Top 100 Graduate Employers*, so there's an idea if the thought of PricewaterhouseCoopers or Citigroup doesn't really do it for you. With phrases such as 'information gathering', 'careful research' and 'interpreting data' being used to describe the work of the secret service, Imperial should be a recruitment hotbed for MI5!

## Starting to shape your future

A look back at this year's National Graduate Recruitment Exhibition



**GABRIELLA SILVESTRI**  
CAREERS EDITOR

Whether you're embarking on your initial research in order to choose a career or you're ready to target a specific company, graduate recruitment exhibitions are an excellent forum for meeting your potential employer.

It's hard enough for graduates to get on the first rung of the recruitment ladder, and there isn't a better way to make an impression than in the flesh. I personally went to this exhibition at Wembley, and I advise all of you to go to the next one. Whatever you want to be, you'll find a career platform. There is something for everyone, from finance, science and consultancy to languages, marketing and sales. You can meet recruiters face-to-face and get a feeling of the company you are interested in, plus lots more. You can attend free career seminars and company presentations, or sit down with an expert that will go through your CV at the 'CV clinic'. There is also the opportunity to attend interviews and hand in your CV, if your career is already clear to you. If you wish to visit the CV clinic, make sure you get there early to avoid the massive queue!

After filling out a regis-

tration form, I first went to GCHQ's stand. Does the name mean anything to you? Well, before going to the exhibition, I certainly didn't know about the Government Communications Headquarters. These days you hear a lot about the British intelligence agencies, but have you ever thought of joining one?

'Heard but not seen (until now)' is how GCHQ introduces itself. GCHQ reports to the Foreign Secretary and work closely with the UK's other intelligence agencies (commonly known as MI5 and MI6). Their primary customers are the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and law enforcement authorities, but also a wide range of other Government departments.

What you are allowed to know is that they work to counter the numerous threats that face the nation and the global community. This involves using cutting edge technology to intercept communications and electronic emissions.

GCHQ has two missions: signals intelligence (Sigint) and information assurance.

Sigint work protects the vital interests of the nation, providing information to support the Government in foreign policy decisions, military operations and law enforcement.

Information assurance helps keep Government communication and information systems safe from hackers and other threats. The intelligence they provide is at the heart of the fights against terrorism, international crime, drug trafficking and weapons of mass destruction.

I was interested to find



Be sure to visit presentations, recruitment fairs and exhibitions like this one at Wembley

out their recruitment criteria. Mandeep Kuner, GCHQ technologist and mathematician, said: "We recruit from a broad spectrum of disciplines, with a minimum of a 2.1 degree. There are different positions such as linguists, technologists, applied researchers, intelligence analysts, finance specialists and vetting officers, just to name a few. Therefore, science, language, engineering, IT and accountancy degrees are all welcomed".

I wanted to know which specific skills GCHQ seek in an applicant – 'analytical skills' seem to be a major requirement. Work experience in any institution is a bonus. After speaking with Kuner, my impression was that you must be exceptional to succeed in the selection process which includes appli-

cation forms, psychometric tests, interviews and going to an assessment centre. If any of you are interested in such a career, the website [www.gchq.gov.uk](http://www.gchq.gov.uk) has all the necessary information on how to apply: [www.gchq.gov.uk](http://www.gchq.gov.uk).

The next stop I made was to ACNielsen BASES, a leading company in new product consulting, providing sales forecasts and market analysis to companies around the globe. Positions in this company again are not limited to any specific degree area.

I approached Paula Wright, the HR manager, who told me: "The main requirements we expect from an applicant are very strong client service ability with analytical and multitask skills. We accept graduates with a minimum of a 2.1 degree but they must be enthusiastic individuals with

the ambition to learn".

She added: "We are very disappointed with the students we came across here today. They want to know from us what we can offer them and what the company is about. We ended up being given hundreds of CVs, but nobody impressed us particularly. It doesn't take much to do a little research about us and to come prepared. We are looking for researchers and they should at least know how to do that. The best way to impress us is to show some interest and knowledge about us, otherwise we will not consider them further".

The message is quite clear: show the company that you are very passionate and interested in them. There is no way you will be selected above hundreds of other applicants if you do not make an effort.

## Careers events and useful links

### TALK SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Thursday 21 Oct, 1–1.50pm  
Clare Lecture Theatre, Huxley Building

### TALK POSTGRADUATE STUDY IN THE USA

Tuesday 26 Oct, 1–1.50pm  
Clare Lecture Theatre, Huxley Building

### TALK IT & THE CITY

Thursday 28 Oct, 1–1.50pm  
Clare Lecture Theatre, Huxley Building

### EVENT IMPERIAL COLLEGE CAREERS FAIR

Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 Nov, 11am–4pm  
Beit Quad

### LINKS

<http://www.ic.ac.uk/careers>  
(Visit this site for a full list of employer presentations)

<http://www.shell-livewire.org/thebigtrip>

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

<http://www.newscientistjobs.com/graduate/>

<http://www.doctorjob.com>

● The Careers section appears in *Felix* every two weeks

## Competitions

### Win... a dance mat!

Yes indeed, this week we're giving away a dance mat (compatible with PS1 and PS2 consoles), which works in conjunction with the famous dance mat game. Please don't ask us why. Anyway, it looks quite impressive, and I'm sure a few of you will be into that sort of thing...

For the chance to win, just answer this question:

**What type of dancing was demonstrated by the Imperial Dance Club in dBs on the Thursday of Freshers Week?**

- a) Salsa dancing
- b) Break dancing
- c) Morris dancing

Email your answer to [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk) by Thursday 28 October. The first person to be randomly selected after the closing date will win the prize. *Felix* competition rules apply.

### Railcard winners

The winners of our Young Persons Railcard competition (issue 1299) are Alison Stubbings, Song Tsai, Elizabeth Shaw, David Herd and Ka Cheng. Obviously fans of *The Simpsons*, they all knew that entrepreneur and con man Lyle Lanley introduced a **monorail** to Springfield. The winners will receive an email telling them how to collect their prizes very soon.



### Part-Time Staff Needed

There are a few part-time staff positions available to help for the Union's Careers Fair on November 2, 3 and 4.

Shifts are varied.

If you are interested, please e-mail your contact details and times available to [kristine@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:kristine@imperial.ac.uk).





# Felix



**We need:**

- **Sport editor**
- **What's On editor**
- **Campus correspondents**

**No experience necessary. Interested? Email [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk)**

**We still have some opportunities in all other areas – email for details**

# What's on

felix@ic.ac.uk

## THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
RAG FRESHERS MEETING**  
12 noon  
dBs  
An informal meeting for anyone who wants to find out more about RAG.  
Contact: rag@ic.ac.uk

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
MALAYSIAN SOCIETY:  
PASAR MALAM**  
4-8pm  
Queen's Lawn  
The society will be simulating the atmosphere of a traditional Malaysian bazaar, with stalls selling several exotic items such as batik wraps, handicrafts, mehndi tattoos, calligraphy and delicious Malaysian food for great prices.  
Contact: charlotte.yeow@ic.ac.uk

**FILMS  
THE BOURNE  
SUPREMACY (12A)**  
6pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£3  
When Jason Bourne is framed for a botched CIA operation, he is forced to take up his former life as a trained assassin to survive. Showing at the Union's own cinema.  
Contact: cinema@ic.ac.uk

**UNION EVENTS  
JAZZ & ROCK GIG  
NIGHT**  
7pm  
dBs  
Live appearances from some of Imperial's best bands.

**FILMS  
FAHRENHEIT 9/11 (15)**  
8.30pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£3  
Michael Moore's view on what happened to the United States after September 11, and how the Bush Administration allegedly used the tragic event to push forward its ruthless agenda. Showing at the Union's own cinema.  
Contact: cinema@ic.ac.uk

## FRIDAY 22 OCTOBER

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
MALAYSIAN SOCIETY:  
PASAR MALAM**  
4-8pm  
Queen's Lawn  
The society will be simulating the atmosphere of a traditional Malaysian bazaar, with stalls selling several exotic items such as batik wraps, handicrafts, mehndi tattoos, calligraphy and delicious Malaysian food for great prices.  
Contact: charlotte.yeow@ic.ac.uk

**UNION EVENTS  
DRAMSOC PRESENTS  
SLEUTH**  
7.30pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£2 (free to DramSoc members)  
The freshers' play. In a secluded Wiltshire mansion, a detective story writer is putting together the finishing touches of his latest masterpiece - a crime so fiendishly clever, the police would never be able to figure it out.

**UNION EVENTS  
ROCK CITY**  
8pm-1am  
Beit Quad  
£3  
With DJ Way Way and Boxer Rebellion. Smirnoff vodka and draft mixer £1 while stocks last.  
Contact: union@ic.ac.uk

**CLUBBING  
LORDS OF THE  
UNDERGROUND**  
The Fridge  
Nu-NRG for those who like it a bit harder, with Karim and legend Kevin Energy.

**CLUBBING  
YADA YADA**  
Ministry of Sound  
Eric Prydz, Mutiny and Tom Neville come together for a night of proper house.

## SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
ULTIMATE FRISBEE: UCL  
BEGINNERS' ONE-DAY  
TOURNAMENT**  
9am onwards  
A one-day event for anyone who has been playing ultimate frisbee for three months or less, in which beginners can play against other beginners from London and beyond.  
Contact: emmanuel.bennett@ic.ac.uk

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
DRAMSOC FRESHERS  
WORKSHOPS**  
TECH: 11am, Concert Hall  
ACTING/DIRECTING: 2pm, dBs  
Come along and see what Imperial's Dramatic Society can do, and find out more about getting involved. For more information visit www.dramsoc.org.

**CLUBBING  
SYMBIOSIS**  
The Rocket  
Massive psy-trance party with special appearance from Psy-Sex.

**CLUBBING  
BUGGED OUT! 10TH  
ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL**  
The End  
Mylo (live) in the main room, plus Trash founder Erol Alkan and FC Kahuna in the lounge.

## SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER

**UNION EVENTS  
DRAMSOC PRESENTS  
SLEUTH**  
7.30pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£2 (free to DramSoc members)  
The freshers' play. In a secluded Wiltshire mansion, a detective story writer is putting together the finishing touches of his latest masterpiece - a crime so fiendishly clever, the police would never be able to figure it out.

**CLUBBING  
JUST GROOVE**  
414  
Finish your weekend with some bouncy fun at this little gem of a club.

## MONDAY 25 OCTOBER

**FILMS  
DODGEBALL: A TRUE  
UNDERDOG STORY (12A)**  
6pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£3  
A group of misfits enter a Las Vegas dodgeball tournament in order to save their cherished local gym from the onslaught of a corporate health fitness chain. Showing at the Union's own cinema.  
Contact: cinema@ic.ac.uk

## TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER

**UNION EVENTS  
PARAMOUNT COMEDY  
ON TAP**  
7.30pm  
Reynolds Bar, Charing Cross Hospital  
£4  
Comedy night, featuring Marcus Brigstocke, Marty Wilson and Barry Castagnola.

**UNION EVENTS  
STA TRAVEL QUIZ NIGHT**  
8-10.30pm  
Beit Quad  
FREE  
The quiz is a bit of a tradition at the Union, with cash and beer prizes on offer.  
Contact: union@ic.ac.uk

## WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
HIS PEOPLE:  
'DESIGNED FOR  
DESTINY'**  
6-7pm  
BMS  
FREE  
A multimedia presentation utilizing movie clips and interviews to explore our own purpose and destiny. Relevant to all.  
Contact: john.hermes@ic.ac.uk

**UNION EVENTS  
CHEEKY**  
8pm-1am  
Beit Quad  
£2  
Flirty current chart music and party classics.  
Contact: union@ic.ac.uk

## THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER

**VERY IMPORTANT  
FELIX PUBLISHED**  
10am onwards  
Pick up the next issue from your department or the Union building.  
Contact: felix@ic.ac.uk

**UNION EVENTS  
ARTS FESTIVAL 2005  
LAUNCH MEETING**  
5-6pm  
Seminar Room 1, Beit Quad  
The Arts Festival, held in February, is a chance to show the rest of the world how big arts really is at Imperial College Union. Everyone with even the slightest potential interest should come along to this meeting.  
Contact: arts@ic.ac.uk

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
HIS PEOPLE:  
'POTHEAD, PHYSICIST,  
PROPHET'**  
6-7pm  
BMS  
FREE  
Come and hear the story of a pothead physicist who became a prophet, then meet the man himself.  
Contact: john.hermes@ic.ac.uk

**FILMS  
THE VILLAGE (12A)**  
6pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£3  
The thrilling tale of an isolated town confronting the astonishing truth that lies just outside its borders.  
Contact: cinema@ic.ac.uk

**CLUBS AND SOCIETIES  
URBAN MUSIC:  
HEAVY ELEMENTS V**  
8pm  
Southside Bar  
FREE  
A night of hip-hop, drum 'n' bass, breakdancers and MC Unreal, the human beatbox.  
Contact: urbanmusic1@hotmail.com

**FILMS  
DODGEBALL: A TRUE  
UNDERDOG STORY (12A)**  
8.30pm  
Union Concert Hall  
£3  
A group of misfits enter a Las Vegas dodgeball tournament in order to save their cherished local gym from the onslaught of a corporate health fitness chain.  
Contact: cinema@ic.ac.uk

## ALL WEEK

**ARTS  
NATIONAL GALLERY**  
Raphael

**ARTS  
TATE BRITAIN**  
Turner Prize

**ARTS  
BRITISH MUSEUM**  
Sudan: Past and present

**FILMS  
ALFIE (15)**  
Odeon Kensington  
All week: 1.00pm, 3.35pm, 6.10pm, 8.45pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.20pm.

**FILMS  
ALIEN VS PREDATOR  
(15)**  
Odeon Kensington  
All week: 1.35pm, 4.00pm, 6.25pm, 8.55pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.25pm.

**FILMS  
BRIDE AND PREJUDICE  
(12A)**  
Odeon Kensington  
Fri to Thurs: 12.45pm, 3.20pm, 5.55pm, 8.30pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.00pm.

**FILMS  
COLLATERAL (15)**  
Odeon Kensington  
Fri and Sat only: 11.20pm.

**FILMS  
HERO (12A)**  
Odeon Kensington  
Fri to Thurs: 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.35pm, 9.00pm.

**FILMS  
LAYER CAKE (15)**  
Odeon Kensington  
All week: 1.30pm, 3.55pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.15pm.

**FILMS  
SAW (18)**  
Odeon Kensington  
Fri and Sat only: 11.30pm.

**FILMS  
SHARK TALE (U)**  
Odeon Kensington  
Fri to Thurs: 12.05pm, 2.15pm, 4.35pm, 6.55pm, 9.10pm.

## Running an event? Want people to know? Tell us about it!

Felix will print your listings free of charge.  
Just email felix@ic.ac.uk and tell us:

- the name of the event
- who is running it
- the time
- the location
- the cost (if any)
- a brief description of the event
- a contact email address

# Around Campus

felix@ic.ac.uk

## Silwood Freshers Fortnight: part one

By Andy Brown  
Silwood Park Correspondant

Free coffee. That was what was offered to the current Silwood Executive Committee to bribe them to get out of bed and greet the newly arrived freshers. Did it work? For a few of us, yes! We may be paid postgraduates, but once a student, always a student at heart!

Our temporary greeting room was welcoming enough, the smell of fresh (well, powdered) coffee, biscuits and a typical big warm grin greeting you from the president. If only it had been like that all weekend. Saturday passed with not much happening, so in their wisdom the events team decided to shepherd all the new arrivals to one of our "local" pubs. It was only then that they realised lots of people had turned up today, resulting in the need for multiple trips through the winding streets of Berkshire, gradually getting more intoxicated. It was hard enough getting everyone there while sober, but getting them back, well, at least we didn't lose anyone. That was to change later in the week.

Slightly calmer evenings followed, such as a night in the Silwood bar on the Sunday. I'm not sure the Silwood bar

has had that many people in it this side of Darwin's theory of evolution (for those non-biologists – that's quite a while ago). Free alcohol was on offer on the Tuesday with a College-funded 'meet and greet'. We all got up on chairs and said a few words, which was rather ironic as I am not allowed to use a step ladder for my research but am allowed to stand on a chair to encourage students to drink and enjoy themselves!

Wednesday was supposed to be about eating rather than drinking – the 'kitchen crawl' – but with some kitchens supplying drink as well as food for the judging committee (not that that swayed our decision at all), it was another hazy morning that followed.

The Thursday brought what for most was the highlight of the first week, the local pub crawl. Those of you living in London may not understand the excitement that goes with this event out here as you are constantly surrounded by pubs, but here it takes real dedication to get around all of them. This is where the events team organisation faltered for the first time. The theory isn't hard: get from pub A to pub B then pub C, while avoiding the beer monkey (more details to fol-

low). However, it's a little complicated when it's dark and only one person in the group knows the way from the third pub to the fourth, despite the efforts of a helpful but inebriated yokel. Anyway, the upshot is that to my knowledge only two people were lost, myself being one! Without a leader, everybody soldiered on bravely and got around all the pubs, and the detached party regained contact at the last pub just in time for last orders.

Friday morning was hazier than most and as a result only a minibus of hardcore drinkers made it out to Reading for clubbing, but those who did were in for a treat. There was Tom's calm driving under Clare's navigation (or lack of), and the barman was an ex-Silwoodian and so gave Silwood half pints to all.

Thankfully for many, the cycle pub crawl and sports were postponed as livers cried out in unison for a day off and the desire to remain horizontal.

So it is from my room, while almost horizontal, that I write to inform the outside world of the goings-on in this remote part of the Imperial world. I hope everyone else is having half as much fun and not as much getting lost as we are out here.



The Silwood kitchen crawl: "it was supposed to be about eating rather than drinking..."

If you would like to bring us news from any of Imperial's campuses, or just write about your own experiences, email us at [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk)

# Clubs & Societies

felix@ic.ac.uk

## DramSoc presents... mystery, intrigue and workshops

### DRAMSOC

By Tom Elliott

Get out your magnifying glasses and dust off your pipes, as DramSoc cordially invites you to partake of our freshers' play: *Sleuth*, a fiendish mystery by Anthony Shaffer, ably directed by Mike Wyer.

In a secluded Wiltshire mansion, a detective story writer is putting together the

finishing touches of his latest masterpiece – a crime so fiendishly clever, the police would never be able to figure it out.

The plan is put in motion, and events gradually unfold throughout the course of the evening, leading to the dramatic climax. But all is not as it seems, and a battle of wits develops between the police and the amateurs, all trying to work out who did what and when.

The mystery unfolds in

the Union Concert Hall on Friday 22 and Sunday 24 October, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £2, but are free to DramSoc members.

**"A battle of wits develops between the police and the amateurs..."**

For those of you not content to simply observe, who want to help shape the suspense and guide the intrigue, Saturday 23 October will see the *Sleuth* directing workshop. Mike and his cast will be on hand to help you let your creativity loose. In conjunction with this, there will also be an acting workshop, allowing you to try out your performing skills and learn some new ones. To attend either the acting or directing workshops,

turn up in dBs at 2pm on Saturday.

For the more technically-minded amongst you, there will also be an opportunity to "get your hands dirty" at our tech workshop. Starting at 11am, our "techies" will guide you through the use of the lighting and sound equipment we employ in *Sleuth* and other productions.

For more information, or to find out about our other events, please visit [www.dramsoc.org](http://www.dramsoc.org).



Apply online at [www.oncampus.citigroup.com](http://www.oncampus.citigroup.com)

...a year ago my computer programs earned top marks at my university. This year they're being used on trading desks in a dozen countries...

**Come and meet us at our Technology Presentation** at 6.30pm on Tuesday 26th October 2004 in the Civil Engineering Lecture Theatre 207. Please sign up via [campus.queries@citigroup.com](mailto:campus.queries@citigroup.com) stating Imperial Technology Presentation in the subject box.

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# My London

felix@ic.ac.uk



Name: **Anthony Vernon**  
 Department: **Neuroscience and psychological medicine**  
 Year: **Postgraduate 3**  
 Living in: **Parsons Green**

## My... clubs

Fabric is probably the best club in London right now [see Nightlife, page 16]. Quality DJs every week, a unique venue, a sensible door policy (you can wear trainers on a Friday), reasonably priced drinks and a kick ass soundsystem make this my number one club!

Turnmills and The End are also pretty cool if you like your dance music. Ministry is usually full of tourists but they do have some good house nights on Saturdays. However if you want more of a cheesy clubbing experience then my faves are School Disco at the Hammersmith Palais and Carwash at the Aquarium in Old Street. Personally I have had several very funny nights in both places! Yes, dressing up can be a pain, but it's more fun if you make the effort. Aquarium is particularly cool as it actually has a swimming pool in the club!

Alternatively check out Strawberry Moons off Regent street. Whatever you do, for Gods's sake avoid Leicester Square!"

## My... pubs

"My fave bars in London have to be The Social, an excellent DJ bar just off Oxford Street; Nordic on Goodge Street, which is a random Scandinavian bar that does lots of different shooters and cocktails in a nice relaxed atmosphere; Walkabout in Shepherds Bush for watching sport and generally drinking cheaply; and the Alphabet Bar in Soho which has quality house music at the weekend and isn't too pricey."

## My... restaurants

"I guess my favourite places to go would be Wagamama's [there's a branch on Kensington High Street, close to the main Imperial campus] or the very similar but slightly better Satsuma on Wardour Street. Other great Japanese places are Misato and Tokyo Diner (Leicester square) and Ichizen (Goodge Street)."

## My... work

"I'm still studying here at Imperial, having just started my final year of my PhD. I did my undergrad here too so I know the place pretty well. Currently I work at Charing Cross hospital doing research into Parkinson's disease."

## My... money saving tip

"My tip is buy *Time Out*, as they quite often have '2 for 1' deals on museums and restaurants and the *Time Out* night pass which gets you money off club entry. Also when you're totally skint it tells you lots of cool things to do and places to go for free!"

## My... favourite day out

"Watching cricket or rugby with my mates, or just chilling out by going someplace like Portobello market with my girlfriend followed by dinner in town."

Tell us about your London. Email [felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:felix@ic.ac.uk)

Imperial College  
London

## Sign up now!

Why not get active in the community whilst you're at Imperial College London? It doesn't matter if you work or study in Imperial – volunteering will have always something to offer you! We have over 250 volunteering opportunities in our database, so there should be a project for you.

The easiest way to get regular updates about volunteering is by signing up to our mailing list. You will receive all the latest opportunities on a weekly basis, directly to your email inbox. Simply send us an email to [volunteering@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:volunteering@imperial.ac.uk), clearly stating that you want to receive the weekly news bulletin and we will do the rest!

Imperial Volunteer Centre



Linking opportunities

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

Imperial Volunteer Centre  
South Kensington campus  
Union Building  
Beit Quadrangle East Basement  
Prince Consort Road  
London SW7 2BB

£1 Per Pint  
Carlsberg +  
Tetley

In dBs Till  
the Cellars  
Run Dry

The Union  
encourages  
you to drink  
responsibly

imperial  
college  
union



At: dBs  
Wed Oct 27  
8pm > 1am

Imperial £2.00  
Ents Pass £1.50  
Guests £3.50

Imperial College Union, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB

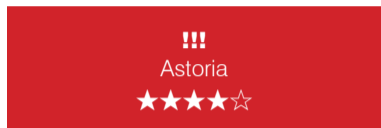
# Music

music.felix@ic.ac.uk

## Louden up, kids

One of the few good bands to come out of the supposed dance-punk revival, !!! brought their insane live show to the city. **Tom Hampton** was there for *Felix*

### LIVE REVIEW



!!! (most frequently pronounced 'chk chk chk') crashed into the indie limelight recently on the crest of a wave of similar New York dance-punk bands such as The Rapture

and Radio 4. However, !!!'s sound is truly their own. A mix of fashionistas and other student types greeted the eight-strong band at the Astoria, ready for a heady mix of energy-filled dance numbers taken mostly from the new album *Louden Up Now*.

Throughout the evening, three circular projection screens burnt a sequence of dazzling, progressively more psychedelic images onto an

audience already bathed in thick percussive beats, swirling guitar lines and copious flashes of strobe lighting.

Lead singer Nic Offer cavorted wildly, dancing cathartically, rigidly, often just plain stupidly to the music behind him, all without a hint of irony. Well, maybe just a small hint. After barking incomprehensible vocals and occasionally resorting to making abstract noises and breathing sounds, it was all change as drummers took vocals, guitarists played keyboards, bassists picked up trumpets and someone, somewhere, hit a cowbell or two.

Multi-instrumentalists abound in this band, and the fired-up punk aesthetic coupled with programmed beeps, tweaks and trance-esque spiralling song structures made for an embracing experience.

Stand out tracks were difficult to pick out; the well-known *Me And Giuliani...* single, stretched out to over eight minutes, caused the biggest crowd response. Fun was had by all, ranging from gently swaying



!!! in the park... but where is the cowbell?

heads to rave-dancing in pockets, all rippling through the crowd. Nic interacted with the audience well, despite splitting his jeans, and there were several well-intentioned mini stage invasions, cheerfully resolved by all involved. These were the cause of much satisfaction to the band, despite the bassist being confused for a jubilant fan and getting roughly handled himself towards the end of the set!

There's no pretending that !!!

will have a bestselling album, nor will they achieve emphatic commercial success with their brand of experimental genre fusion. However, their music and performance are so bubbling with crisp, surging blasts of dance and new-wave punk cool, leaving every muscle in the body twitching excitedly, that the band deserve all their recent superlative critical appraisal. I can only recommend investigating for yourself.



The band practise carrying giant invisible dustbins

## Nancy boys done good

Felix waxes lyrical about The Dears and reappraises Placebo's singles

### ALBUM REVIEWS



There are bands who constantly develop their sound, striving to evolve and move on, surprising fans and critics alike with every release. Then there are those who have found their signature sound and decided to stick with it. You hear them and say, "that's them, no question".

It doesn't take much cerebral activity to work out which camp Placebo belong to. No indeed, the music industry's most brazen nancy boys found the noise they liked with their debut, self-titled, album, and, as this collection shows, they haven't

felt the need to change it.

Their sound is an angsty nasal whine backed up by droning guitars and a solid, repetitive beat. An acquired taste, it's actually rather more appealing than I've just made out, although it really shouldn't be. It should be absolutely bloody awful, and, while I don't doubt that there are millions of people who think that it is, I can't suppress a creeping fascination for the crazy gay Luxembourgers (is that a word?)

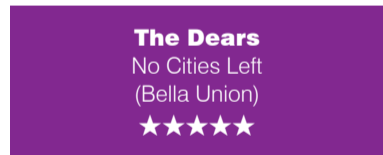
Yes, Brian Molko's voice has a tendency to give me a migraine after too long. Yes, it's as predictable as the USA winning the World Series (apart from that crazy rapping thing they did on *Black Market Music*). But there's something hypnotic about it all. Despite the occasionally obscene lyrics, their music has a friendly, soothing quality to it that quite belies its superficial anger. Not

many groups consisting of a teeny-tiny androgyne in lipstick, an impossibly tall bassist and, er, that other guy could come off as homely and comforting as your favourite blanket but, if you listen to them enough, Placebo can manage it.

This collection of all their singles is a brisk and faithful trot through a successful but never stellar career, and although it misses some of their hidden album-only gems it's consistently interesting to fans. The most exciting track, though, is one that has never previously been available in the UK - *Protège-Moi*, the French version of *Protect Me From What I Want*, a song from their latest album, *Sleeping With Ghosts*. In his native language, Molko becomes a husky little sextop with a drawl that could fell admirers at twenty paces, rather than the shrill pixie we've come to know. It's a new and noteworthy side to Placebo, as is the short but mostly sweet new love song *I Do*. The sound is no different, but the emotions have changed, becoming more tender and cutely pathetic. Perhaps we are seeing progression here? I wouldn't count on it, but it's a nice thought.

So, this is really one for collectors, or beginners. However, I leave you with this thought: the band was formed when Molko accidentally ran into his former classmate, bassist Stefan Olsdal, in South Kensington tube station. They're local boys. Give them a chance.

Anna Novitzky



This album is long overdue. At last, an indie band that's neither embarrassingly poppy (see Keane), or blandly predictable (see Snow Patrol or Thirteen Senses). This is an album that will lead you into a darkened room to whisper to you all your darkest secrets, tuck you into bed and kiss your cheeks, stained by the tears it caused you to cry. It is truly as overblown as that last sentence, and yet darkly humble, riddled by its own insecurities.

This strange schizophrenia comes across clearly in the lyrics. *Lost In The Plot* warns you "don't mess with our love, our love is so much stronger", whereas *Pinned Together, Falling Apart* bites its nails since it's "petrified by the thought of losing you, absolutely horrified by the thought of losing you". The Dears are blessed with the perfect vocalist for their style in the form of Murray Lightburn. His voice is rich, dark, deep and smooth; confident yet tentative.

The album opens with *We Can Have It*, with a fragile intro caressing you with beautiful acoustic guitar and vibraphone. It teases you with this for two minutes before exploding into a flurry of overt instrumentation. Lightburn's vocals soar skywards for the rest of

the song, taking you along for the ride, frantically promising you that "you're not alone" and sending the hairs on the back of your neck into cardiac arrest.

The instrumentation and musicianship is breathtaking throughout. *Who Are You, Defenders Of The Universe* is in sinister 6/8, blindingly complex, and rocky to boot. *The Second Part* and closer *No Cities Left* both feature an accordion, and flutes and strings are used as staple instruments.

The variety on *No Cities Left* is startling. *Postcard From Purgatory* is echoey and loud, drenched in feedback, and accelerates into a psychedelic whirlwind of tambourines, flutes and distorted guitars. *Never Destroy Us* sounds like a Bond theme, suave, sophisticated and jazzy.

A couple of minor bad points: *Don't Loose The Faith* does absolutely nothing, a very bland, going-through-the-motions kind of song. *Expect The Worst/Cos She's A Tourist* starts as one of the best tracks, with choppy cellos, *The Omen* style choir, an Arabian feel, start stop rhythms and a tempo change, but then drops of to nothingness for six minutes.

Nothing you can love will ever be perfect, a truth The Dears will happily impart to you before drowning your sorrows with their genius melancholia. Essential listening; you need this in your life.

James Millen



Placebo: the ever elfish Brian Molko, and the other two



# Nightlife

clubs.felix@ic.ac.uk

## Birthday Bonanza

Last weekend, London superclub Fabrik celebrated its fifth birthday. *Felix* was there to check out the party

Fabrik cannot have escaped your attention. Not only is it one of the biggest clubs in town with a capacity of around 3000, but their publicity is almost ubiquitous – you will be handed stylishly designed Fabrik flyers on your way out of almost any club, as well as gigs and concerts.

Situated in Farringdon, Fabrik has built up an incredible reputation – some people don't go anywhere else. FabrikLive (Fridays) and Fabrik (Saturdays) are two of the most consistently solid nights out in town, with impressive line-ups of live acts covering the spectrum of music with breaks, drum and bass and house, although the music policy explicitly states 'no trance'!

Last weekend, Fabrik was five. The celebrations were held over three days, with the club unusually open on a Thursday night for a pure drum and bass mash up, and Friday and Saturday in the familiar format. Nacho Quinones went down on Thursday to check out the action, and I was there for all the fun on Friday.

**Simon Clark**  
Nightlife Editor

### CLUB REVIEWS

**Fabrik Fifth Birthday  
Weekend: Thursday**  
Fabrik  
★★★★☆

So I went to Fabrik on Thursday. The line-up for the whole weekend was impressive, but on Thursday it was immense!

All your favourite drum and bass DJs were there: Grooverider, Nicky Blackmarket (who kicked ass in dBs last year), Goldie and DJ Hype, back to back with the granddaddy of drum and bass, Andy C. Individually, wick-ed. Combined? Unmissable!

On the Circle Line, I was surrounded by baggy-trousered, bling bling, red-eyed clubbers all shaking with anticipation. When we got to

Farringdon it was pretty much a race to beat the omnipresent Fabrik queue, which to everyone's surprise was notable by its absence. Once inside, the club was pretty packed but not quite as full as it can get, probably due to the midweek effect.

Basically, Fabrik is made up of three main rooms and a couple of chill-out areas. I say "chill-out" in the loosest of terms here, because the music is too damn phat to sit down, so most people use the couches as platforms really. As for the main rooms, there is usually different music in each one, but this Thursday it was drum and bass everywhere, which I guess was Fabrik's way of celebrating the fact that it is one of the main drum and bass venues in the world.

Room 1 was the arena for the main acts and I found myself spending most of the night there. Grooverider kicked off with some of the phattest basses that I've ever heard and the occasional slip-up was swiftly covered by some skilful MCing.

The main dish of the night was Andy C. This was obvious judging by how packed the room got when he came in. To be fair, at Fabrik you can always expect a good amount of the old elbow-in-the-ribs, but I would have to say that Andy C is too popular for his own good. He was as great as people tell you he is, but the overcrowding in the room was as irritating as it was unavoidable.

The other rooms were comparatively empty, but the tunes were just as kicking with the added bonus of extra breathing space. The staircases are a popular area to gather what remaining strength you have left to get through the rest of the night. But you'll find that you're not alone, as this is the place where most people come to chill, have a smoke and decide on the next room to hit.

Drinks at Fabrik are at average club prices, which is bad news for us students! I would definitely recommend that you get plenty of pre-club drinks in before you get in there, as

most likely you'll find yourself refilling water bottles from the unisex toilets for most of the night.

The somewhat restrictive prices are compensated for by the awesome light displays, which are some of the best imaginable. The lights, the music, the DJs, the MCs, the atmosphere... the list is endless, so if you're into drum and bass, I would definitely recommend you pay Fabrik a visit. I'll see you there.

**Nacho Quinones**

**Fabrik Fifth Birthday  
Weekend: Friday**  
Fabrik  
★★★★☆

So, Fabrik is five. Five years on, and it's still going strong. Stronger than ever, it would appear. I arrived shortly before midnight – somewhat stupidly, as I knew this was going to be a busy one – and the queue was leading around the corner and down towards the tube station. Not a good sign. If I hadn't had a ticket I doubt I would have waited. As we entered, security looked about ready to turn away the majority of the waiting masses.

I remember last year's birthday weekend, when they brought free drinks into the middle of the dancefloor just before chucking out time, and someone threw a load of glow sticks into the crowd (quite shocking considering they are banned in the club), so I had been looking forward to this night for a long time, especially since I hadn't been down the giant staircase in a good few months.

Once inside, I was eager to get right into the midst of things, so it was straight into the main room for me. I have to admit I was slightly taken aback, as the place wasn't jumping like I had expected. Electronic duo Death In Vegas were in the middle of their live set, which seemed odd to me – usually at FabrikLive the live acts perform first, then clear



The almost omnipresent Fabrik queue forms on Charterhouse Street

the stage for the clubbers. Tonight, however, it seemed I had missed Stanton Warriors and Richard Fearless. Death In Vegas were playing their signature style of dirty electronica, and, whilst intense and atmospheric, the beat rarely got fast enough to have a proper dance to.

Moving into Room 2, I found similarly downbeat proceedings, so headed up to Room 3 to check out Talvin Singh on the decks.

Talvin is an astounding artist. His production work is a beautiful fusion of Eastern and Western sounds, and I have a passion for his music. I hadn't ever seen him DJ, however. In Room 3, he was spinning what was at the time the most upbeat music in the place, though I have to say it didn't really sound like him. He was playing a dubby kind of house, but I gave him the benefit of the doubt and over the next hour or so the sound progressed and got a lot more interesting, causing me to get a right old wiggle on as he started bringing elements of bhangra and other more esoteric styles into the mix.

Before long, I felt the urge to check out Room 1 again, especially as I knew breakbeat god Adam Freeland was playing. Just as Death In Vegas were finishing, the room, and the whole club, seemed a lot more full than when I had arrived, as if the wandering masses had swarmed to see Freeland. I wouldn't blame them – he's at the forefront of his scene and has been all over the place recently. You probably know him best for his danced-up version of the White Stripes' *Seven Nation Army* or his beatsy bootleg of *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, but his own tracks, such as *We Want Your Soul*, have been just as popular. If you want to hear what this man is all about, check out his *FabrikLive 16* mix CD for a nice slice of dark and growling breakbeat pie.

The breakbeat scene has exploded in the past few years, but it's not a new sound. Ask any old school raver – dance music has always had a lot of breaks in it, right from the start. What I'm referring to came out of the garage scene a few years ago, as producers took the two-step beats and heavy bass and left out the sexy soulfulness to create warping,

bumping, grinding music which had a fresh sound about it. These days, breaks is massive, taking in elements of house, hip-hop and drum and bass, as well as a fair amount of remixing and re-remixing (notably the Plump DJs' rework of Donna Summer's *I Feel Love*).

Step onto a dancefloor when a man like Freeland is playing, and you'll soon see what the hype is all about. People go wild for this music – the beats, being more varied and sometimes more random compared to straight, four-to-the-floor house, give rise to some crazy body moving, twisting and jerking. Add to this basslines that could rearrange your internal organs, and you're surfing on a wave of sound. And it feels good.

Freeland's set lived up to my expectations 100%. It was tight, resounding and fresh. The crowd loved it, and so did I.

Next up were the Plump DJs. The Plumps are just as big as Freeland, but with a slightly different take on the breakbeat vibe, favouring a more funky, disco sound. Tonight, however, they went straight for the juggular, with beats sounding harder and basslines deeper than what had come before. They rocked and twisted the crowd right through to the end of the night, which was my only real disappointment. You'd expect, for their birthday, that the club would stay open a little longer, but tonight the lights came up as usual, and it was game over. Fair enough really, we all had beds to go home to, and it had been one hell of a night.

**Simon Clark**



Fabrik from the inside



Adam Freeland



NIGHTLIFE

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# Go Knowwhere, fast!

You might remember a not-so-positive review of this place from two weeks ago. Here's an alternative view of the same night's third birthday

## CLUB REVIEW

**Knowwhere: Third Birthday**  
The Fridge, Town Hall Parade, Brixton  
£10-£16  
★★★★☆

Before I start, I should give you an idea of how this article is going to pan out. Two weeks ago, Simon reviewed Knowwhere and made various comments about the quality of the music and DJs. To say I was horrified doesn't do justice to the set of emotions I went through as my eyes grew wider and my jaw moved slowly towards the floor, culminating in the spraying of my drink across the table as the shock of two stars just threw me over the edge.

Knowwhere (KW) has been one of my favourite events, if not my favourite, since I started going there about 18 months ago, and I couldn't believe that everybody else didn't feel the same. Everyone I know that has been adores the place, and the regular, familiar crowd attest to the fact that it really does do it for many, many people. Of course, there are going to be differences in taste, but for me and my friends that's only half the story, the other half being made up firmly of the people, atmosphere and overall vibe of the place, which in my experience are almost unparalleled in London. Because of this, I decided I had to review the next Knowwhere night, to try to convince you all that it's worth every penny.

Originally, KW was held in the Soundshaft, a 600 capacity club near Charing Cross, and this was part of what made the event so special. The

intimacy was astonishing and made the whole thing feel like a glorified private party which, we decided, was "fucking wicked!"

When we heard that KW was moving to the Fridge, we were excited but also cautious. The Fridge is an awesome club, but would the atmosphere transfer to a venue with over twice the capacity? The first time we went we couldn't believe how well the move had gone – the familiar faces were all still around, but so were loads of new ones and the feel of the original KW was still there in spades. The fact that it was their third birthday meant that extra effort had been made, with the main room decked out in a suitably party-spirited way. The usual stalls were there by the bar area selling T-shirts, CDs and things that glow in the dark, and loads of extra seating had been put in by the entrance. The bar area itself was extremely disco with hundreds of small glitter balls littering the low ceiling, glowing red and blue through the perspex surfaces.

The opportunities the second room offers have been seized upon, and it was full every time I went in. This was especially so for the back to back set by Shaun Rowland and Dom Pardey, whose enthusiasm behind the decks was wonderful to watch, mainly because they are regular crack-on buddies and so share a rapport rarely seen these days. The set was full of techy, funky house with masses of groove that the crowd just lapped up like a cat on the cream.

As I was strutting my funky stuff, my friend commented that this was the way clubbing was heading –



Bobbly things adorn the ceiling at Knowwhere's third birthday

towards funky, beat driven house, similar to the kind of material you can find on early Trade CDs – and I would be inclined to agree. It's cool, enjoyable music to spend an evening with and fantastic for people-watching. However, my heart still belongs to trance. It was trance I had come for and it was trance I was going to have.

One thing I should make clear at this point: KW do not do cutting edge, intelligent, forward-thinking trance. They are not pushing the genre forward into the future; I wouldn't even say they do the same kind of trance Gatecrasher used to do. No, what KW do better than anybody else is bouncy trance that makes you want to jump around like a rabbit with a head full of poppers, grinning like a post-orgasmic Cheshire cat. If you want to stand around all night pondering the complexities of the mix the DJ is in the middle of, or discussing why Tiesto, Van Dyk and Armand are shit and nowhere near as good as the Armenian producer you discovered while you were chatting about your new drum sequencer on trancebores.com, then piss off.

Or more specifically, don't bother coming here – you won't like it.

KW is for people who want to have a bit of a laugh, catch up with old friends, make new ones, have a bit of a bounce around and leave in the morning smiling and feeling their lives are just that little bit better for having been there. This is achieved with the help of a great bunch of DJs and a music policy that suits me down to the ground.

When we rolled up at midnight, the main room was already buzzing and Steve Morley was just about to step up. Steve was followed by Lizzie Curious (my first time, and I was impressed), Anthony Dean (all hail the mini DJ), Pablo (promoter/legend), Ian Betts (Imperial graduate/top bloke/awesome DJ) and Matt Darey (nuff said).

For those who weren't here last year or missed my incessant ravings in *Felix*, Ian Betts is absolutely massive in London and one of the best, most loved trance DJs currently doing the rounds. He's grown in stature over the last few years having played for Cream in Ibiza, toured Australia and been installed

as Heat's second ever resident. He's on the way right to the top. He knows exactly what and when to give to the crowd and he is adored for it. Needless to say, tonight he was excellent and as usual his own *Love Resurrection* blew the roof off. This production has been tearing up dance floors across London for over 18 months and is finally set for a release in the next few weeks. I urge you to go out and get a copy as soon as you can.

Finishing off the night in style, Matt Darey came along with his typical brand of driving, melodic and uplifting trance. He was also the source of a few surprises in terms of track choices, playing *Silence* and an absolutely epic version of *Dreams* that seemed to go on forever to give the night a perfect ending.

The tune of the night, just edging *Love Resurrection* into second, has to be *For An Angel*. Unbelievably, I'd never heard this in a club and it sounded amazing. It certainly got the biggest response of the night and had every single person standing with their arms in the air and heads held back.

Overall then, another fantastic night out at KW for me. As usual, the people were spot on, the atmosphere was there in bucketloads and the music was perfect. Granted, it's not for everyone, some may find it a bit cheesy and simple, but those people would be missing the point altogether. After all, it's about having fun, and I know of nowhere that has an overall package that is as much fun as Knowwhere. Do yourself a favour next month, and get a bit of trance in your life.

Dom Farrell

# What's cooking at Godskitchen?

## CLUB REVIEW

**Godskitchen**  
Air, Birmingham  
£15  
★★★★☆

Entering the car park of this famous club is an experience in itself. The gates are constructed entirely of crushed cars piled on top of each other, creating a breathtaking sight for first time visitors. Muffled bass can be heard seeping out of the building as you make your way to the entrance, filling you with anticipation and excitement. Be warned though, chewing gum cannot be taken inside due to one of the many gash rules now bestowed onto modern clubbers, resulting in bad breath for the duration of the night.

Godskitchen used to be classed as one of the posh superclubs in the UK, and in comparison to places like Gatecrasher 1 (formerly The Republic) in Sheffield and Cream at Nation in Liverpool, it is. However, comparing it now to new clubs popping up around the country, Godskitchen seems like a bit of a hole to be honest. Still, I personally love the place and it does hold a touch of class above the rest.

Upon entry you have a bar to your right and are faced with a series of steps. One leads up to the second and third rooms, the other down to the main arena. The main room is a large warehouse-like expanse, with the DJ booth behind you as you enter, raised slightly above the many clubbers and podium dancers.

Seeing Carl Cox's fat head behind the decks brought a slight smile to my face as he blasted out his own distinct style of techno. You can tell he's been in the business for years, and why he's one of the best technical DJs in the world.

One thing you can always depend on Coxy delivering is a crowd – the whole club was packed and literally hotter than the sun. This didn't stop the atmosphere being electric or the masses of clubbers dancing almost in unison, giving even first time clubbers an overwhelming sense of elation. Amazingly, everyone in the club emitted a friendly aura with everyone wanting to shake your hand and be your part-time mate for the night.

Venturing upstairs, you find an 'oxygen bar', or the 'rip-off bar' as I like to call it. Personally, the thought of paying £5 for five minutes of flavoured air is completely dokey, but recommend it to anyone you don't



Carl Cox

like and just have the satisfaction of watching them throw their money down the proverbial drain!

Next to this is the second room, which houses a completely different type of music. James Zabelia was playing progressive house and

later returned to play an awesome breakbeat set. This room is a lot smaller than the main one and you can actually spit in the DJ's face while ordering yourself a beer at the bar. Not advised, but worth a try for kicks.

The sounds were bassy and bouncy with monotonic vocals over deep bass lines and electronic hiccups reverberating round the room. Zabelia also scratches like a kid with nits, adding new dimensions and new sounds to his already breath-taking mixing. An acquired musical taste, but awesome if you appreciate it.

The third room at Godskitchen is the funky lounge. Situated at the top of the club and hard to find for the first time, the lounge can be quite intimidating. Originally it was the chill-out room for wrecked clubbers that needed to get away for a bit. Now it has turned into a haven for the 'pretty people' in the club, full of sexy gals and pretty boys, whichever takes your fancy. As you walk in you immediately notice a line of them posing along the bar. You know who I mean – ripped faded jeans, funky tops and stylish hair. Fag in one hand, drink in the other and armed with a cheeky smile, they occasionally break out into a spon-

taneous shuffle to the music, trying to impress one of the gorgeous girls dotted around the room (the thrust and the wink is my personal favourite).

The lounge has a plush carpet and comfy seats with huge square tables, ideal for chilling and chatting. Funky beats are blasted out at tolerable levels, so chit chat is possible but you still get the feel of being in a club. The atmosphere can be pretentious on first impression, but is actually friendly. You soon find that you can easily walk up to someone and strike up a conversation about nothing. Alternatively, you can just strut up and dance with a group of know-yas (randoms) without getting looked at like a complete weirdo. If you're looking to sit and observe some of the best looking specimens of our species, the lounge is an ideal place to do so.

Basically Godskitchen has a little something for everyone, apart from R'n'B, but come on, a bit of change will do you guys some good. Whether you're a die-hard clubber out for a good time or a pretentious poser, this club has something for you. It's well worth the trip out of London for something a little bit different.

Hass Jishi

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# Something smells fishy

Two different views on what happens when one little fish tells a great white lie

## Shark Tale

Director: Bibi Bergeron, Vicky Jenson, Rob Letternon  
Starring: Will Smith, Robert De Niro, Renée Zellweger, Angelina Jolie, Jack Black, Martin Scorsese  
Length: 90 minutes  
Certificate: U  
★★★★☆

Given that it's DreamWorks' answer to *Finding Nemo*, I had high hopes for *Shark Tale*. With an impressive cast, the movie was bound to be a success at the box office – the likes of Robert De Niro, Martin Scorsese and Renée Zellweger attract the more mature moviegoer, whereas Will Smith, Angelina Jolie, Jack Black, Missy Elliot and Christina Aguilera are sure to spark the interests of a younger generation. However, *Shark Tale* tries too hard

**"...the result is a mildly amusing cartoon that has none of Nemo's charm"**

to please everyone, and the result is a mildly amusing cartoon that has none of *Nemo's* charm. The few funny moments in the film come from references to *Jaws* and gangster films, which are sure to be lost on much of the younger audience.

The film is disappointing visually. Main character Oscar's world is a sprawling submarine American metropolis, complete with billboards, sushi restaurants and prawn shops. The fish live in a brand-driven world

in which they drink Coral-Cola, eat Kelpy Kremes and communicate with shellphones. The main characters all have a visual likeness to their Hollywood voiceovers: the shark mob boss has De Niro's mole, Sykes has Scorsese's bushy eyebrows, and Oscar has Smith's big lips.

As movies go, *Shark Tale* is about as unoriginal as they come. As a camp, cross-dressing shark, Lenny is the only imaginative character.

*Finding Nemo* had a simple plot – a father's desperate journey to find his son. *Shark Tale* is a whole lot more complicated. There is the love triangle that is Oscar, Lola and Angie. There are Oscar's dreams of making it big and his adventures as a shark slayer. Finally, Lenny's trouble at "coming out" to his father about his culinary (read sexual) preference is yet another subplot in this cluttered film.

*Shark Tale* simply doesn't come together and relies on a loud, extravagant ending to leave the audience feeling satisfied.

Harry Moore

## Shark Tale

★★★★☆

As a short U film, lasting only 90 minutes, *Shark Tale* can be enjoyed by all ages. Produced by the same makers as *Shrek* and *Shrek 2* (DreamWorks), this film is very similar in style to its predecessors, incorporating jokes that although intended for the whole family may be more fully appreciated by a more adult audience. There are also many references to other films such as *Jaws* and *The Godfather*, which are most likely to be recognised by older viewers.

With an enjoyable, lively, largely hip-hop soundtrack, the film is set in the animated underwater equivalent of New York. Based more from a human perspective than an aquatic one, scenes include many clever fishy puns and plays on words such as Kelpy Kremes and Coral Cola.

If, like me, you love everything about Will Smith, especially as the *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, you will also love his character as computer

generated fish Oscar. Oscar works as a whale washer determined to make something of himself through wealth, fame and respect from the

screen personalities and appearances to their fish counterparts.

The film seems to be strongly inspired by other animated blockbusters such as *Finding Nemo*, and there are similarities between the two sets of characters.

Although it may lack originality, *Shark Tale* is very enjoyable and light-hearted. Not only does it have a really witty and clever script with the classic happy ending, it can still be followed even after a hardcore week of freshers activities with no sleep!

Laura Ritson

**"There is a large amount of brilliant voiceover casting in this film..."**

other fish. There is a large amount of brilliant voiceover casting in this film from actors sharing similar on-



Oscar (left), played by Will Smith, placating the puffer



Sykes, voiced by Martin Scorsese

# Wimbledon courting

## Wimbledon

Director: Richard Loncraine  
Starring: Kirsten Dunst, Paul Bettany, Sam Neill, Eleanor Bron  
Length: 98 minutes  
Certificate: 12  
★★★★☆

Wimbledon is the scene for this good old-fashioned love story. Even if you are not a tennis fan, the film is worth watching, as the tennis doesn't dominate. The plot follows Peter Colt (Paul Bettany, *Master and Commander*) as the lucky British wild card to the Wimbledon tournament. His game is slipping, his back failing, his spirit dying. His rank has slipped from 11 to 119. Colt has major problems with his game and at home. He knows his time is up as a pro on the tennis courts and has already accepted a job helping the more senior citizens with their swings at a health club. This is his last Wimbledon. Every romantic

comedy needs a hopeless lost soul that has given up on love, and Peter Colt is it.

Cue the romantic interest, America's new talent Lizzie Bradbury (Kirsten Dunst, *Spiderman 2*), the John McEnroe of women's tennis. She's the bitch on the court – tough, focused and determined. Nothing will stop her from winning this Wimbledon, especially men. Her father (Sam Neill) will make sure of that. Still, the phenomenal Lizzie cannot help but fall for Peter's charms, but how can she handle a relationship and a career?

Somehow Peter manages to work his way through the tournament; his dream of winning one of the most prestigious tennis tournaments is near realisation. Lizzie is Peter's salvation.

Paul Bettany is the perfect character for the role. You love him, you want him to win, you're sitting on the edge of your chair for the cliff-hanger ending, biting your nails.

You want him to get the girl, and you probably already know the answer to whether he does or not, but that doesn't matter in the end when you walk out of the cinema and feel uplifted and generally contented from this heart-warming film.

Dunst also adds her usual affability to the role. Peter's amicable character is synonymous with the role of a struggling British tennis player, thereby making the audience will him on, both in the matches and in his moments with Lizzie. He is the transformed hero of Wimbledon.

There's tension and suspense, and it's just like watching Tim Henman again. Can Peter cope with the onerous burden of national expectation?

*Wimbledon* is given authenticity through real commentators, such as John McEnroe and Chris Evert. It even captures the sporting drama of narrow escapes and tense finals. This film will appeal to all those Henmaniacs, however sitting through it has all the predictability

of one of Henman's semi-finals.

*Wimbledon* is a light-hearted and clever film. Nothing beats *Notting*

*Hill* for a romantic comedy, but this comes a close second.

Melissa Parkinson



Winning a love game: Kirsten Dunst in *Wimbledon*

**FIT IN.**

**STAND OUT.**



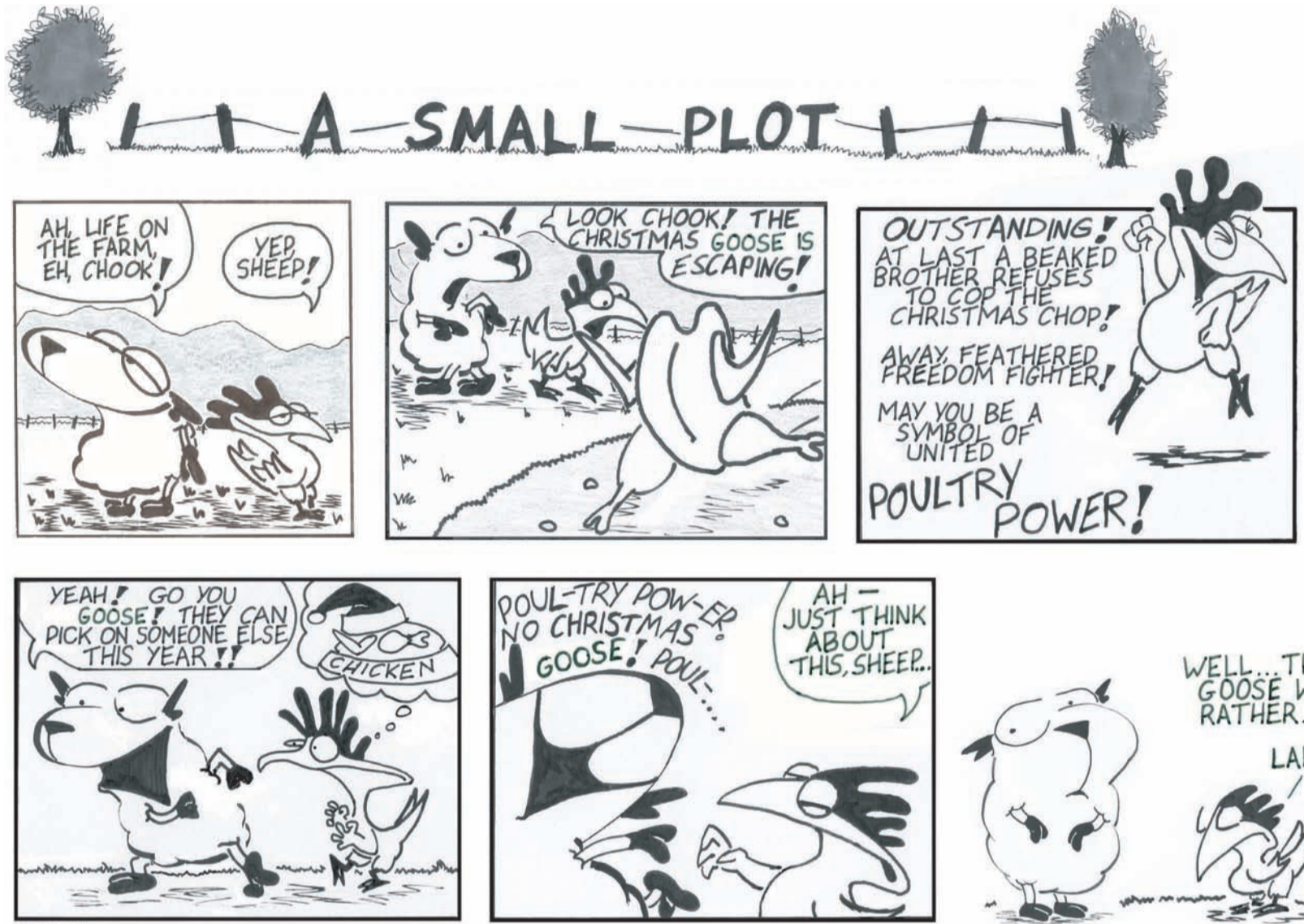
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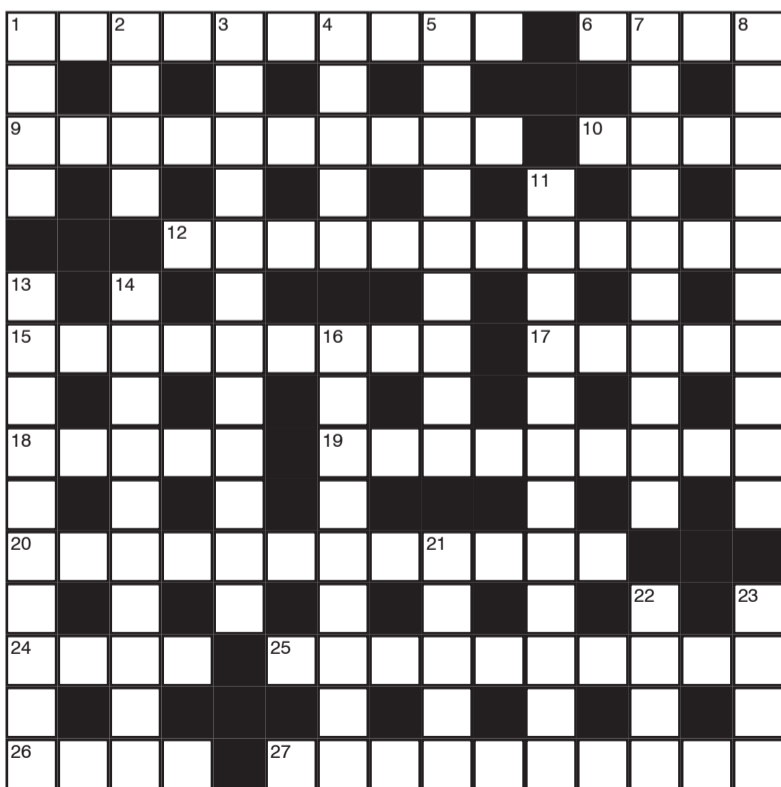
# Coffee Break

coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk



## Felix Crossword 1302

by Snufkin



### Across

- Bear needing huge amount of stuffing? (10)
- Transport from Paddington, perhaps (4)
- As my mentor's incapable, it's a wise investment (5,5)
- Devonshire river race (4)
- Vicar redeems queer soldiers (5,7)
- Cross line and hope to move foreign lover (9)
- Refuse to tease (5)
- Mathematician's equal jeers oddly (5)
- A swift one off the wrist from literary type? (3-6)
- Hammered last nail into artwork (12)
- Catch Spike (4)
- We hear Constitution State's moving installation (7,3)
- Work on old rowing machine (4)
- Red chamber in Socialist Hall (4,6)

### Down

- Finished most of Italian meal (4)
- Dull poet turns up (4)
- Priest learns new way to sow seed (12)
- Feel good with hemp (5)
- Kinky pet lovers spent too long in bed (9)
- Unusual bead, a relic that can be rooted out (10)
- He isolated nitrogen and he turned it into oxygen (10)
- This guy's a bum doctor! (12)
- Suffer Wilde's mistakes (10)
- Removing make-up? Shameless! (10)
- I'm tortured with vile pus and rash (9)
- Stealing businessman's newspaper (5)
- A scholar and a soldier - wise men? (4)
- Chemical unit imprisoned by Great Omar (4)

Hello, Snufkin here. As promised, some tips for neophytes.

Most cryptic clues have two parts, in which case at least one must be a definition of the answer. If the other part is simply a different definition of the same answer, the clue is a 'double definition'. For example, in this puzzle, 6, 8, and 10 (and a few more) are double definitions.

Another common clue is the anagram, whose 'subsidiary indication' (non-definitional part) contains both an anagram of the answer and a phrase warning that an anagram is involved. In this puzzle, clue 5 is an example of an anagram.

Next time we'll look at some more complex clues. **Snufkin**

### Issue 1301 solution



Last week's winner is Sebastian Junemann, Physics III. Well done!

Send your answers to coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk or bring this page down to the Felix office in the West Wing of Beit Quad. Each week, we'll choose a winner and print their name, thus providing them with almost unlimited kudos and self-satisfaction. Everyone who provides us with a correct solution will get an entry into our prize draw at the end of the year

## SPORT

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# Two tries for Higgins secure winning start



Heavy lifting: the Rugby Club in line-out action

## RUGBY

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**Imperial Men's 1st 24**  
**Chichester Men's 1st 16**

By Mike Hicks

The First XV started their first match of the season with a team almost unchanged from last year. Having not lost at Harlington for the previous two seasons, we came out strong if not a little rusty.

Shortly after kick-off, a careless penalty close to our 22 gave Chichester the chance to open the scoring with a penalty. Being three points down woke up the Imperial team and we started playing some good rugby. A great break by O'Rourke on the halfway line was followed by even better support and finished up with a four on one against the fullback. Robinson duly touched down to open the Imperial scoring.

Shortly after the restart, a bit too much French flair led to Spencer throwing a horrendous miss pass in front of the IC posts. The opposition centre had seen this coming from about last week and intercepted to score under the posts and make it 10-5 to the visitors.

Chichester were now back in the match but Imperial raised their game again and Spencer went in for a try in the corner to level the scores.

In the second half we started to play a bit more consistently, but more unnecessary penalties gave Chichester the chance to score another six points. Luckily, Higgins had other ideas and with a man of the match, hat-trick avoiding, full back trampling performance, he scored two tries to secure this season's first league win for the Imperial College Union Rugby Club.

Notable performances came from debut freshers Simon and Luke and also from O'Rourke with some superb strength on the wing.

Although Wednesday's performance was scrappy at times, if we continue to improve and cut out the penalties and dodgy miss passes then this year should be another very successful season for Imperial rugby.

## Medicals triumph over Imperial Seconds

## RUGBY

**Imperial Men's 2nd 17**  
**Imperial Medicals Men's 2nd 23**

By Mike Hicks

For the first match of the season, Imperial's Second XV rolled into Harlington to face the newly promoted Medics, with LSE seconds having quit the league at the last minute!

With a healthy contingent of old and new players alike, Imperial faced up to the medics knowing that it would be a hard fought match. An early score came from a kicked medic penalty after some nervous early play (0-3).

The Imperial team came straight back at the medics and after some dominating scrummaging were rewarded with a penalty inside the opposition 22. Two quick forward moves later and Steve McClell crashed over for a debut fresher try (5-3).

Undeterred, the medics quickly applied pressure and

scored under the posts, giving them an easy conversion (5-10). The Newmanator then hit back with a devastating try to level the scores (10-10).

Some lax defending then gifted the medics a try out wide (10-15). Refusing to give in, the mighty Imperial Seconds fought scrum after scrum in their own 22, before finally releasing Alex Newman for his second try of the game, taking the lead (17-15) with the help of a superb conversion from Tom Hodgson.

With five minutes to go, the medics hit back with a try and a penalty in swift succession, leaving the Imperial Seconds with a desperate last play to try to capture an elusive winning try. This was not to be, and the match ended 17-23.

Despite the last minute loss, the Imperial seconds remain optimistic, eight freshers started the game and all acquitted themselves well. The development of the side has only just begun, but a successful season certainly beckons!



Got him: an Imperial player makes a crunching tackle

# Thirds thrash QM

## RUGBY

**Imperial Men's 3rd 69**  
**Queen Mary 0**

By Mike Hicks

The Third XV, Imperial's most sociable rugby team, started their season with a crushing victory.

From the start of the game, the opposition defence was almost non-existent and there were gaps all over the pitch. This meant the powerful Imperial attack was virtu-

ally unchallenged as they ran in try after try.

Boosted by a powerful bench of over 40 freshers to choose from, the Thirds dominated from start to finish. Man of the match went to captain Dan "Peanut Head" Lindsley for his leadership and also a sublime left-footed drop goal from the halfway line!

Hopefully next week's opposition will provide more of a challenge to the powerful force that is the Imperial Third team.

## Stupendous Virgins somehow lose friendly match

## RUGBY

**Brunel Women Too many**  
**IC Virgins Not enough**

By Harriet Tennent

The team started the year in true Virgin style: down the union, slightly inebriated, on a Wednesday night.

The fight club boxing ring was much appreciated, with Trev (tiny back) pinning down captain Felix (6'2" forward), and Killer continuing her unbeaten reign by thoroughly thrashing yours truly. Pinkie may be out of action on the pitch, but on the true battlefield (the Union dance floor) she continues to score!

Oh God, I might have to mention the match now. Do I have to?

Well, the Virgins started badly when only 11 players turned up, but after a quick trip to a sports shop on the way, re-arrangement of boots and borrowing of kit (boots, socks, shorts...) from coach Dave, there was a team of 12.

After the fuss of arranging this friendly, we were damn well playing a rugby match, so Brunel very generously lent us three of their players. After a very hasty discussion, we put their flanker at fly half and our winger (me!) at scrum half and started the match.

Highlights included forward of the match Hayley sitting on their prop's face and being surprised as "most people like it". This was clearly unacceptable. But the prop was obviously listening, as

she went on to sit on Beater twice. Newbie Tumbles (back of the match) played a stellar game and put Nathan's tackling advice to very good use, mullering many a wayward Brunel player. Beater bonded with Dapps about their common Welsh-Belgian sexiness and commendably held up the second row. Pip exhibited the totally mad-for-it attitude that made her an awesome prop. Ali put in far too many fantastic tackles to be put on the wing and had to be moved into the centre. The same can be said for Danger Mouse who showed her try-hungry colours by yelling for the ball all the time.

So in the end, as you can tell, the Virgins were all utterly stupendous but Brunel some-

how managed to win (they are in the league above).

Many thanks must go to our guest coaches on Monday, Jen for coming and watching in the wet and cold and to our super duper driver and water monkey Ed, who must now be questioning his wisdom dating a Virgin after standing in the pouring rain all afternoon and enduring the chorus that echoed round Southside and the Union Bar: "Hail to the bus driver!"

If you are interested in playing women's rugby, getting fit, making friends and singing loudly after a few pints, we would love to hear from you. No previous experience is necessary, and all shapes and sizes can play. Please contact captain Kitty on catherine.fitzgerald@ic.ac.uk.

SPORT

sport.felix@ic.ac.uk

# Late start, winning finish

FENCING

**Kent Men's 1st 112**  
**Imperial Men's 1st 132**

The team made a good start to the season by missing their train. But they didn't let that get them down. No, I have to credit the team with great resolve in being able to overcome the unexpected punctuality of British public transport. So after a gentle jog all the way to Canterbury, while finding the time for a lengthy stop at England's largest second hand bookshop, arriving just 15 minutes late wasn't such a bad result.

The team entered the hall with presence - everyone turning to look, possibly because of good looks, perhaps because of reputations, or maybe just because Pierre was foaming at the mouth, who knows. The fact of the matter was that Imperial were there to get down to business.

First match. Foil. Imperial's weakest weapon. Rory first on the piste. Bang! Bang! Bang! He puts the bitch down. Up comes Hugo. Pure class. Kent doesn't know what's hit them. Finally, the Big Man: Eric Lai was solid as a rock, with a very



A member of the Fencing Club in action in Hong Kong on their summer tour

good performance against a talented fencer. The rest of the match didn't go quite as well and Imperial lost 45-42. It was close enough, with the big guns still to come.

Now for the sabre. Easy win for the team. Pierre did Imperial proud despite "not feeling it". I didn't ask what "it" was mainly because I know what that boy's like. Rory made his second appearance,

stunning the crowd with his almost Jedi-like skills. Eric showed himself more than capable of holding his own with his weakest weapon. 45-30. Nice.

Now Imperial had the lead in their grasp, with just the epee to go. There were concrete performances from Hugo and Matt, with Eric really coming into his own. An effective set of fights took

the score to 45-37, making a grand total of 132-112 in favour of Imperial. First win of the season. Sure not to be the last. Well done team, keep up the good work.

On a slightly more important note, the girl Pierre seemed to find quite attractive apparently thought someone else to be considerably better than him. Damn that handsome devil...

## Lacrosse team survive lack of half time oranges and salvage eight all draw

LACROSSE

**Imperial Women's 1st 8**  
**UCL Women's 1st 8**

By Michelle Maloney

The team's prayers were answered when, with minutes to spare, the Shropshire massive arrived and we got a goalie. Thank you Emma, we are forever in your debt.

The first match in a new league did not get off to an

inspired start. Weather down south in Teddington: "light drizzle". UCL scored within a couple of minutes and Imperial seemed to have problems getting going. However the sight of the 'the Godmother' arriving on the touchline provided motivation, and we began to see some nice lacrosse. Caroline scored a stunner to bring us level. But despite some excellent defending, the quarter finished 3-1 to UCL.

After regrouping, reshuffling and bringing the Godmother on, the second quarter finished 4-4. Mary 'the tiger' Matthews, captain of vice Lizzie and new girl Sam 'the terrier' all put themselves on the score sheet.

Despite the lack of half-time oranges (sack the captain), the second half started well. UCL had also raised their game and it was now a very closely fought match. We were one down or level

until the dying minutes of the last quarter, when Hannah took us into the lead. You see. Madam. Unfortunately, in the last few seconds, UCL pulled one back and it was all over at eight all, a fair score for an excellent match.

Mary was man of the match because she is awesome and played like a woman possessed. Special mention to the freshers who braved the buses: Lizzie V, Sam and Frank.

# Mulletheaded striker's offside goal denies Fourths victory

FOOTBALL

**Imperial Men's 4th 2**  
**RVC Men's 1st 2**

By Michael Nicholson

Imperial Fourths started off the season against an experienced RVC side, who had just achieved two consecutive promotions.

An early blow was dealt when striker Jai was ruled out during the extended warm-up, which was caused by a flat tyre on one of the

RVC vehicles.

Despite the prolonged warm up, it was RVC who started the match stronger, with Imperial looking like a team who hadn't played together very much (funny that), and the vets were unlucky when their mulleted striker, who must be about 104 by now, got to a cross ahead of captain Vanni and crashed a header against the bar.

It came as something of a surprise when Imperial took the lead against the run of play. The move

started when Tim (to borrow a phrase from Thirds captain Shatters) "beefed" one of their midfielders with a tremendous tackle and the ball broke to Paul in midfield, who threaded a quality ball through to Shwin. Shwin held the ball up before playing in Demetris, who remained calm and curled a beauty of a finish around the 'keeper and into the corner! Get in! Subsequently, the Fourths woke up, started playing and coasted into half time with the lead

safely intact.

The second half started abysmally when some idiot got nutmegged by the Mullet, leaving him a clear run to the by line. He crossed well to his unmulleted strike partner, who had an easy tap-in.

Imperial showed incredible fighting spirit to bounce back and retake the lead with Shwin's first goal for the club. He received the ball in the box after a neat one-two on the left between Ed and Chris, turned well and smacked it in. Another beauty!

# Results

## WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER

BADMINTON

Bournemouth Men's 1st 3  
Imperial Men's 1st 5

BASKETBALL

LSE Men's 1st 49  
Imperial Men's 1st 73

FENCING

Kent Men's 1st 112  
Imperial Men's 1st 132

FOOTBALL

Queen Mary Men's 1st 0  
Imperial Men's 1st 2

Essex Men's 3rd 3  
Imperial Men's 2nd 2

Imperial Men's 3rd 0  
Buckinghamshire Men's 3rd 1

HOCKEY

Imperial Men's 1st 1  
Kingston Men's 1st 4

Imperial Men's 2nd 0  
Brunel Men's 2nd 4

Brighton Men's 2nd 4  
Imperial Men's 3rd 0

Reading Women's 1st 2  
Imperial Women's 1st 2

Imperial Women's 2nd 0  
Hertfordshire Women's 2nd 9

LACROSSE

Imperial Women's 1st 8  
UCL Women's 1st 8

NETBALL

Imperial Women's 2nd 17  
Surrey Women's 2nd 32

RUGBY

Imperial Men's 1st 24  
Chichester Men's 1st 16

Imperial Men's 2nd 17  
Imperial Medicals Men's 2nd 23

Imperial Men's 3rd 69  
Queen Mary Men's 3rd 0

SQUASH

Surrey Men's 1st 1  
Imperial Men's 1st 4

Imperial Women's 1st 2  
Surrey Women's 1st 3

TENNIS

Greenwich Men's 1st 9  
Imperial Men's 1st 1

## SATURDAY 16 OCTOBER

FOOTBALL

Imperial Men's 1st 2  
Royal Free & University Coll. Medical School Men's 1st 0

Holloway Men's 1st 2  
Imperial Men's 2nd 1

UCL Men's 6th 4  
Imperial Men's 6th 0

Imperial Men's 7th 0  
RSM Men's 2nd 4

## SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER

FOOTBALL

LSE Women's 1st 5  
Imperial Women's 1st 2

## MONDAY 18 OCTOBER

NETBALL

Holloway Women's 1st 48  
Imperial Women's 1st 4

And that should have been that, with the Imperial defence holding firm and the vets' attacks becoming increasingly panicked. Then one of RVC's brutes at the back punted the ball up the park in the vague direction of the Mullet who was about half a mile offside. Vanni, expecting the imminent whistle, let the ball run. The Mullet sensed an opening and nipped in to nod the ball into the empty net. Imperial couldn't really give a shit, and placed the

ball ready for the free kick. However, the referee whistled for the first time in the match and gave a goal. Unbelievable.

The game petered out into a tame draw, when a morale boosting victory for the mighty Fourths would have been the least they deserved. Still, quality performances from everyone mean that the team look a good bet for promotion. The reward for the vets is a place alongside Holloway on the list of teams we hate.

# Sport

sport.felix@ic.ac.uk

## Imperial 'rain' supreme

### FOOTBALL

Sponsored by

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**Queen Mary Men's 1st 0  
Imperial Men's 1st 2**
**By Michael Berks**

Imperial Firsts opened their 2004 campaign with a tough BUSA South-Eastern fixture. The team faced an away trip to the side that forced them into second place in last season's London league: reigning ULU champions Queen Mary.

Imperial will face the Chislehurst outfit three times this season, so today was the chance not just to gain some revenge for last season, but also an opportunity to gain an important psychological advantage for the rest of the year.

As Imperial went through their warm-up exercises, the skies darkened, and by the time kick-off arrived the light drizzle had evolved into a full-scale downpour. The pouring rain, coupled with the prospect of facing one of London's most notoriously tempestuous sides, meant today would be a baptism of fire for the new faces in the Imperial

ranks. Passion and commitment would be the orders of the day.

As expected, the early stages of the game were frenetic, with neither side managing to hold onto possession, and time on the ball was a scant commodity. Unfortunately, Imperial's remodelled 3-5-2 formation wasn't quite gelling. In particular, the midfield three – debutant Louis joining old-timers Berksie and McMahon – were failing to make their numerical advantage count, allowing Queen Mary to dominate most of the early play. However, fresher Pat Farr was already making a big impression, and alongside Paul "the Club" Mills, and Tom "G-Unit" Gray, the Imperial back three responded to everything that was thrown at them. When Mary's did manage to breach this blue and black fortress, Carlos Alberto Vasquez made light of the "keeper's nightmare" conditions and dealt with every shot or cross with his usual unflappable authority.

Despite their disjointed start, Imperial were prepared to battle hard, and gradually clawed their way back into the game. One attacking foray down the right flank forced a throw-in deep in



The 2003-4 Imperial first team, most of whom were probably involved against Queen Mary last week

the QM half. As the ball was thrown long, Oli used his considerable bulk (all 87 kilos of it) to great effect, his flick-on running through to "so-good-they-named-him-twice" Benji-Benji. The ball ricocheted between a defender and the Spanish youngster, eventually running loose to the edge of the box and into the path of Imperial trickster Mathan. The Sri Lankan wizard's intelligent first time side-foot fooled both defenders and goalkeeper alike, squeezing inside the near post to put Imperial one up. To compliment his excellent finish, Mathan made full use

of the slippery conditions, celebrating in exuberant Klinsmann style: 1-0.

Moments later, Matty was almost on the scoresheet again, however this time he nearly provided Queen Mary with an equaliser. As the ball fizzed across the Imperial area, Mathan's miscued clearance flew alarmingly quickly towards the wrong-footed Carlos' goal. Luckily, the Peruvian cat recovered his footing in time to stick out a leg and divert the ball for a corner, sparing the blushes of Mathan. This was the last meaningful incident in a first half that offered lit-

tle to the neutral observer, though Imperial were more than happy to enter the break ahead.

In the second half, the weather failed to improve. Sadly, neither did the quality of play – sexy football this was not! However, with three vital points up for grabs, Imperial were prepared to fight tooth and nail to preserve their lead. Through sheer force of will, the men from South Kensington began to dominate.

In response, Queen Mary lost their discipline, and having scythed Oli down in the first half, QM's captain dived in on Benji. This earned the Mary's number four a yellow card, and Imperial a dangerous free kick in the perfect position for Louis' cultured left foot. Worse was to follow for the mullet-bearing centre back, and as Louis curled the ball over the wall, he seemed confident the ball was sailing over the bar, calling to his men: "All day, all day..."

Unfortunately for Mary's, the only thing worse than his judgement was Tom G's tie collection, and as the ball careered off the crossbar, the QM defence stood stationary. This left Oli and Joe to fight over the rebound, the captain screaming loudest to head past the hapless QM keeper:

2-0. This second goal would surely secure the game for Imperial, and the elation was there for all to see on the faces of Oli and his troops.

With the game now seemingly beyond them, Queen Mary switched their attention from scoring goals to kicking lumps out of the Imperial team. In particular, the Mary's number eight proved that Robbie Savage might not be the most irritating footballer on the planet. However, Imperial were not prepared to rise to this bait, instead concentrating on holding out for a clean sheet and deserved three points.

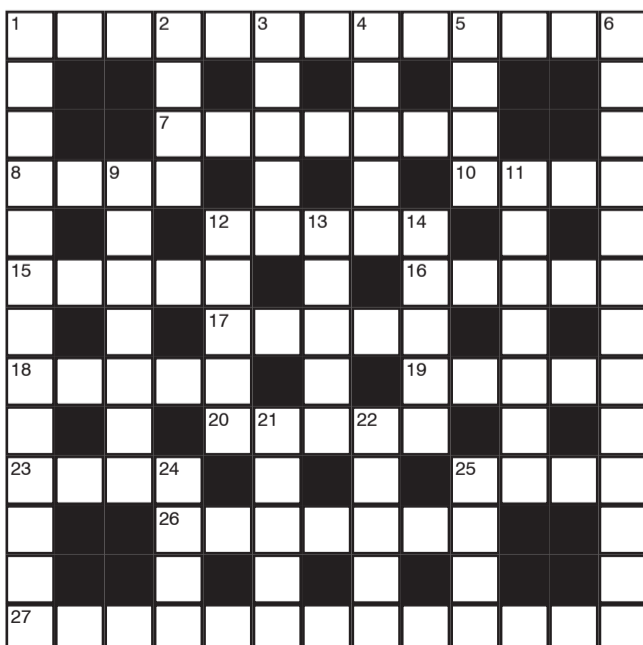
Amidst the deluge, the referee finally brought proceedings to a close. Despite the pouring skies, Imperial's joy would not be dampened. Along with a winning start, Imperial had much to celebrate, with promising debuts for Benji, Louis and Chris (a second half substitute for the ever-reliable Timur). However, no one had a better game than "man-of-the-match-on-his-debut-and-birthday" Pat, who was a rock in the Imperial defence for the whole ninety minutes.

This may just be the start of a long season, but then even the longest journey begins with the first step. Great things await...

## SEND US YOUR SPORTS REPORTS!

If you've played a match, been on tour or entered a competition, why not write about it for *Felix*? Send your reports to [sport.felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:sport.felix@ic.ac.uk). If you can include a good quality photograph, you will get a bigger article and it might even appear on the back page. Please tell us who has written the article, try to think up a headline, and write in the third person

## Quick Crossword

**by Cactus**


### Across

- Athletics (5,3,5)
- NH3 (7)
- Partly open (4)
- Ballet skirt (4)
- Imprint (5)
- Calculator (5)
- Sufficient (5)
- System in which dissidents are oppressed (5)
- Make of earthenware (5)
- Spy (5)
- Giant (5)
- Indian unleavened bread (4)
- Make fabric with needles (4)
- Crocus used in cooking (7)
- Born again (13)

### Down

- Way to improve accuracy (5,3,5)
- Tyrant (4)
- Own (5)
- Thick cotton (5)
- Tie-dye technique (4)
- Paperwork (esp. official) (13)
- Group of dishonest people (1,3,3)
- Innumerable (7)
- View (5)
- Assign (5)
- Without religious belief (5)
- Below (5)
- Protective cloth (5)
- Book identifier (1,1,1,1)
- Join in string (4)



Send your answers to [coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk) or bring this page to the *Felix* office in the West Wing of Beit Quad

### Issue 1301 solution

