



The Wizard of Boz

Felix assesses the new Mayor's manifesto and his promises of change for the country's capital over the next four years, see pages 3 to 6



Inside

International news weekly



Pages 8 & 9

ICU looking hot



Pages 28 & 29

The Science Challenge finalists



Centre pages

18th Century Roman art



Pages 22 & 23



News

News Editor – **Andrew Somerville**, News Goblin – **Matty Hoban**

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Student hospitalised after first floor window fall

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

Last week, a student was taken to hospital after falling from a first floor window in Southwell Hall. The incident occurred in the early hours of the morning on Monday 28th April.

Emergency services, including the fire brigade, were called to the scene. There they were required to cut the student free, since he had fallen onto the railings below, avoiding a two-floor drop into the basement entrance area.

The student was taken to hospital and initially put on life support. Southwell Hall Warden Nick Voulvoulis told Felix that since the incident, the student has "[undergone] surgery and is now recovering well."

Students affected by the incident were offered counselling. If you would like further support, feel free to contact the College's Counselling Service by telephoning 020 759 49637 or emailing counselling@imperial.ac.uk.



The first floor window in Southwell Hall from which the student fell

Plethora of Union positions up for grabs

Kadhim Shubber
Politics Editor

Nominations are currently open for many, many positions throughout the Union. Students can stand for positions within the Faculty Union they belong to (ie: RCSU, CGCU or ICSMU), the department they are in, or within Imperial College Union (ICU) itself. Nominations close at 11:59pm on Sunday. If you don't want to stand yourself, voting for the majority of elections opens on 19th May, except for the Engineering elections which open on Monday 12th May.

The most important positions to be elected are the Faculty Union Presi-

dents. The Presidents are responsible for overseeing, and representing the views and welfare of thousands of students, often in meetings with College and ICU bigwigs. They'll probably organise the occasional hellamshup too.

Within the Faculty Unions are the departmental societies (ie: Physoc, Civsoc, etc). Each one will be electing a committee – much like a club or society's committee – which communicates with



their respective Faculty Union and lecturers and demonstrators in each department.

The final positions up for grabs are within ICU, such as the Council Chair, who is responsible for steering debate (while remaining completely impartial) in the Union's policy making meetings, the RAG (Raising And Giving) Chair, who organises fund-raising events throughout the year, and more.

Look out for students campaigning and head to www.imperialcollegeunion.org/ vote to make your choice.

Queen's Lawn comes under shadow of student body



IC students pounced at the chance of invading the desolate Queen's Lawn this week, basking in the glorious sunshine whilst College's fleet of marquees takes a well-earned break from hosting numerous business-types and conference-goers. Several students insisted that using the lawn during the exam period is a welcome break from stuffy libraries and crowded computer rooms. However they were obviously too intoxicated with the spirit of freedom to be taken seriously. News that several members of College staff, when approached by this reporter, said they were "too busy sunbathing" to comment, is completely unfounded.

felix 1,402

Friday 9/5/08



Felix, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BB. Tel: 020 7594 8072. Fax: 020 7594 8065. Printed by The Harmsworth Printing Ltd, 17 Brest Road, Derriford, Plymouth. Registered newspaper ISSN 1040-0711. Copyright © Felix 2007.

Felix was brought to you by:

Editor-in-Chief
Tom Roberts

Deputy & News Editor
Andrew Somerville

News Editor
Matty Hoban

International Editor & Busybody-in-Chief
Gilead Amit

Copy Editors
Louise Etheridge
Tom Culley
Anthony Maina
Gilead Amit
Jesse Garman

Science Editor
Ed Henley

Business Editor
Afonso Campos

Politics Editors
Li-Teck Lau
Kadhim Shubber

Arts Editors
Rosie Grayburn
Caz Knight
David Paw
Emily Wilson

Nightlife Editor
Greg Mead

Film Editor
Zuzanna Blaszcak

Games Editors
Azfarul Islam
Sebastian Nordgren

Music Editors
Peter Sinclair
Susan Yu

Technology Editor
James Finnerty

Travel Editors
Ahranyan Arnold
Nadine Richards
Ammar Waraich

Fashion Editors
Sarah Skeete
Daniel Wan

Sports Editor
Jovan Nedić

Photography
Sally Longstaff
Vitali Lazurenko

LOLEATS



color blind cat



OF THE WEEK

PROFILE: Boris Johnson



The next four years with Boris Johnson

In the very first minutes of Friday 1st May, Conservative candidate Boris Johnson was declared to be the new Mayor of London. Almost six hours after the results were supposed to be announced, returning officer Anthony Mayer read out the polling figures at City Hall. Even though incumbent mayor Livingstone got a substantially larger share of the second preference vote, his 1.03 million votes were not enough to defeat Boris' 1.17 million first and second preference supporters. As the results were announced, Boris sheepishly shook hands with the other candidates on the podium, showing particular warmth to his strongest rival. After the speeches by Johnson, Livingstone and Paddick, referred to by Boris as the 'strange triumvirate', public attention was drawn to the results of the other parties. Coming fourth and fifth respectively, only 8,000 votes separated Siân Berry's Green party from Richard Barnbrook's BNP – a result seen by many in the public as a worrying outcome of this election.



Bullingdon Boy Boris' background

His defenders have always claimed that his bumbling was an act, that his gaffes were just that and that in reality he was a competent and intelligent individual. Such defence has been cold comfort for his detractors who saw little evidence of a brain behind his floppy blonde hair. But after winning 1,168,738 votes in the London Mayoral contest, Boris has overcome his detractors and established himself as a serious political animal.

President of the Oxford Union and a member of the Bullingdon Club, one might have presumed that his political career would blossom quickly, in similar fashion to fellow Bullingdon members David Cameron and George Osborne. However, he chose to enter the world of journalism instead, with varied results.

Although Editor of The Spectator from 1999 to 2005 and Conservative MP for Henley from 2001, he was, and still is, best

known for the numerous gaffes that have plagued his public life. Consequently, despite being a well-known public figure, he was seen as a liability rather than an asset to his colleagues; probably more useful to the tabloids than the Conservative party. Despite this, in 2005 fellow Bullingdon Club member David Cameron, now leader of the opposition, appointed Boris shadow minister of education; his second time in the cabinet after an abortive foray under Michael Howard. Boris might have continued steadily enough, always in the public spotlight but given little notice as a credible politician.

Yet here we find ourselves in 2008, and the mayor of one of the world's richest cities is a man who for years has been disregarded as a bumbler. His election to this prestigious position has been accompanied by a miraculous transformation. When he first announced his candidacy, BBC Political Editor Nick Robinson didn't think it should appear on the main news

bulletin: he didn't consider his candidacy serious enough. But a carefully managed campaign, free of any gaffes allowed the public to forgive his previous misdemeanours and put their trust in him. Boris the fumbler gradually gained confidence in debates and the intellectual that his defenders have always claimed lay beneath the surface, shone through.

Not everyone is convinced, though: Paul Merton recently joked that Londoners will soon remember that "he's a fucking idiot" and, furthermore, rumours are swirling that David Cameron is nervous about the possibility of a Boris-style Gaffegate damaging the Conservative Party's credibility nationwide. The true measure of his transformation into serious politician will be his record as Mayor. He will either be remembered fondly as an entertaining but ultimately successful politician or the man who damaged the Conservative Party's best chance of regaining power after 13 years.

Boris' recreational pursuits caught on camera

In a moment of hilarity caught on national television, Boris attempts to tackle an opposition player in a charity football match.



I, Boris Johnson, pledge to...



Tackle gang culture

With the rise in violent crimes amongst teenagers, addressing this issue is one of the most important tasks the Mayor faces; 12 teenagers have died as a result of violent crime this year alone. Boris campaigned on his assertion that tackling minor crime would successfully mitigate more serious crime. To reduce the number of knives and guns carried onto buses and trains, he plans to introduce handheld scanners at a cost of £2.6m. Boris also believes police are burdened by bureaucracy and has signalled his intent to lighten police hours by putting an end to the "stop and account" form. Boris' promise to tackle gang culture was an intention shared by his rivals. Whilst his focus on respect in society is bold, one would be surprised if he had the magic formula to this national problem.



Improve London's transport

Boris' policy is two-fold, focussing on transport crime as well as efficiency and quality of service. He intends to remove free travel privileges from those who abuse London transport, forcing them to earn it back through community service. This is in line with the Mayor's emphasis on respect within society. Boris has promised a wide-range of changes to improve the quality of transport, including a no-strike agreement with the tube unions; quashing the plans of a £25 Congestion Charge increase; and to phase out bendy buses. Following comments from the largest tube union's leader, Bob Crow, the chances of a no-strike agreement being reached are nil. Whilst Boris' plans to tackle crime on buses may bear fruit, his policies on the Congestion Charge and the bendy buses are reactionary, and he has shown few fresh ideas to really tackle the problems with London's transport.



Tackle our environment's problems

Boris intends to increase the amount of recycling in London, to improve the quality of local neighbourhoods and is committed to cutting London's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025. He opposes the development of the third runway at Heathrow and also wants to set up an annual Mayor's prize to award £20,000 to students for innovative, low-carbon technology ideas. His manifesto pledges largely "encourage" Londoners to tackle environmental problems but are seemingly devoid of genuine substance.



Make housing affordable

Boris plans to deliver 50,000 new homes by 2011 and to renovate the capital's 84,000 empty properties in an attempt to make housing more affordable for low-income families and those entering the property market. A policy that will directly affect students is his promise to protect private tenants from rogue landlords by publishing a 'Fair Rents Guide.' His promises for increasing the number of available homes across London will reassure Londoners who face great difficulty buying property during this period of economic instability. However, the severity of the global crisis will make his promises difficult to deliver.



Deliver a successful Olympic Games

Boris has pledged to fight for a lasting legacy for the London Olympics so that once the Games is finished, the city is not left with unused infrastructure and facilities. He is committed to ensuring the cost to the taxpayer remains at current levels, so that any extra money put towards the Olympics is not paid for through London Council Tax increases. Boris' promises are similar to the previous Mayor's and there is little room for real political impact and fresh policies to be created. The new Mayor's main challenge is to ensure no major mistakes are made in preparation of the 2012 Olympics and to develop an effective working relationship with Labour's Tessa Jowell, who has previously referred to Boris as a "bit of a joke."

FOLLOWING THE
ELECTION OF
MAYOR BOEIS
SIMPSON, THE AGE
OF THE POLITICAL
UNIVERSE BEGINS
INCREASINGLY
TOWARDS THE
ABSURD...



Dry Wit & Tonic

THE LABOUR PARTY,
LONG BUNDLED
OUT OF POWER,
FINDS NEW
SUCCESS IN
THE
ENTERTAINMENT
INDUSTRY...

LABOUR
CIRCUS
TODAY'S FEATURE!!
Tessa Jowell
ACCURATELY GUESSES
THE AMOUNT OF
CHANGE IN YOUR
PUSE!!
(* TO WITHIN £5 BILLION)

AND SCOTLAND
FINALLY FALLS
OFF A SECESSION,
BUT FEW ARE
PREPARED FOR
THE ASTONISHING
RESULT OF THE
FIRST ELECTION
THE SURPRISE
RESULT HANDS
POWER TO...

-PINGU



Picture of the Week

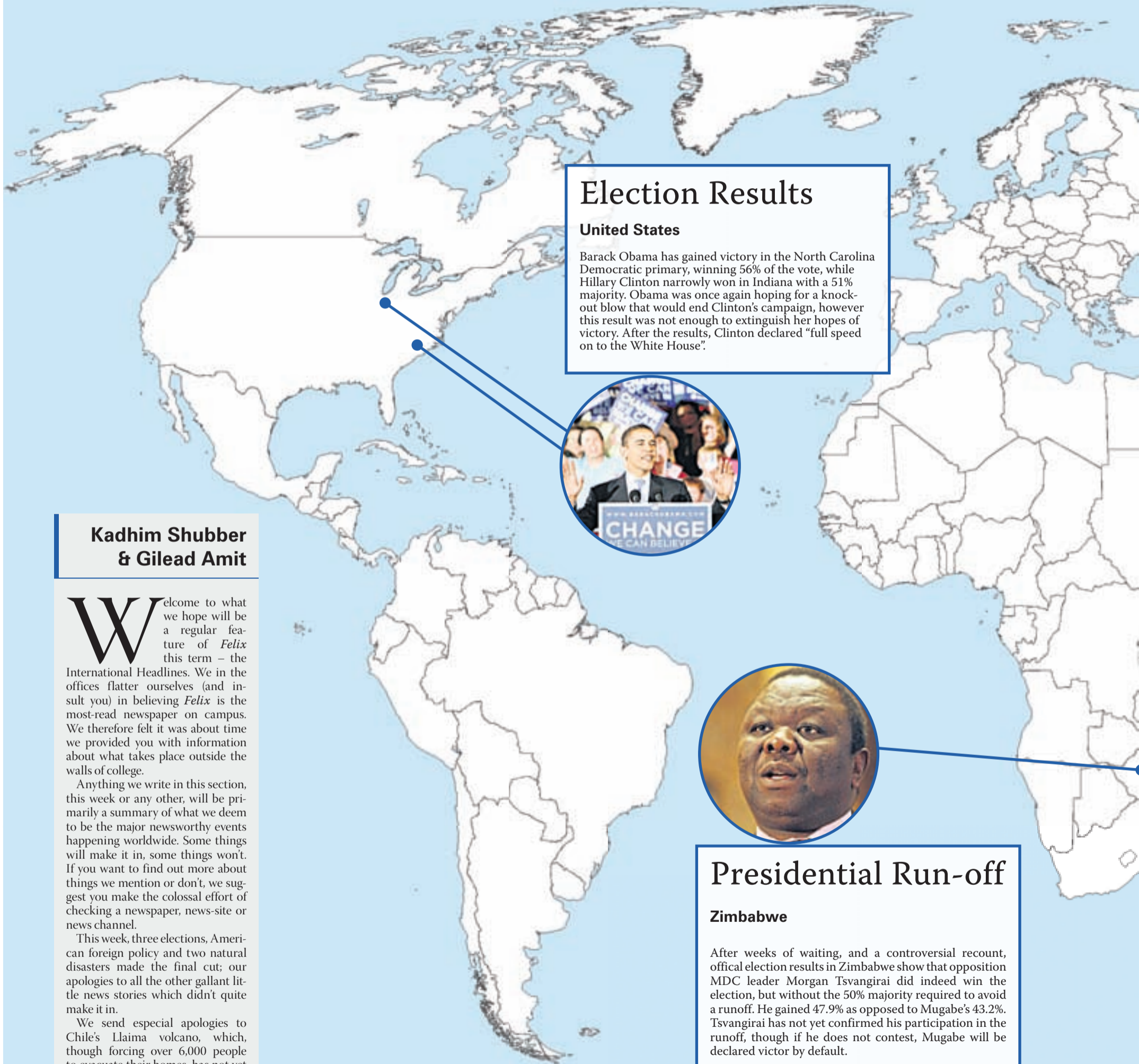
The Four Horsemen, by Ammar Waraich.
Fourth Year Medicine

We want to exhibit your art. Send in your photographs.
felix@imperial.ac.uk



Headlines from around the globe

The world beyond College walls...



Election Results

United States

Barack Obama has gained victory in the North Carolina Democratic primary, winning 56% of the vote, while Hillary Clinton narrowly won in Indiana with a 51% majority. Obama was once again hoping for a knock-out blow that would end Clinton's campaign, however this result was not enough to extinguish her hopes of victory. After the results, Clinton declared "full speed on to the White House".



Kadhim Shubber & Gilead Amit

Welcome to what we hope will be a regular feature of *Felix* this term – the International Headlines. We in the offices flatter ourselves (and insult you) in believing *Felix* is the most-read newspaper on campus. We therefore felt it was about time we provided you with information about what takes place outside the walls of college.

Anything we write in this section, this week or any other, will be primarily a summary of what we deem to be the major newsworthy events happening worldwide. Some things will make it in, some things won't. If you want to find out more about things we mention or don't, we suggest you make the colossal effort of checking a newspaper, news-site or news channel.

This week, three elections, American foreign policy and two natural disasters made the final cut; our apologies to all the other gallant little news stories which didn't quite make it in.

We send especial apologies to Chile's Llaima volcano, which, though forcing over 6,000 people to evacuate their homes, has not yet killed anybody. Try harder, Llaima, and maybe someone will pay attention. Equally sincere apologies to Secretary of State Rice, whose efforts in the Middle East have not yet produced any results worth bothering you with.

See you next week.

Presidential Run-off

Zimbabwe

After weeks of waiting, and a controversial recount, official election results in Zimbabwe show that opposition MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai did indeed win the election, but without the 50% majority required to avoid a runoff. He gained 47.9% as opposed to Mugabe's 43.2%. Tsvangirai has not yet confirmed his participation in the runoff, though if he does not contest, Mugabe will be declared victor by default.





New President

Russia

Wednesday 7th of May saw the inauguration of Dmitry Medvedev as Russia's President. In his first public speech after the appointment, Medvedev declared his intention to 'pay special attention to the fundamental role of the law', eliminate corruption and improve living conditions for the Russian people. The true power, however, is expected to follow ex-President Vladimir Putin to his new role as Prime Minister.

Troops go home

Iraq

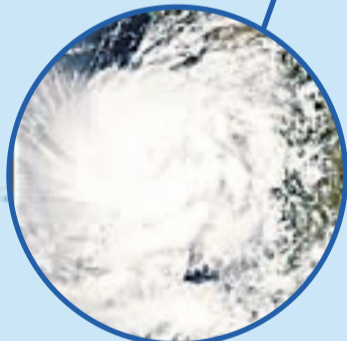
Close to 3,500 American troops are due to return home over the next few weeks, in an attempt to reduce the number of troops serving in Iraq. The US government plans to go from 170,000 men and women there at present to 140,000 come late July. This figure will mean a similar total force in Iraq as was present before President Bush's 'surge' last year. The planned withdrawal comes amid an increase in the number of attacks over recent weeks, though casualty figures seem to be consistent with official figures.



Fears of Famine

North Korea

Severe flooding in 2007 has led to what the Voice of America calls 'a desperate food shortage' in North Korea. The UN World Food Programme has calculated a grain deficit of two million tons, predicting that there will not be enough to meet the citizens' basic needs. The food crisis in North Korea is one of several such incidents being reported this year, with similar food shortages surfacing in Southeast Asia, Africa and Australia



Cyclone Nargis

Burma

What is feared to be the world's deadliest cyclone since 1991 struck Burma on May 2nd, leaving over 5,000 square kilometres underwater. The exact number of casualties is obviously difficult to confirm, but predictions are currently as high as 50,000. International aid has started coming in, with leaders such as Gordon Brown vowing to make sure 'food aid is available to the people of Burma.'



Comment, Opinion & Letters

Let us know your views: comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Letters may be edited for length and grammar purposes
Views on these pages are not representative of Felix

The aftermath of the 25th April

In the last issue, Felix reported on the Political Philosophy Society's (PPS) 'Criminalising War' lecture given by Malaysia's 4th Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. This week PPS Chairman Ammar Waraich gives his account of the event, its organisation, the College's restrictions, and the society's true intentions



Ammar Waraich
Chairman

// We do not feel we did anything wrong by inviting such a high-profile speaker and our intentions were sincere //

**Political
Philosophy
Society**

// I think the PPS can deliver an amazing and unique experience //

There is probably not much room for originality now, considering everything that has already been said on Live!, the Facebook forums and last week's Felix, so I suppose this will very much be a comment piece from me, in the true sense of the term.

Disappointment

Let me start with the disappointment I felt. Firstly, from the individuals commenting on Live! who were quite happy to hide behind aliases and accuse the PPS of bias without any evidence; who went on to somehow infer that this lecture on War was to be some sort of anti-Semitic seminar; and who then went on to hurl border-line racist accusations at each other, proving the need for frank dialogue on racial-religious matters to stop the world becoming even further polarised than it already is.

A few individuals decided to attack me personally, one of them deciding to use my religious beliefs as a justification to claim that "it's time college and the police cracked down on these people" – and these are the people who accused the PPS of being racist!

It is surprising how easily these guys forgot our Genocide Awareness Week where we invited Jewish leaders to discuss the horrors of the Holocaust, and how we were discourteous to a panelist we had ourselves invited to ensure that Israel was represented at our Israel/Palestine debate. For some, I suppose, no matter what we do will not be enough, and maybe that's just politics.

Secondly, I felt very disappointed at the Union. In the past, it has been very helpful to the PPS; however in this instance I was never made involved in any of the meetings or the decision-making processes that led the College to enforce these restrictions, even though I explicitly requested to be. Furthermore, according to the College, it was the Union that suggested that visitors be limited to IC only and the College used this to back up their stance claiming that if the "strongest supporter of student rights" thought so, they thought so too. If this is actually true, this really is a sad revelation.

Thirdly, I felt extremely disappointed at the College's decision and the manner in which they enforced it on the PPS. One can perhaps understand the decision to limit the audience to IC students, in the hope that belonging to IC will stop them from in some way saying inflammatory things, but then extending that to VIPs such as MPs, Lords, Professors, heads of prestigious NGOs, Dr Mahathir's elderly wife and body guards, etc. was way too much. It was such an embarrassment to have to say to these people that they cannot enter when they arrived purely because they do not have an Imperial ID!

I had to turn away my own family, my dear friends and even ex-Union President Mustafa Arif because none



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad answering questions from Bangladeshi media after the PPS 'Criminalising War' lecture on 25th April

of them had a valid Imperial ID. This is clearly an over-reaction, and similarly I cannot see how extending the restrictions to banning recording and photography served any useful purpose, especially since they were impossible to police.

Finally, I was disappointed at the Ramadhan Foundation, who admittedly brought us a fantastic speaker, but was un-cooperative and deceptive. In fact, the only one who did not disappoint was Dr Mahathir himself, and chairing the Q&A that night was not only an honour but also great fun.

Intentions

The PPS has been very transparent with the Union and College in the past and also with this event. We do not feel we did anything wrong by inviting such a high-profile speaker and our intentions were sincere. We were not looking to cause trouble or upset people, but were looking to conduct powerful discussion on divisive issues.

Our intention, certainly with this event, was to raise Imperial's profile, as this was Dr Mahathir's first ever public address and we wanted IC to be his choice of venue rather than the usual LSE or SOAS, from whom he had also received offers. What we got in return was a slap in the face as we were forced to essentially insult our invited guest.

Being on the receiving end of the hate and anger of hundreds of students from across the UK is also not a pleasant experience, nor is being forced to juggle your loyalty to Imperial with courtesy to your guests. Being handed a decision that you have to enforce the

night before, and against your original word, is a very stressful experience and with repercussions for Imperial's and the PPS's reputation, especially considering that many people had already paid for accommodation and travel.

I do not think any of these factors were considered by College when they literally forced me to take these steps. And how could they have been, since I was never called to any of the meetings, having to chase developments only to be told what the PPS has to do less than 24 hours before the event.

I was left on the receiving end of everybody's criticism and felt that I really could not turn to anyone for support and that was truly an emotionally and mentally exhausting experience. I do not think the College considered these personal issues at all.

The Way Forward

We want to make the PPS a premier student society in London as we think it offers something no other society in any other university offers, and in the process raise the Union's profile nationally by providing some excellent events.

So now that all is said and done, where do we go from here? Well I think the first step is demanding our right to hold events without the fear of College pressure.

We want to have the freedom to invite who we want as long as it is legal. Most outspoken speakers will have said something that is inappropriate, but where do we draw the line and start stifling freedom of speech? As long as the address is legal, anybody from Gal-

loway to Tamimi should be allowed to speak.

We want external guests to be allowed to attend. If for example in Oxford, handling speakers is left to the societies themselves, and their student debates are open to the general public, why does it have to be different at Imperial, which claims to be equal in all manners to other top international institutions?

We certainly cannot prevent others from being interested in what the PPS is doing, especially with Facebook as a publicity tool, so why must we overly complicate things?

We also want the Union to continue being supportive of its clubs and societies and help them reach a resolution in disputes with full involvement in all the decision making that affects them. I think this is a fair request.

We want parties who may have apprehensions or concerns with our events to approach us directly to raise the matter with us so we can make sure that any concerns are taken on board during the early stages of planning. This will mean that things are settled with the Union and College in time for the events.

I think we can safely say that most clubs and societies are behind us in these requests as well as Felix and Live!, so we hope the College will consider them.

Closing Comments

I can appreciate why the Jewish Society raised their concerns. Their apprehensions were fully justified. I can even understand why the College did what they needed to. At the end of the day, their job is to protect the reputation of Imperial and make sure things are smooth and legal on campus – and ultimately the PPS is using College property. Moreover, maybe it is the first time that Imperial has had to deal with such a situation that other broader-discipline universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, LSE and SOAS are very familiar with.

The PPS does not echo the views of the speakers that attend our events, or any of their previous comments. We are purely about the events and the earnest discussion that ensues from it, which will at some points need thorny issues to be tackled.

We would appreciate support instead of resistance. We would appreciate more transparency and involvement instead of being treated like children. And we would certainly appreciate trust and assistance. With these requisites being met, I think the PPS can deliver an amazing and unique experience not only for Imperial students but for society as a whole, and in doing so we can raise the Imperial name as something above and beyond purely Science.

Union President, Steve Brown, will be responding to this article in next week's issue

IC students' views on the elections

Boris Johnson's appointment as Mayor of London has caused quite a stir amongst the student body, but perhaps not quite as much as a BNP member, Richard Barnbrook, winning a seat on the London Assembly



Jaimie Henry

You might be blind

This week, London has elected a new mayor. I'll be honest with you: I don't like him at all, and I was much more in favour of Ken. But something rather curious happened during these elections – people actually voted. A record turnout of around 45% was both unprecedented and unusual.

So surely this is a good thing? Democracy is working, right? It seems to be happening everywhere – even in the recent ICU Sabb elections, normally the hotbed of apathy (if there is such a thing) voter turnout was at a record high. And don't get me wrong, I'm really happy this has happened.

But somewhat paradoxically, this is where we are now left with a problem in the mythical beast that makes up this new and shocking voter turnout: the "average person." But surely when it comes to democracy, there is no such thing as an average? One man, one vote; voting for one party and one ideal, no?

Well, I suppose so, but take average as a person on the street with no particular political affiliation. This "average voter" has always had a protective effect on British democracy. It is this mythical being that prevents extremist parties coming to power by flooding the system with their supporters and outnumbering the relatively centric views of the rest of humanity.

This is why, despite all the hysterical journalistic rhetoric that is inevitable with an election, the BNP and other extreme parties generally fail to win seats, or at least never enough to create anything apart from a passing feeling of disgust in the pit of your stomach. It is the same effect that gives legitimacy to governments with a large turnout or may label them both unrepresentative and radical with the opposite. But it is at best concerning that in this powerful friend we have created a very dangerous foe.

Before I go any further, I want to clear up that I know that democracy is, by definition, the choice to vote for whichever party you want. If that is the Monster Raving Looney Party, then so be it. But we are entering the era of blind democracy. I might not like Boris, but I have to admire the brilliance of



Apparently, telling jokes can get you into the London Mayor's office

his PR machine. Our average voters see this charismatic buffoon, and vote for him for every reason they can think of except for his manifesto. I've heard people voice support for him because he "jokes," and these people upon interrogation have no idea of his policies or past. Other rationales include seeing him on TV, or thinking his behaviour is hapless and amusing, and would like to see the aftermath of this in office. People apparently voted against Ken because he has a nasally voice or was ugly, not because he was a bad mayor. In the Union elections, voting for the fittest girl is certainly not unheard of – good looks do not help you run any form of government. Maggie taught us that much.

I know people tend to vote right when there's economic instability, and that people apparently wanted to punish Labour over the whole 10p tax fiasco; but Ken could hardly have been said to have been a New Labour lapdog. It serves to prove the point that people either don't know or care about the Mayoral remit if they're judging candidates on national issues on which the Mayor has no control.

Facebook has a lot to answer for. Until recently I didn't think I could add "voter intimidation" to that. Viral mar-

keting may be spreading the word of democracy, in much the same way as I do when I drag people out to vote late at night whilst screaming party propaganda at them. But I fear people have started to vote from other people's statuses and flashy application logos. This is not informed decision making; this is displaying the intellectual rigour and questioning mind of a farm animal. It had got to the stage where I had to pimp my profile with pro-Ken rhetoric just to feel like I was ever going to get through to people. Why is this different from posters and billboards? Because the 20ft head of Boris Johnson on a billboard won't on its own make you vote for him, whereas a picture of your best friend shaking hands with him on the same billboard might just do the trick.

To top it all off, one of my friends supposedly voted for Boris to "cancel out" my vote for Ken. Please listen to me very carefully: This is not a game. We are not on Have I Got News for You. You are playing with the single most powerful thing you have in your possession, so give it some respect and use it wisely. Of course you can vote for who you want – and I really want you to. Read up on the candidates, support someone because you believe in their

cause or manifesto, and don't be fooled by the persona, bumbling or otherwise. Otherwise, extremism is just around the corner.

The BNP mayoral candidate, Richard Barnbrook, now sits on the London Assembly, having gained over 70 000 votes. This is most likely not because we are suddenly becoming very xenophobic and nationalistic, but because this clean-cut character is comparatively personable and not an overt racist they have pulled the wool over people's eyes.

I thought it was common knowledge the BNP were racist bastards, but apparently a change of image does wonders. I sincerely doubt there are 69,000 people in this City who would advocate the kind of "behind the camera" racist violence the BNP advocate, as exposed in a recent BBC documentary. This probably happened thanks to a public ignorance and a well-oiled PR machine, a la Boris Johnson. What's more worrying here is that whilst people have no idea whether or not Boris is incompetent, they should know this man is the bedrock of prejudice and discrimination. This is the endpoint of the slippery slope we are falling down; voting for Boris or Ken without knowing much about them is one thing, voting for the BNP is quite another. If I have got it all wrong, and people are becoming well-informed BNP supporters, then I weep for humanity.

I'm not saying you are all average voters; the esteemed readers of this fine publication will no doubt be remarkably well informed. Indeed, students tend to be among some of the more active and sensible voters. And hopefully this is a minority of voters, albeit growing rather rapidly. But it is your civic duty to inform the ignorant – and goodness knows there are many of them – about why they should know what they're voting for, and you are so culpable if you allow this travesty to continue under your noses. Please don't allow this naïvete to continue in 2010, when much bigger things are at stake. Power and responsibility are indeed inextricably linked. Spiderman may have been an idiot, but his Uncle had a good point.

// Support someone because you believe in their cause, and don't be fooled by the persona //

// I thought it was common knowledge the BNP were racist bastards //



Please think seriously about who you're voting for in 2010...



A. Geek

No laughing matter

I can't help but feel that Boris is too easy a target this week – not just in physical terms, in the sense that photos of him cycling to work look like they've been taken from a leaflet raising awareness about cruelty to narwhals but also in the sense that, as many of you have been all too quick to remind me this week, he did get elected 'by democratic process' and is thus entitled to at least seven days of swearless seething from me.

However, the term 'by democratic process' tends to conceal all manner of evils nowadays. These evils are largely concerned with America of course, and thus I get to put on a kind of bemused smile whilst watching it happen much like the rest of the country did last Friday when the election results were announced. However, occasionally America's older brother gets pissed and starts beating his political process of a wife, and it's at that point that humour gives way to horror.

Somehow, in the clamour and sweaty palms of last Friday, five percent of the Londoners that went out to put a cross in a box next to the phrase 'British National Party'. The London Assembly now bears that terrible phrase on its website, when referring to its members. This means that we, as a City, have failed.

I can go on for hours – ask my girlfriend – about any topic you like. Throw one at me. I'll rant for hour after hour, plucking out as colourful an insult as I can at each occasion. I'll slap you around a bit, draw out pie charts representing the distribution of all the reasons why your opinion is worthless, I'll even cajole you into insulting yourself if I'm on a particularly good streak. It's great fun, even if a little hypocrisy slips in here or there.

That's why Boris is a good target. I re-read my piece from last Autumn about Boris' impending election, and I stand by it – the man's a buffoon, and the Tories pushed him forward in order to seize control of the mayoral hotseat. However, there's a distinction between Boris – a walking joke who we can all chuckle at in publications much like this – and Richard Barnbrook, who is absolutely no laughing matter at all. At all.

Let's get one thing straight first, and I feel a certain level of appropriateness in quoting Marcus Brigstocke here – "the BNP are racist, and if you vote for them, so are you". There is no middle ground here, there is no distortion of



Boris Johnson: Joke and inset, Richard Barnbrook: No joke

the truth, there is no quiet revolution. There is just a political party based around a contorted idea of patriotism, and on the other side there is the sane portion of the population. That's the end of the story.

I like to think that not a single one of you reading this voted for them. The thought that someone at Imperial, someone young and passionate about their future in whatever form, would actually stand up and say they believed in the BNP's values makes me sick thinking about it. And I don't think enough people are making this clear. Members of the London Assembly have already stated that they will not work with Barnbrook, who also gained a seat on the Assembly. That's all well and good. But unfortunately, in the interests of fair politics, some people have chosen to stand up and give the same line I was fed about Boris. Barnbrook was elected democratically. He deserves his chance to represent those that voted for him.

Bullshit. There's a difference between someone like Boris and someone like Barnbrook. Here it is – you can tell a joke about Boris' party and still laugh afterwards.

See, we can banter about Boris on these pages, and have a good old chuckle. I can tell you that the way he's been transformed through PR over the previous few weeks makes it look like they've fitted some kind of cybernetic implant into his head like the one they used to control beetles via remote. I

like the idea of Gordon Brown sitting in the audience during Newsnight, tapping responses into his mobile before texting them off to the receiver hidden underneath the floppy hair.

But with Barnbrook, there are no jokes. We can't afford to joke about it. There's just a clear dividing line, a point where democracy stops becoming important and everything can be swept aside in favour of simply saying no. No debate. No discussion. We don't need to ask what merits they have, what part they play in the system. There is no question of democratic process, of

due right, or of representation. There is only one question – who is voting for the British National Party? And why?

These questions need to be answered before the next general election. Because the answers are the only way we'll remove this anomaly from British Politics. Ironically, it is not immigration, nor the EU that makes me feel like I do not own the word 'British'. It's the quasi-racists that grow year on year that make me feel ashamed to admit to my nationality. If you want to reclaim this country, then the BNP are the extremists that have to go first.

// quoting
Marcus
Brigstocke here:
"the BNP are
racist, and if you
vote for them, so
are you" //

// With
Barnbrook, there
are no jokes.
We can't afford
to joke about it.
//

The BNP and society's political apathy

Dear Felix,

Its 2.30 am on the Sunday after the elections and I'm still awake, sober as a judge. Whilst this may not seem surprising during exam season at Imperial, what with all the night owls populating the library at all hours, I'm not awake for revision. I'm awake because something has been buzzing around my head since I saw the election results for the General London Assembly. The British National Party, that champion of the British right wing, has won a seat. That means they got over 5% of the London-wide vote. It also means that whilst before I was proud of being a Londoner born and bred, I am also now a bit embarrassed.

All the mainstream mayoral candidates wax lyrical about how London is a diverse, multicultural and vibrant city yet the BNP still manage to get a seat. How? I suppose it isn't that important, I accept that we live in a democracy and that they now have every right to that seat. But I have a niggling sense it could have been avoided.

Many people I spoke to leading up to the election told me they were voting for Boris because he was a joker, a legend, against Ken because they didn't like him as a person. Their choice, they can vote on personality in a political contest if they will. What makes me uncomfortable is how many told me they weren't voting at all because they didn't know or

care about the candidates' policies, and that was for the well-publicised mayoral election. How many had even given a thought to the GLA? Think about it for a moment, how many people out there didn't vote for similar reasons? With a turnout of less than 50% I think we can safely assume a hell of a lot.

Now, pretty much anyone that supports the BNP will have turned out to vote for them. They are good at getting those who agree with them to act. But what of all those people out there that find the BNP and its policies worrying, offensive and in some cases even threatening? Many of them will have voted for a party they find more palatable in the GLA elections, but many won't have voted at all. I'm sure some of Felix's readers are amongst them. The question is do they actively disagree with the BNP? Did the ones disagreeing with them do anything to prevent them gaining the 5% that won them a seat? Well done to them if they did, but if they didn't: well, I can't force them to vote but I can tell them that they worry me almost as much as the BNP do.

I'm scared by the fact that the apathy of our society is providing the conditions for what I consider the political face of the National Front to gain a foothold in London. A foothold that they deserve in democratic terms, but that I cannot believe represents their actual London-wide popularity. If it does, my embarrassment at their apparent popularity in London is justified. If it doesn't, all I can do is hope that next time people will do something to stop them....

Yours,

Matthew Kaufeler



Have Londoners failed as a collective because Richard Barnbrook has been successfully elected to the London Assembly?



Gilead Amit

// The emoticon industry still employs scandalously out-of-date hiring practices //

:- But what comes next?

This week I am writing in the name of the oppressed. In the name of those who are not permitted to convey their message directly, and who rely on people like myself to do it for them.

I am writing to complain about unfair discrimination which is still omnipresent in the workplace. The oft-overlooked emoticon industry still employs scandalously out-of-date hiring practices, and equal opportunity is an unheard-of concept.

Recent research indicates that in well over 90% of e-mails, text messages and facebook correspondences, the clichéd 'smiley-face' is the preferred emoticon. Surely we can all agree that in today's world, this is outrageous. Usage of emoticons should not be based solely on looks, but rather on the ability of the symbol in question to convey the desired emotion.

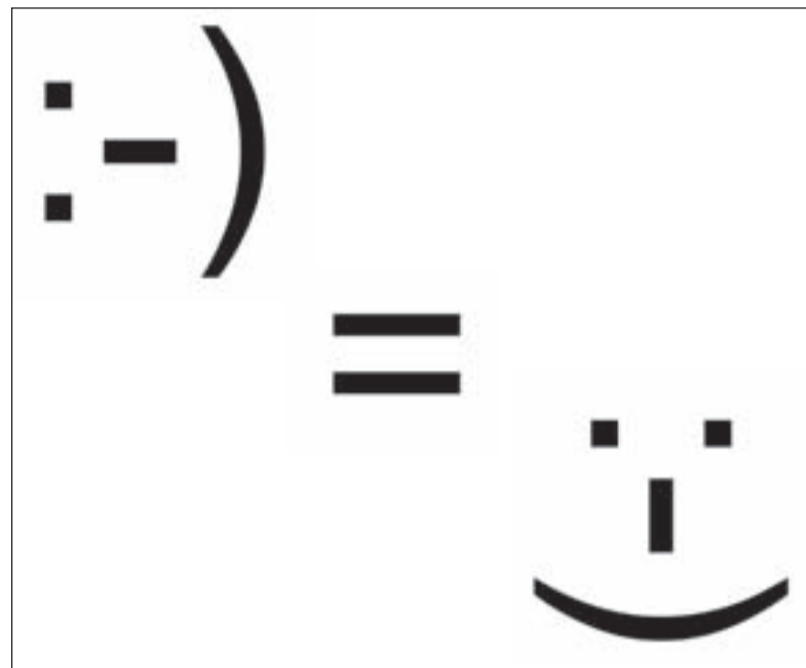
Do we, in fact, all feel happy all the time, as my research seems to suggest? Most certainly not. We are merely trapped in a society where the only acceptable emoticon to use is the Pac-man-esque smiley.

Should one be so forward-thinking as to provide gainful employment to a less permanently-cheerful set of punctuation marks, one is immediately re-

garded as dangerous and subversive. Such attitudes have to stop. In a world where emotions are infinitely more complex than mere 'happiness', we should be allowed to run the full gamut of these in expressing the way we feel.

And yet, even in the emotionally complex world in which we live and type, we stereotype and apply the most virulent forms of prejudice to these circular faces. What about the 'confused' and 'sarcastic' smileys on offer in Windows Messenger? Can anyone honestly claim to know the difference between them? Of course not – 'if you've seen one unconventional yellow face, the cry goes round, 'you've seen them all'. How eerily familiar that sounds.

There are whole neighbourhoods of the emoticon grid in Windows Messenger that undergo such negative stereotyping. How about 'that one with the party hat'? The 'funny one with the glasses'? The cheap generalizations that follow are no less disconcerting – how easy it is to assume that red faces are angrier than most, or that green faces are more prone to vomiting. We must grow to be more accepting of these new and wonderfully complex individuals, and to find out what they truly represent. Sure, they're more difficult to type, and they may be harder to find on one's PC, but the infinite va-



Just incase you didn't realise...

riety one gains as a result clearly validates the extra effort.

I don't know about you, but I have hope. Already, people are using the politically-correct term 'emoticon', rather than the blatantly emotionist 'smiley-

face'. With time and perseverance, I see no reason to suppose that we will not one day see the peaceful integration of these other expressions, making our texting and facebooking as vibrant and eclectic as our speech.



Jellybean

Doom and gloom

Can you feel it? No, it's not the love tonight, it's a whole lot worse. You got it, enter stage left 'impending doom' – everyone's favourite incessant, niggling, soul-muncher. Can you hear it? The winds of change? I think not. It is unmistakably the faint jingle and rustle of four horsemen saddling up. Oh, and don't worry, the whole squad will be here. (I heard Flatulence is on stand-by if Pestilence falls well again). We're for it. We are staring down the barrel of yet another term, and this one is well and truly cocked. Exam timetables are out and the female species carefully following colour-coded revision plans – grim advert calendars ominously prefacing their own funerals. (Ironic, isn't it, that funeral is an anagram of real fun).

I suppose some of you will have got it all over with already and walk the

planet like the living dead, your souls dwelling in a state of purgatory as you await that envelope – the brown one with the power to cast you back into the fiery pits of retakes – with nervous expectation.

Others among you will be mid-way through and probably feel guilty that you are reading this and not cramming, and some of you will feel them looming ahead like a giant kid with a magnifying glass. Your friend from the colony (course) beyond the tree stump (upper Dalby Court) just exploded into flames and you know it's only a matter of time. Save the Queen!

As for me? I am like a papier-mâché giraffe, my revision a coat of varnish and the exams like a ton of bricks. A lone terracotta warrior against a very angry Scotsman with a sledgehammer, who was recently cheated on by a Chinese historian (the Scotsman not

the sledgehammer). A candle in the wind? More like a match in a blizzard. A springbok who, prancing joyfully through the savanna of university life, suddenly finds his front legs have disappeared mid-jump. Bummer. Should have worn the gum shield.

Well, never mind, according to the hazy recollection I have of a factoid loosely based on almost certain pub truth, beggars in London can make over 35k a year. So there's always that to fall back on. Oh, but wait – I'm talking to Imperialites, no consolation for you. You've got to have starting salary of at least 40k (and a 4k golden hello) in order to afford that flash car you walk past every day. You know, the one that will bring certain happiness, women and speeding tickets. With a First you're on for a job in that bank, so you can stay in London and work off your left butt cheek for a Thames-

side pad, company ski trips, gossip at the water-cooler, overtime and squash with a colleague on Tuesdays. It's fine by me, but don't come crying in your mid-life crisis.

So here are some reassuring facts. If and when you fail you will not be flattened by a misplaced grand piano (probably), neither will your knee-caps be sawn off (I suspect) or your eyes shrivel like raisins (as far as current studies suggest). Your brain, however, will have turned to mush, but you will do that voluntarily in two hour stints with fifteen minute breaks in between for a week solid before the exams, so we shan't blame the system. You'll be fine. You're at Imperial because you are smart (/are an Oxbridge reject) and you attended most of the lectures, well some of them, and you understood the tutorials, right?... Right? Well... crud. I got to cram...

Letters to Felix

Where is the line drawn?

Dear Felix,

I feel that the response given in this week's issue [issue 1,401 – Ed] to the email regarding the football club was entirely missing the point. The fact that there were no complaints regarding the previous 'Finance tart' article can be easily explained – finance tart is an exaggerated fiction and not a real, identifiable group. The fact that the football club is constantly being singled out among all of the varied groups that exist at IC is the issue at hand. What you fail to realise when you lash

out over issues you have with the small number of club regulars who drink at the union every week is the impact that such actions have on the other 100+ members of the football team. Why should I have to defend myself to the readers who now see my training top and automatically think homophobic drunkard? I don't even drink.

As to the acceptability of anonymous publishing, it is my view that people should have the courage of their convictions. If you feel that strongly about something then maybe you should be prepared to face the reactions your opinion might bring. I'd also be interested to know exactly what guidelines you follow with regards to the types of opinions you are allowed to publish. Presumably if I wrote a piece criticising

a group categorised by religion, sexual orientation or appearance it would not make it to print (except scientology or gingers cos they're just crazy/fair game right)? Where exactly is the line drawn?

Regards,

Phil Meier

"spotty yob with three decent A-levels"

Dear Phil,

Whilst the 'Finance Tart' is not a specific club at Imperial, the article's intention was to satirise the graduates who leave university to work in the City, of which there are plenty at this institution. I would argue Linnearse's 'Finance

Tart' depiction sends up a larger group of identifiable people than the Football Club itself.

It is a shame that you feel people automatically think you're a "homophobic drunkard", but I think to some extent that stems from society's way of forming preconceptions about groups of people based on the actions of individuals.

English, Argentinian and Italian football fans garner a reputation of being aggressive and violent in the international media, yet those fans are a minority which give football a bad name on the whole. Just because documentaries focussing on violence amongst football fans exist, it doesn't mean I believe every fan behaves like that. I'm sensible enough to realise this isn't the case. Similarly, Felix's duty is to report on

news around College in the public interest, however, it is not responsible for peoples' reactions.

As for the Comments section's guidelines: ultimately the decision falls to me whether something is published or not. I deemed Linnearse's pieces to be acceptable since they are clearly parodies. Religion, sexual orientation and appearance are (or almost are in the first two cases) inherent characteristics of a person. Whereas, joining a club is something you are responsible for yourself.

We welcome and consider any articles sent in on any topic but the decision as to what crosses the line remains with me.

Tom Roberts
Editor-in-Chief

President's Update

Union Colours Nominations Open

What are Colours?

Colours are a type of award that Imperial College Union can give to anybody to recognise the service, contribution and dedication of someone to the Union.

There are five types of Colours that are broadly separated into two groups. The first three Colours, which are Half Colours, Full Colours and Outstanding Service Awards, are awarded in recognition of one year's service to the Union. The other two Colours, which are Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships, are awarded in recognition of many year's service to the Union.

Who can be nominated for Colours?

Anybody can be nominated for these awards, except the Union Sabbatical Officers and the Felix Editor.

Who can nominate someone for Colours?

Any Imperial student can complete a nomination form, but it's best not to nominate yourself!

What happens if you are awarded a Colours

Being awarded a Colours is a great honour and privilege. Those who receive these awards are presented with an award certificate at a ceremony, a tie or pin, and in the case of the higher awards a gift like an engraved tankard or Honorary Life membership of the Union. The Union keeps a record of all the people awarded Colours.

What do you need to do to be awarded a Colour?

To be awarded Half Colours you need to have made a "positive contribution to the general life of the Union in an extraordinary fashion."

To be awarded Full Colours you have to "repeatedly, through outstanding achievements, over the course of the year, have made a significant contribution to the life of the Union."

For an Outstanding Service Award "you will have displayed continuous outstanding achievement across a broad spectrum of Union activities." Few of these are given out, only five a year at most.

The Fellowship and Distinguished Fellowship awards are much harder to get as they are based on the contribution the awardee has made over a length of time.



To receive a Union Fellowship award you need to "have continuously served the Union in an exceptional manner." Very few of these are given out.

To receive a Distinguished Fellowship you need to have "served the Union in a selfless and dedicated manner which is both exceptional and beyond reproach."

If you don't know which award to nominate someone for then choose the one you feel is appropriate and the Colours Committee will change if necessary.

How can I nominate someone?

Nominations are open from Tuesday 6th May 2008 to midnight Tuesday 27th May 2008 at 12 noon. Nomination forms can be downloaded from the website and should be completed and emailed to colours@imperial.ac.uk.

You'll have to give the name of the nominee, the award you are nominating them for and tell us, in less than 200 words, why you think they should get it. Also include your name and CID.

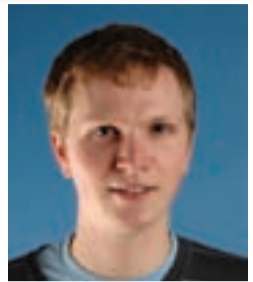
What happens then?

Your nominations will be considered by the Union's Colours Committee and then the results will be announced towards the end of the term in Felix and successful nominees will be given their awards at an Colours ceremony in June.

Imperial College Union and Faculty Union elections

On 11 May nominations will close for the positions of Council Chair, RAG Chair,

CAG Chair, Welfare Campaigns Officer and Equal Opportunities Officer of Imperial College Union. You should have also been contacted by your Faculty Union Representatives as the elections process for CGCU, RCSU and ICSMSU positions have also started although each of these are being run to slightly different timetables. For more information about any of the Imperial College Union positions please contact me and for details of the Faculty Union positions please get in touch with the relevant President.



Stephen Brown
President
president@imperial.ac.uk

Stand!

Each of these positions are extremely important in the running of the Union and ensuring it well-represents its members. By standing you will have a real chance to be involved with the important decision that are made by the Union. Not to mention experience in all these areas shows that extra-curricular involvement that employers are looking for. Again, for more information please to get in contact with me.

ICU & RCSU Elections Timetable:

Nominations open - 5 May 00:00
Nominations close - 11 May 23:59
Voting starts - 19 May 00:00
Voting finishes - 22 May 23:59

Elections for the CGCU and ICSMSU elections have been promoted to students of the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Engineering by their Faculty Unions.

TICKET PRICES RISE FROM 16:00 MAY 16 - BUY ONLINE NOW!

ENTERTAINMENTS TICKET

£30 **£35**
FROM 16 MAY

DINNER & ENTS TICKET

£55 **£60**
FROM 16 MAY

VIP ENTS TICKET

£50 **£60**
FROM 16 MAY

VIP DINNER & ENTS TICKET

£65 **£85**
FROM 16 MAY



VIP TICKETS GRANT ACCESS TO OUR EXCLUSIVE VIP LOUNGE AND BAR WITH FREE COCKTAIL BAR. SEE ONLINE FOR MORE DETAILS

DINNER TICKETS WILL SELL OUT VERY SOON, UNDER A THIRD ARE AVAILABLE AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

for more information and to buy tickets: imperialcollegeunion.org/ball

IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON

SUMMER BALL 2008

21.06.2008

London's Largest Summer Ball

The biggest and best party of the year is the Imperial College London Summer Ball. With a regal formal dinner and over 24 hours of party heaven; 21 June is a red letter day in your diary. We will be showcasing the best acts and DJs out there, across four awesome venues. Plus, for the more decadent, our exclusive VIP lounge and bar is waiting for special VIP ticket holders. Get your tickets early to avoid disappointment. See you there!

THE KLAXONS (DJ SET)
JAMES RIGHTON

ZANE LOWE

FEARNE COTTON

NABOO DJ SET (MIGHTY BOOSH)

ANDY C | SCRATCH PERVERTS

THE MACCABEES (DJ SET)

ADVENTURES IN THE BEETROOT FIELD (BANDS)

G.Q. | REAL | HI FIDEL CARTEL | PINFOLD GOLD

(Line-up subject to change)



The Imperial College London Summer Ball 2008 is a fund raising event for Imperial College Union with all proceeds going towards the Building Redevelopment Fund.

**Imperial College
London**





Why we defend our ‘abusive’ China

Kewen Chen invites you to consider the Olympics and the Tibet issue, in a different light

Recent events surrounding the Olympics and Tibet have certainly thrown China into the spotlight. Many issues have been dug out and closely examined. Personally I feel this is a good thing. It facilitates the exchange of ideas and helps us to understand each other's culture better. Nonetheless it has highlighted some major difference between a “Chinese view” and a “Western view”.

Currently there is a ferocious online battle going on in various forums. One side is the “Free Tibet” camp, highlighting not just Tibet but a whole range of issues involving China such as human rights; on the other side is the “Tibet is always part of China” camp, made up mainly of those of Chinese origin. Both sides have thrown up pretty good rational arguments (amid even more irrational and emotional outcries). It would be too long and too difficult to go through them, besides, my good friend Kadhim has already done a pretty good analysis on the Tibet issue. What I am going to do instead is to explain the way we Chinese think about this whole thing and also highlight some key differences between western and Chinese point of view.

On Tibet, there are huge gaps between the two camps at the moment. “Free Tibet” camps accuse the Chinese of being brainwashed by Communist propaganda and choosing to ignore the issues in Tibet; in return, the activists are being accused of ignorance of the history between China and Tibet (thus the overly abused question used “Do you even know where Tibet is?”). This only shows the clear prejudices each side has against the other. Although a lot of the activists are being emotional or just “jumping on the bandwagon”, many activists have actually been to Tibet and China and are pretty well informed on the issue. Equally, not all Chinese are brainwashed. Overseas Chinese have unrestricted access to BBC, CNN, various Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan media, even net users in China regularly use foreign proxy servers to circumvent the Chinese government's online filter and thus gain full access to foreign media.

Hence many people are puzzled as to why overseas Chinese, having enjoyed

the western freedom of speech and access to free media, are still defending an “oppressive” regime. This is a complex issue, and there are many different reasons. But it ultimately boils down to a clash of culture and values.

Many western people point out that they are not protesting against the Chinese, merely the Chinese government hosting the Olympics, and cannot understand why it offends the Chinese so much. If you dig deeper, you will find it is impossible for us to distinguish between the two. The host of the Games is not actually the Chinese government but Beijing, a Chinese city. Thus, in our eyes, hosting the Games does not symbolise the achievement of the government, but rather that of the Chinese people. To deny us this privilege is to deny the achievement of our culture and of our people. If you break

“NGOs should retune their image to broaden their appeal”

into a wedding and accuse the bridegroom of murder, you should not expect gratitude from the guests.

The perceived “biased reporting” from the western media and from pro-Tibetan camps does not help to dispel this illusion either. I am not expert enough to comment on the factual truth of the media reporting. However, I think all media consider the taste of their audience base and they use sensational headlines to grab the attention of its readership. Really, no-one wants to hear dull stories about a bunch of Chinese flag-waving enthusiasts welcoming the Olympic Torch. Thus, in the cases where pro-China and pro-Tibetan supporters are numerically equal, pro-Tibetan protesters would of course get a bigger slice of the media pie.

In the same way, the media concentrated on the “massive military presence” in the Lhasa riots, while the Han Chinese murdered are merely “displays

of anger” by the Tibetans. So of course we Chinese feel prejudiced against by the western media. Sure, Beijing's refusal to allow foreign journalists to freely report in Tibet is partly to blame. But from the way the western media leaned toward pro-Tibetan protests in the Torch Relay, Beijing is not going to trust them to report the whole truth.

As for the perceived prejudice by the majority of westerners against our government, I understand its cause but I feel frustrated at its outcome. Most of the westerners have very strong ethical feelings, and I applaud that. But we feel that various NGOs over-exploited this to their advantage. Is the Chinese government really the sort of “Nazi”-style oppressor that many NGOs portray it to be? I would like to point out that although these NGOs exist to promote noble causes, they are not going to achieve their goal by highlighting the progresses in China. They grab the attention of the public by sensationalising the issue, highlighting only part of the whole story, taking facts out of context or sometimes distorting disputed facts, anything just short of outright lying really.

As for the Chinese media, many westerners merely dismiss it as propaganda. This is only partly true. The state-controlled media is heavily censored, but there are many regional media groups that offer robust opinions. An example would be the Southern Metropolis Daily editor Chang Ping's essay of 3 April, “How To Find The Truth About Lhasa,” in which he criticised the governments' decision to not allow free coverage of Tibet riots. (As far as I know he is still the editor of the said paper). This stirred a fierce debate in China, with pro- and anti-media-control camps battling it out in various media outlets. Clearly it is not true that there is zero free speech in China, it is just our attitude towards true free speech is different.

I don't deny that China has got tons of human rights issues, but to what extent have the actions of these NGOs changed the situation in China? With the political situation in China, are these NGO protests really in the best interest of the common Chinese and Tibetan people, or do they just protest to make themselves feel good? Can



The Olympic torch has been greeted with celebrations in China

noble causes really be furthered by aggressive protests in a country outside China, or does the more subtle “quiet-diplomacy” work better?

As a result, most Chinese feel deeply suspicious of these NGOs; they have not earned our respect. On the contrary, their actions have forced us to re-assess our loyalties and in most cases re-align ourselves with our government. I don't like to say I agree with Beijing's policies, because I don't. But

by over-exploiting this “all-stick-and-no-carrots” tactic, we are all led to feel that the western NGOs are against progress in China in general. Maybe NGOs should retune their image to broaden their appeals?

On the other hand, we do feel that the Chinese government has made vast progress in recent years. In poverty reduction, hundreds of millions of people are being lifted out of poverty due to the economic boom. In environ-



The Olympic Stadium in Beijing, often referred to as the ‘Birds Nest’. The Chinese people are deeply proud of their cities success in holding the 2008 Olympics

ment, although the question of implementation remains, Beijing has passed aggressive environmental legislations, recently upgrading the environment bureau into a full ministry. In the media, despite intermittent periods of tightening control, there is the undeniable trend that the press is gradually freed up. Although the media industry is still self-censored, many private media enterprises are now competing directly with state-owned ones. Moreover, the BBC website and Wikipedia are now unblocked in China ahead of the Games (amid the Tibetan riots), so readers in China have no problem of getting a more balanced view. Furthermore, China's hosting the Games is really a positive influence on its leaders. The unreasonable demand to boycott it, would only isolate the regime, deepen Beijing's suspicion of the west and give the right-wing hardliners reasons to implement tighter control.

The vast cultural differences are also a major reason in our different ways of thinking. We Chinese believe that

we shouldn't meddle in other people's business, and we expect the others to treat us the same. Many of you say that Tibet is not a Chinese domestic issue. Maybe it is or maybe it is not. The important thing is we are deeply suspicious of the western countries' motivation in getting involved. This suspicion is deeply branded into our psyche, because our relationship with the west has not always been one of friendship. China used to be a great power; its decline in global status was worsened by western imperialism and colonialism. The looting and burning of our prized Imperial Old Summer Palace by Britain and France, the sacking of Peking (Beijing) by the western Eight Nations Alliance is still taught in our textbooks and remembered as the symbol of the humiliation China suffered at the hands of the West.

I disagree with the people who dwell on the past to justify their blind nationalism. But in their shoes, you can see why they drift so easily into an ultra-nationalist mood. Under the cur-

rent government, for the first time in over a century China is strong, stable and united, under no threat of civil war while building a thriving economy. We may not have freedom of speech, but we do treasure the most fundamental human right – the right to live in peace without the fear of turmoil. In a world where the majority of the people live in poverty, in fear or in war, we Chinese people don't for on second take it for granted. This is why we support a strong government while subconsciously we question the motivation behind the West's "request" to improve China's human rights.

Of course we want our government to be more transparent and we want more rights, but we also believe in patience. We believe in constructive criticism and gradual changes. I believe ultimately all people in China will have more freedom, much more freedom. I accept other people have different opinions, but we all want the best for China, just in different ways.

On a final note, most of you would



The mascots of the Beijing Olympics. Look - there's a panda!

say this is not about China but about Tibet. I say, considering the political reality in China, and the positions of those involved, Tibetan independence is not a realisable solution. The ques-

tion remains, how to get the best out of the current situation. I suggest you read Kadhim's article carefully and then form your own opinion as to how best to go forward.

Mixing Politics and the Olympics

Carlos Joaquin Karingal discusses whether the Olympics should serve as a political platform

Despite having attended the recent protests in London along the route of the Olympic Torch Relay, remembering the expressions on the faces of some of the people on those vans and buses as they were booed and jeered has made me think twice about what I did. Seeing people hired solely to drive buses, coordinate the procession, or even simply to dance in short shorts on the back of a van shrink back as protesters chanted "shame on you" and threw two-fingered salutes at them aroused thoughts as to whether politics are really relevant in a global gathering meant to celebrate human achievement through sport.

Indeed, the goal of Olympism, according to the Olympic Charter, the governing document of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is "to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity." Thus, it seems ironic that Beijing was chosen as the host city of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, it being the capital of a country renowned for human rights abuses, not only in Tibet, but in the Xingjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, home to almost 9 million Muslim Uyghurs, as well as for its support of other autocratic regimes, such as that of Burma, where the recent Saffron Revolution was denounced by the Chinese press, and that of Zimbabwe, of which China is the largest arms supplier.

Despite China's immaculate human rights record, when the IOC met in Moscow in 2001 to choose a host city for 2008, the IOC Evaluation Commission wrote in their report for the committee delegates that when choosing a host city "it is impossible to ignore the debate on political issues, such as human rights", but that it would "not deal with this issue other than to acknowledge the existence of the debate and its continuation".

Furthermore, in the Olympic Charter, it is written that "any form of discrimination with regard to a country or person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise in incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement", meaning that ignoring

Beijing's bid to host the Games simply due to their political stances means violating the Charter.

Indeed, it is stated clearly in the Olympic Charter that "no kind of demonstration or religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites," which, one could argue, should eliminate any opportunity for the politicisation of the Olympic Games. However, governments in the past have made huge political statements while still abiding by this rule.

Starting with the Melbourne Games of 1956, when seven nations refused to attend because of the Suez Crisis, the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and Taiwan's participation under the name of Formosa. Of course, it was this year's host nation that was protesting the third. China boycotted the Olympics again in 1980, when 62 countries joined the USA in expressing their disapproval of the host nation's – the USSR's – invasion of Afghanistan. Quite ironically, despite its record of political activism in the games of the past, the People's Republic has recently been one of the strongest advocates for a completely neutral Olympics. Their Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Jiang Yu, remarked that any group wanting to "take the world people's grand event as a stage for a political show, [has] found a wrong place, and will only ask for insult."

"The Dalai Lama has consistently been against any boycott"

Nevertheless, some world leaders have declined their invitation to attend the opening ceremony in August, including Gordon Brown, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Prince Charles, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel; but many of them told the press that they had never intended to go in the first place. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, however, has neither confirmed nor declined his place at the opening ceremony, but the country's Secretary of State for Human Rights,



The banners used by pro-Tibetan protestors mix secessionist politics and human rights issues

Rama Yadav was reported to have laid down the conditions of Sarkozy's attendance: "an end to violence against the population and the release of political prisoners, light to be shed on the events in Tibet and the opening of dialogue with the Dalai Lama." Furthermore, the Japanese Royal Family has decided not to attend, citing not only Tibetan unrest, but also a dispute over gas fields claimed by both countries, and the poisoning of 10 Japanese by dumplings imported from China.

The Dalai Lama, however, has consistently been against any boycott, declaring his stance on NBC Nightly News in April, saying that any politicians' attendance of the opening ceremony is "up to them". He has also said that he believes that China "deserve[s] to host the famous games, as it is the most populous nation of the world", ending any doubt as to whether Tibetans that view the Dalai Lama as their political leader should support the IOC's decision to host the Games in Beijing.

Nevertheless, many people have protested against China, questioning the IOC's choice on the idea that a country

with such a questionable human rights record should not be allowed to host an event seen as a celebration of "human dignity", to quote the Olympic Charter. In addition, their chants of "China, China, China! Out! Out! Out!" and "Human rights in Tibet!" showed that they were also protesting simply for Tibetan independence, which has been an issue on people's minds since the 1950's at least, well before Beijing submitted its bid to become an Olympic host city. Thus, the protestors simply seized the opportunity to make themselves heard at a time when all eyes were on them, which they have done many times in the past. When former Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited London in 1999, pro-Tibetan protestors gathered outside Buckingham Palace, where Jiang was having a state banquet with the Queen. Similar demonstrations occurred in 2004 around Downing Street while the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, met with Tony Blair. Past incidents, however, seem not to have exceeded those surrounding this year's torch relay, where we saw about 2500 people gather for the cause in London alone, showing that the protestors capitalised

on the fact that simply more people are interested in the Olympic Games than a state visit, so the media surrounding the relay gave activists a perfect platform from which to make their voices heard.

So the people on the streets, voicing their anger over China's policies are not without reason, but while I am glad I took a stand for the rights of people in need of help, I regret booing and making less-than-savoury gestures at the dancers and the bus drivers. Sure, I disagree with the way China has handled Tibet and Burma, and I vehemently oppose their oppression of the Falun Gong, and I would take any opportunity to let people know, but I don't think that the man driving the van should be punished for it. These are all political issues, and the Olympics are about sport. It has been said that the Ancient Greeks put their differences aside in times of war to compete in the Olympics. Whether or not that is true, I think it is an admirable example, and should be emulated. Let the athletes compete, and the Chinese celebrate the Games. After August we can talk.



$$-\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \frac{\partial^2 \psi}{\partial x^2} + \mathcal{V}(x)\psi(x) = E \psi(x)$$

Science Challenge: The excerpts

Last term's Science Challenge finale was a great success, with some high-calibre essays winning well-deserved prizes. The full essays are available at www.rcsu.org.uk/sciencechallenge, but we thought you'd like a taster. Meanwhile, in the lower left, **Andrew Somerville** gives you his impressions of the evening

On the final Tuesday of the spring term, the Science Museum's Imax cinema was almost filled to capacity with students, guests and the distinguished panel of judges as the finalists of this year's (formerly RCSU) Science Challenge gave presentations on their essays. The Science Challenge is rapidly becoming one of Imperial's flagship annual events (being born only three years ago) as exemplified this year by the huge sponsorship by Shell, high-profile judges and fantastic location in the Science Museum.

This year saw over 360 entries from both IC students and school and college students across the country in the two competitions. The IC prize went to **Erika Cule**, on the essay title "How would knowledge of my genetic makeup affect my lifestyle?" – the question set by our own Rector, Sir Richard Sykes. The Schools prize went to **Hassan Al Halwachi** of Sherborne School on the topic of "To what extent is geo-engineering the solution to the climate change problem?" set by Sir Brian Hoskins.

Following the presentations and speeches from the winners, the Rector, and Science Challenge committee chair, Daniel Burrows, the crowd adjourned to the main Science Museum hall for the other main attraction: the after-party. The event was lively, many students taking advantage of the opportunity to rub shoulders with the distinguished guests panellists such as Sir Robert Winston, and avail themselves of the open bar.

"I'm very pleased", said Daniel Burrows, "We set out to get beyond a science essay, and look beyond the statistics... the communication is empty without the science, but the science is useless without good communication."

As one of the finalists, IC PhD student Anna Gustavsson, put it: "The purpose of publicly funded science is not for the self-realisation of scientists, but for them to communicate scientific discovery back to the public." By those criteria, the Science Challenge has a valuable role to play in the future of science at IC.

Should healthy people take drugs to enhance their cognitive abilities?

Dr Nakasone indulges in rather too many espressos to propel him through the day. The active ingredient, caffeine, acts on the same dopamine system as methylphenidate [*Ritalin*] to increase wakefulness, and has gained widespread popularity and acceptance worldwide. Today, coffee is second only to petroleum in world trade. So, having taken a step in the direction of cognitive enhancement, would Dr Nakasone ever take drugs other than caffeine to improve his cognitive skills?

He has some concerns. Cognitive enhancing drugs provide meagre benefits to healthy people, yet they have marked short-term side effects, and the long term effects are largely unknown. In particular, no studies have assessed what happens when people stop taking the drugs. As he makes himself yet another espresso to stave off his tiredness, he is reminded of the time when a single one would have kept him awake for hours on end. Could the same tolerance develop in people taking drugs to improve their cognitive function? He also has reservations about the social impact of these drugs. Could they widen the divide between those that can afford them and those that cannot? In fact, these drugs appear to work best on those with poorer cognitive abilities, which are likely to be those without the benefit of a good education. Ironically, education itself is considered the safest and most effective form of cognitive enhancement.

With all this in mind, Dr Nakasone chooses to stick to his coffee. In fact, he might consider switching to decaf.

Leili Farzaneh

It is clear that the way we choose to enhance ourselves matters. Few people would object to parents giving their children fish-liver oil. Yet a recent study of school children with certain learning disorders has shown that omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids (found in fish oil) are as effective as Ritalin for improving reading, spelling and behaviour. Other ways of improving cognitive function include regular exercise, memory training courses and regular sleep. Again, the neurological mechanisms for these improvements are not understood. But there remains an ethical difference between enhancing oneself through these conventional means and taking cognitive enhancing drugs. Why is that?

Perhaps our unease about cognitive enhancement drugs has to do with the way we see ourselves. There is a strong connection between brain and mind, and between mind and self. Serious ethical problems arise when we reduce our consciousness to a series of chemical reactions that we can influence directly.

Genetic engineers struggle with many similar ethical questions related to the implications of modifying the essence of self. Some are starting to address this issue using complexity theory, in which it is asserted that we are more than just the sum of our parts. Consciousness is similarly a subtle and complex phenomenon that may also need to be treated from a non-reductionist point of view. Perhaps the real underlying question is how these cognitive drugs affect the overall pattern of our consciousness – and whether this change is desirable.

Ignoring the legalities—methylphenidate is a Class B drug—if you can get them, the scientific data suggest that *cogs* [cognitive enhancing drugs] are efficacious. In recent tests, methylphenidate improved spatial working memory and planning in fatigued, but otherwise healthy, people, although there are some indications that the increase in speed causes a greater number of errors. Similar research with modafinil has also found improved cognitive ability. The results are not universally positive—some tests have shown no significant improvement compared to placebo—but the balance of evidence seems to suggest that these drugs can improve performance in at least some aspects.

Safety, however, is a more contentious matter. In particular, the discussion must be mediated by the fact that the pharmaceutical industry, as it currently operates, focuses exclusively on sick people, since historically this has been the group of people most interested in medication. The inevitable consequence of this is that it is very difficult to assess safety for healthy individuals.

All drugs, without exception, produce side effects—common side effects experienced with Ritalin include insomnia, headaches, and gastrointestinal symptoms—but these are considered against the alternative course of action: to not medicate the patient at all. Therefore, when a drug is licensed for the treatment of a given condition, it has been determined that in most instances the benefit to the patient will outweigh the impact of the adverse effects. The aim is to return the patient to as close to 'normal functioning' as possible. So if the side effects take the patient further from this goal than the benefits take them towards it, the drug is not helpful. Drugs for healthy people, however, have a much more nebulous target. What is 'better than normal functioning'? Are any adverse side effects acceptable when medicating healthy people?

Anna Gustavsson

Andrew Turley



1. Leili Farzaneh points out that cognitive enhancing drugs are already used by students and pilots

2. Dan Burrows: science proselytizer extraordinaire. Aply aided and abetted by many others on the Science Challenge team – all credit to them

3. Erika Cule won the Imperial competition. She's asked us not to print any of hers, as she's submitting it for some other competitions, but you can see it with all the others on the Science Challenge website

4. The Science Museum – what a great location for an afterparty!

5. Ali Tasleem takes the audience through the ins and outs of geoengineering



All photographs by Chris Chan

How would knowledge of my genetic makeup affect my lifestyle?



Whilst genes do play a fundamental role in character, it has been shown that environment – particularly during developmental stages – is often far more significant.

For instance it has been shown that children with a mutated (under-repeated) promoter region of the monoamine oxidase A (MAOA) gene are far more likely than average to commit acts of violence, but only if they are abused while young.² Therefore it would be unethical to criminally penalise or counsel an individual merely on the basis that they carried this mutation. A 'bad' genotype therefore is not a sentence; it also requires a bad environment to create an undesirable phenotype. Yet just one little diagnostic test, of the promoter length in this one gene, could allow a physician to predict, with some confidence, whether one is likely to be antisocial or probably criminal.

James Stillit & Sascha Alles



To what extent is geoengineering the solution to the climate change problem?

Could geoengineering - altering global climate using technology - be the "magic bullet" to cure Earth's rising fever?

[One] idea is to fire hundreds of rockets loaded with compressed sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere to create a vast but thin "sulphur sunscreen", which would behave like a sun-tan lotion for our planet, increasing its albedo, or reflectivity. Such an idea may chime of the same bells as a big budget science fiction film, but let us not be so dismissive. The famous volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991 provides evidence for this proposal which is the brainchild of Professor Paul Crutzen, Nobel Prize winner in 1995 for his work on the ozone layer. Twenty million tonnes of sulphur dioxide were thrust 20km into the atmosphere where the particulates remained as a thin veil for years, spreading around the Earth to lower global temperatures

by a sizeable 0.6°C. The major setback of this strategy: the simultaneous part-destruction of the ozone.

[Another idea is] fertilising the Earth's oceans with iron to increase phytoplankton activity, thus raising their "carbon sink" capacity. In the latter, trials by SOFeX scientists in the Southern Ocean have been successful in initiating massive phytoplankton blooms which acted as an effective carbon reservoir and boosted ecosystems. Global warming and the fishing crisis solved in one fell swoop? [...]

Cynics may recoil at the astronomical expense of a sulphur Sun shield or gigantic orbiting parasol, and most advocates of geoengineering schemes would concede that they might not represent the complete answer- but they could bide us the time needed to heal our planet, whatever the cost.

Ali Tasleem



Some geo-engineering techniques attack the root of the problem, carbon dioxide, head on. Artificial trees which, like real trees, can absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere are an option. A solution of sodium hydroxide flows through the trees and absorbs carbon dioxide forming sodium carbonate. However, in order to release carbon dioxide, the carbonate must be heated, which, unless a green energy source is used, would undo the effort made to collect the gas in the first place. Storing the gas is another problem. Although injecting the gas into some geological formations, like saline aquifers and depleted oil fields,

is claimed to be a safe manageable option, the long term effects of the process are unknown.

Sequestration; storing carbon dioxide in solid minerals, is a similar method. For example, serpentine is a type of rock found in quantities sufficient to store the carbon dioxide produced by the world's entire known fossil fuel reserves. The absorption of the gas by the rock yields magnesite, which can be used in bricks. The energy needed to process and transport the rocks, however, could take us back to square one.

Hassan Al Halwachi



The Bahraini press noted Hassan's success in the School's competition



David Paw
Arts Editor

I love summer. In our wonderful little town, we need little more than a partial break in the clouds to run outside and work on the tan. And then it starts pissing it down and everyone runs back inside. Will we ever learn? Probably not. However, every angry-looking rain-laden cloud has a creative silver lining. So when park / beer garden fatigue sets in, take advantage of the elating cool and stillness of pretty much every major gallery in town,

While everyone else is sweltering and pretending to be fabulous and not on the verge of heatstroke, you can indulge in having a gallery all to yourself and not have it interrupted by screaming kids, people parking in front of pictures and blocking your view, poseurs and irritable boyfriends who would rather be somewhere else.

Of course, you might want to head out as soon as you can. Unfortunately, Muñoz's display at the Tate has just ended, but you can still catch Peter Doig, Duchamp and Man Ray there. And if you haven't been over to the Shad Thames to check out the little nook of town by the Design Museum, don't hesitate to go as soon as you can.

Richard Rogers really is one of our national treasures. Technically marvellous, recognisable and incredibly well-designed, he makes a fine British pairing to his more showy contemporary Sir Norman Foster. However, I would disagree with Caz on the aesthetics front, though I can see her point on the more organic and naturalistic aspects of design.

Sadly, not everyone is inclined to discuss the aesthetics and direction of art and design as a discipline; the people commissioning and working in such buildings will probably not care. Specifications? Cold. Sleek. Something to make the rivals jealous. Which is probably why so many artists have a collective income equivalent to one NHS consultant.

Which is the extraordinary thing about architecture. Though perhaps not guaranteed to land one in the megabucks, as Caz stated in her piece a discipline melding aspects of creativity with science can be immensely appealing. And when the element of public service comes into it, it can be altogether more satisfying.

It seems to be unique in that sense in straddling the divide between creative and scientific. How many other mainstream disciplines can truly claim that? Of course, not everyone is inclined to both camps, which explains the existence of science meccas like M.I.T., Caltech and, yes, Imperial.

Also, don't forget to check out the new issue of Phoenix out in the next few weeks. We've been working hard on it and we hope you pick up a copy to read in the quad on a sunny day. We'll be releasing not one but two issues this term, so check for us in the last week of term two?

Sadly, that means more work for your poor old editor. Summer? What summer?

Juan Munoz rocks the Tate

Shahania Begum explores one artist's intriguing perspective at the South Bank

To be honest, before I went to view this exhibition, I was quite unfamiliar with the work of Spanish sculptor Juan Muñoz. All I knew was that he was renowned for sculptural works in which he situates the human figure within elaborate or complex architectural settings. I was curious as to what else would be on offer at the first major retrospective of Muñoz's work in the UK and how I as the viewer would engage with these choreographed exhibitions.

Muñoz was born in Madrid in 1953. Having worked as a curator and studied in London and New York he also exhibited his own works – which were principally sculptures. Having also been an accomplished writer and draughtsman, it may have been his storytelling ability combined with his fascination with the way that the viewer encounters a work of art which brought about his international prominence in the mid-1980s.

His early work included iron welded spiral staircases starting and leading to nowhere, and incongruous balconies attached to a blank wall which encourages the viewers to be the voyeurs, imagining themselves watching people from the balcony, as well as being watched. One of his early works includes a piece called *If only she knew* (1984) an iron house-like structure restrained by skinny supports, containing a single female carved stone figure surrounded by several wooden male

figures under a peaked roof. This piece suggested the feeling of entrapment for women, perhaps being in a male-dominated environment. Hmm... seems somewhat familiar. I wonder if Muñoz visited Imperial College during his time in London.

The Wasteland (1987) was Muñoz's first large-scale exhibit, inspired by the poem of the same name by T.S. Eliot. *The Wasteland* is a very dramatic composition of a statue and space which influenced David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*. As you enter the room, at the far side is a small bronze figure, sitting tight on a little iron shelf sticking out of the wall too high for his dangling feet to touch the ground. But between you and him, the patterned floor is an image composed solely of interlocking cubes. You feel inclined to walk across this disorientating surface rather uncertainly. In the process you yourself become an involuntary performer in the work. You don't know whether to view the frozen little man, with his feet in the air, as the prisoner of this room, or its master. It could even be a spell he has cast on the space around him which you may cross at your own peril.

By far the best exhibit was *Many times* (1999) which is a room full of a hundred slightly under life-size grinning bald Chinese figures, all with the same head and facial expression. The head was derived from a Belgian art nouveau bust. Muñoz choreographed single and multiple groups standing

around as if they were locked in conversation. However, the bodies hold such varied postures and gesticulations that you can't quite believe the heads are all identical. Also, none of the figures have feet: they stand on the floor cut off at their trouser bottoms. It's like the 'living statues' you encounter in Covent Garden: are they real or are they not? It's interesting having walked into the room, but you feel like you are surrounded by people laughing and engaged in silent conversation. The scale of the work is astounding and outnumbers the viewer, making you feel strange and isolated among them, almost as if you have become the exhibit on display.

Other pieces such as *Shadow and mouth* (1996) created a sinister atmosphere, almost like an interrogation scene out of a Film Noir with one figure sitting in front of a table and another against the wall. The mouth of the shadow moves slowly and discretely. It is almost as if the figure is whispering all his secrets to the wall. *The Dwarf and three columns* (1988) is exactly what the title states, three large column towers made of terracotta arranged in a square, but with the fourth column being replaced by a dwarf. Here Muñoz is using the human form as an architectural element as well, perhaps making a statement about how you can be overwhelmed by society making you feel diminutive at times.

Apparently Muñoz liked making

the viewer look upwards to look at his work. In this case it was to look at *The Rotating Hanging figures* (1997). In my view this was a cross between a horror freak show and a circus act which shows two acrobats hanging by their teeth dangling like a pair of seals with their legs kicked back in the air.

Muñoz and metaphorical side with pieces such as a drum made of wax with a pair of scissors stabbed through it representing a burst ear drum. There were also some less thought-provoking works such as his 40 Raincoat drawings, which were basically different perspective chalk drawings of the interior of his house as his mother had an affinity for feng shui.

There were also the *Crossroads cabinets* (1999) which from a great distance look like dazzling glass trophy showcases which you'd love to have in your living room until you realize they contain disparate objects and freaks of nature such as switch-blade knives, miniature doors, locks and miniature casts of resin body parts.

Overall through the highly considered placement of the figures, Muñoz entices the viewer into an engagement with the implied narrative unravelling within. Muñoz used tricks of perspective and scale to create a tension between the illusory and the real. In retrospect it was stimulating and Muñoz's tricks of scale and perspective really choreographed my experience as a viewer.



The crowd got a good laugh out of David James' "performance" for Portsmouth

London, Barajas and Ground Zero

Sir Richard Rogers and his team of architects are some of the finest international exports Britain has produced in the last half-century. We sent **Caz Knight** to the Shad Thames to find out why

Hitherto, uncharted territory for me. And so I arrived at the Design Museum many boroughs away from my SW bubble in the orient; that is, in Shad Thames.

The Design Museum resides in the shadow of Tower Bridge and is in one of the most pleasant and well-situated locations for a museum. The Design museum is nestled among winding cobbled streets right on the South Bank and sits quietly along the river next to an inviting collection of bistros and bars.

I had little idea of what to expect from either the museum or the new exhibition, "Richard Rogers and Architects: From the House to the City", but upon entering the museum I did feel as if I epitomised the more adult equivalent of "child in a sweet shop/toy store"! The museum certainly looks as if Apple lent a hand with the decor: uncluttered, white-walled, minimal, airy and with just the right amount of bright neon colour splashed about the place. Upon entering the exhibition, my awe only deepened as I beheld an immaculately laid-out presentation of the life work of Richard Rogers (and Architects).

One of the leading names in architecture, Richard Rogers is of both Italian and English extraction and began his career working on a private house in Cornwall, a far cry from the international creations he now has in his repertoire.

Moving onto the Pompidou building in Paris in the late seventies, he has since worked on projects all over the globe including my favourite, Barajas terminal building in Madrid (a serpentine, undulating building, the inside resembling a remnant vertebrae of an ancient stegosaurus), housing in Korea (which look curiously like a Jenga game made out of white Rubik's cubes), stadiums in Japan, the Millennium Dome (on time and on budget – is this a first in British history?), the South Bank centre, Heathrow terminal five as well as the work in progress on Ground Zero. Rogers' work at Ground Zero is one of five new towers to be built at the site, and not to be confused with Daniel Libeskind's monumental Freedom Tower.

Rogers' main focus is the process of construction, and how it fits in with people and the buildings' social context. This was extremely clear as I worked my way around the seven themed areas of the exhibition: Work in Progress, Transparent, Systems, Legible, Lightweight, Green, Urban. Each section is beautifully colour coded and prevents people with pitiful knowledge of design and architecture feeling clueless and baffled. What the exhibition is comprised of is just that: the life work of this indispensable architect.

It has amazingly constructed mini-recreations of the buildings, photographs and the final products and the works in progress, blueprints as well as concise articles on the background behind each creation. I marveled at the tiny, silver trees that accessorised the model buildings, and the red Perspex toilet and sinks in another, all complete with appropriately proportioned model people. All the information is displayed attractively on large Apple Mac screens, free from the burden of superfluous wiring and cumbersome hard-



Top: Rogers' gorgeously structured and curvaceous design for Barajas airport and Bottom: The epically industrial Lloyd's building in the City

ware. (PC's have so much to learn!)

As I meandered my way through each "theme" I became evermore confused about my feelings towards these constructions. This is a man who has an invaluable talent and is abundant in his professionalism and ability to conjure up buildings that are extremely efficient and beneficial to society through their function.

However, they all seemed to be made of glass and metal, not pleasing to the eye in any way. I yearned to see something that reminded me that we live in a world made of wood, grass and stone. Alas, I must accept that, although frustrating, modernisation is unavoidable and although it may be a lot more

agreeable to live in cute Cotswolds cottages, a decline in economy and infrastructure is not an option.

However, Rogers is extremely aware of the environmental effect of buildings. In his project (in conjunction with Imperial College, no less) he has designed a turbine tower in which the environment has been used as an architectural generator. In many of his building the use of glass has minimised the amount of energy needed to heat the building in winter, as well as the energy needed to cool it in summer.

Of Heathrow Terminal 5 is written, "...a single span curved roof over the 400m long hall, instilling a sense of calm on the intense activity below". I

wonder if Rogers knew just how much intense activity (i.e. pandemonium/chaos/Bedlam) would ensue following its opening and just how many bags were lost and flights cancelled. Obviously his roof was not enough to prevent Heathrow doing exactly what we expected.

The room in which the exhibition is housed is relatively small compared with other museums, although one can easily spend over an hour and a half working one's way around it. For those who falter, there are some deliciously coloured neon pink sofas with magazines and books on the man himself to browse through. There is also a video interview to watch in which I discover

ered it was the amalgamation of science and art which drove his passion for his chosen discipline.

If I were Rogers, I would feel an intense sense of pride in seeing how much I had achieved in the way of how important my projects are and in how beneficial they are. No whimsical, pointless structures deposited unimaginatively in a town square to tick the box of 'art/culture', nor hoards of houses to satisfy the wealthy (although he has designed two). Richard Rogers is indeed a blessing to architecture though he may be a curse to aesthetics. Surely this is more important than aesthetics and one architecturally bereft girl's opinion?

Of Grand Tourists and Cherubs

Our roving culture vulture Rosie Grayburn samples the delights of Pompeo Batoni at the National Gallery



The author described this one as a “minx”. Not too sure about that but it beats smug tubby little bitches with wings and arrows. Excuse me? A what? What’s a cherub?

It was warm and sunny outside... *maybe that’s why no-one is around*, I thought to myself as I waddled to the new exhibition at the NG. The grand staircase down to the basement in the Sainsbury Wing was absolutely deserted. Last time I was here to see Renaissance Siena at Christmas, it was packed with tourists, old people AND screaming children – a perfect cross-section of your average cultural London attraction. Today, it was just me and a few score paintings by a once-famous Pompeo Batoni.

Pompeo Batoni was the most celebrated artist in 18th-century Rome. I had never heard of the guy and was keen to learn more about him. I just hoped he wasn’t all chubby cherubs and blushing goddesses. I picked up my handy audio guide and entered the 1st room. It was all chubby cherubs and blushing goddesses. Shit.

The first painting that caught my eye was *The Triumph of Venice*. It is one of his early works and was commissioned by the Doge of Venice to commemorate how brilliant his city was. On receiving this commission, Batoni must have got out his ‘1000 Easy Ways to Put Symbolism into Your Paintings’ book out and just copied every single one down onto the canvas. There are more divine beings here than you can shake a stick at and more allegories than you could fit on one giant shell (as

depicted). There are random objects lying around all over the chaotic scene, all of which hold some kind of connection with Venice’s prosperity. There are cherubs bouncing around the frame holding pan pipes, set squares and hammers symbolising music, architecture and sculpture, thus referring to all the things Venetians are good at. Blah blah blah.

Maybe for his first action as our new mayor, Boris Johnson will commission

“Pompeo Batoni was the most celebrated artist in 18th-century Rome”

a similar piece. He will sit on a giant shell before a landscape of London’s skyline and be surrounded by allegories of peace, gun crime and Starbucks. Cherubs will be perched around his head holding Olympic rings, Oyster cards and hard hats. Around their feet will be organic vegetables, fried chicken and marijuana plants. Boris will be flanked on either side by the Goddess of Council Tax and the God of Routemasters.

In the next room, I turn to my audio

guide for sanity as I see more and more cherubs. I will have nightmares tonight, I swear. The little device around my neck has become my very dearest friend. The commentary is concise and interesting, and I rather enjoy the different people they have roped in to talk about Batoni. It’s a change from just one smooth-talking lady instructing you on cherubs – there is a nice man who sounds like Loyd Grossman and some actor dude who talks in an appalling Italian accent pretending to be Batoni. This is the best audio guide ever. After most commentaries, there is an option to find out more info, which mostly includes gossip about Batoni, his patrons and fascinating snippets. Brilliant.

In room two the exhibition turns to the mythological. These ‘history painting’ scenes were incredibly fashionable at the time. Everyone wanted a bit from the Old Testament or Greek Mythology on their wall as it made them look educated! Due to their popularity, they fetched up to 6-times the price of a portrait of the same size. I liked Prometheus Fashioning Man Out of Clay, in which Prometheus is looking rather exasperated at Miranda who is just about to animate his first clay model using a butterfly, symbolising the soul. Prometheus clearly hasn’t finished him yet, as his tools are still poised to finish the man-bits. The generic ‘old man’, like Prometheus, is a theme recurrent throughout Batoni’s works - the wild



This gentleman crossed his legs to stop just a little bit of wee from coming out

grey hair, mad eyes and flailing arms.

Achilles also makes several appearances in Batoni’s paintings. Batoni seems to have taken it upon himself to be his personal biographer as practically all his life is played out over these walls. Poor Achilles had one messed-up childhood. He was educated by a centaur, then dressed up as a woman by his mother to protect him from joining the Trojan War. Fortunately, his penchant for swords gave his clever disguise away and off he went to war. The first two rooms of Batoni’s early work are deceptive. He doesn’t carry on painting looser allegories all his life: once he was recognised, he started to earn more and more commissions from a very different source.

In the mid 18th-century, it was custom for young gentlemen to go on a tour of Europe’s sights after finishing

their education. On their travels, it was customary for these visitors to pick up various souvenirs from the cities they visited. When they went to Venice, they commissioned a painting of its skyline by Canaletto; and when they went to Rome, they got their portrait painted by a well-known Pompeo Batoni. He was the portraitist of choice for British and Irish tourists on their ‘Grand Tour’.

These portraits of Grand Tourists are a breath of fresh air from the voluptuous mythological females next door. Batoni captures his patron’s appearance with great accuracy and honesty. I love the portrait of Lady Featherstonehaugh. Batoni portrays her as Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt. It reminds me of those creepy photo shops you find in tourist honey pots in which you dress up in a ridiculous Victorian

or cowboy costume.

So, Batoni had become a bit of a legend among the British upper classes. According to my precious audio guide, Batoni's studio was chaotic during the days as tourists flocked there to try and get a portrait done or just to see him at work! However, not all of his patrons were British. The unique horizontal framed portrait of 'Duchess Gerolama Santacroce Conti' is completely gorgeous. She relaxes in her elegant chair while doing her toilette and draping pearls in a dish while her see-through nightdress, or peignoir, is lazily undone. PHWOAR! This is nothing like the rest of the portrait. Her dirty husband commissioned this portrait of his wife-to-be and it was hung in their private sexy-time bedchamber above the door. Kinky or what? Apparently, the curator had great fun hanging this on the same wall as a painting entitled 'Meekness'.

The fourth room is full of the grandest Grand Tourists, and we see those huge life-size 'swagger portraits' that grace the Great Halls in stately homes. Yummy. It should be noted that these Grand Tourists were absolutely despised by the locals. They were rowdy, drank too much and were very arrogant. That's right, guys. Brits Abroad haven't changed one bit these last 300 years.

The most arrogant of the 'swagger portraits' is 'Colonel the Hon. William Gordon'. From the way Batoni has portrayed him, he is the embodiment of Scotland. He is swathed in tartan like a toga and his pose is very martial, grand and overconfident. You can imagine him bashing his way into Batoni's studio and rudely asking for his portrait to be done in an incomprehensible Scottish accent. I love the way Batoni has positioned a ruined version of the Coliseum in the landscape, as though

Colonel Gordon has demolished it himself.

Most of these Grand Tourists were depicted in Roman surroundings, with their hand placed strategically on an ancient artefact or bust. However, the

"her see-through nightdress, or peignoir, is lazily undone. PHWOAR!"

6th Duke of Gordon was a special case. At first, he was achingly excited about going to Europe - he hired the best guide and paid for all his comforts to come with him. But when he actually got round to going he refused point blank to get out of his carriage! Fortunately, he did manage to ask Batoni for a portrait, although he shouldn't have

"Batoni got more and more frank with his portraits, dispensing completely with flattery."

bothered. Maybe out of spite, Batoni painted The Duke as if he were hunting back home in the Scottish Highlands! "Bloody tourists", he would have said.

As he got older, Batoni got more and more frank with his portraits, dispensing completely with flattery. If you

were ugly, he wasn't going to change that fact on canvas. The last room of the exhibition demonstrates this, along with the more intimate and sensitive characterisations of the sitters. These portraits are very life-like and likeable. It is evident when Batoni liked his sitter if he depicts them looking intelligent or lively. In addition, his mood was obviously lightened by the retreat of the Grand Tourists in the 1780s when war in France between the French and English prevented much tourism. The portrait of Louisa Grenville is the most sparkling portrait in the entire exhibition. According to Ms A. Guide, "she was the most amiable person who ever lived", and Batoni confirms this in her bubbly depiction.

This exhibition marks the 300th anniversary of Batoni's birth and is a major achievement in terms of reviving a long-forgotten artist. Many of these paintings have been cleaned and restored for the exhibition and they look incredibly fresh as if they had been painted yesterday. The curators are also very proud of the fact they have 'freed' a lot of these paintings from private collections, especially the beautiful Marriage of Saint Catherine. This painting meant a lot to Batoni because he apparently modelled the Saints Catherine and Lucy on his two ex-wives. It has been kept in a dark corner of the Italian Presidential palace for years and it's great that it manages to get a good airing at this exhibition. I loved the exhibition, despite the rather grey, empty atmosphere in the gallery. It is a real unique opportunity to see his paintings; I recommend swaggering along and having a nosey!

Pompeo Batoni is on until 18th May. It costs £4 with your Imperial card and if you don't go, I'll set Achilles on your ass.



Back in the day, The Sartorialist didn't exist. So you stood like a statue for about a month while some noob did the hard work. But it was all totally worth it, as evidenced here



So basically this is what the Felix office looks like half the time, avec nakedness



Film

Film Editor – Zuzanna Blaszczak

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Zuzanna Blaszczak Film Editor

Another year is coming to an end, necessarily bringing along a few changes. While some lucky people leave us to finally do something interesting with their lives, others take over their work, hoping to continue doing as good a job at it as they did (or at least not making fools out of themselves). This term sees the beginning of the process to replace the *Felix* Film editor. Under the guidance of Alex Casey I'll be slowly taking over his position as the Film editor so that when the new term starts after the summer holidays, the Film section won't be missing from *Felix*.

Now just a few words about what you should expect in the new issues. I'll do my best to have a film section printed out in *Felix* every week, but can't make any promises about that. I am interested in a vast range of film genres and so I'd like to keep this section pretty mingled. I enjoy writing about really crap movies (they are so much easier to write about) so expect to see a lot of reviews beseeching you not to see something and thus saving you 10 quid. But if you are feeling like doing some lavish spending then hopefully the DVD section, which I'm planning to start, will help you when you're out of ideas. Don't anticipate interactive parts in the section like quizzes or puzzles or what-not, but do look out for a Comments section where you can post your opinions about movies if you don't feel like writing a whole review but want your views heard nevertheless.

If you feel like getting yourself heard, then contribute to Felix Film. Send your articles to: felix.film@imperial.ac.uk

One of Hollywood's greatest

Are you tired of seeing the same old faces on the screen and bored of George Clooney's over-confident countenance? Stefan Carpanu has the answers



George C. Scott as the American tank commander during World War II, General George S. Patton

There are many things that can be said about actors and a bunch of people make sure to say them. But there's nothing sweeter, in my experience of film, than to discover an actor by yourself and to let him drag you along in an exploration of cinema. Especially when you reach a point of saturation; when you've seen what you wanted to see and don't really know what to see next, an actor can prove extremely helpful.

George C. Scott is one of these actors, having helped me out of late. Probably not as well known as his contemporaries, such as Marlon Brando and James Stewart, Scott is a four times Oscar nominated actor who had a severe distaste for the whole show thrown up by

Hollywood. He refused to be nominated for his performance in *The Hustler* (1961) on his second nomination for best supporting actor – *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959) was the first – and after being awarded the Oscar for Best Actor in a leading role for *Patton*, he did not accept it. His justification was that he did not feel himself to be in a competition with other actors, but he is also quoted to have said that the Oscars were all a "meat parade".

Ironically, the first film I saw Scott in, not knowing who he was or what he had done, was *12 Angry Men* (1957), his first of two excellent remakes with Jack Lemmon – the second would be Scott's last film, *Inherit the Wind* (1999). Only

a few years later did I get to see *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). His famed over-the-top performance, which he was "tricked into" by director Stanley Kubrick, stuck with me even more than Peter Sellers' three character bonanza (not to say that Sellers wasn't brilliant himself). At that time though, I still felt film had many other things to offer and I shamelessly ignored George C. Scott until I laid eyes on *Patton*, earlier this year.

In *Patton* he delivers an exquisitely balanced portrayal of the eponymous eccentric general who led the US armies during World War II in North Africa and Sicily. It's really these kind of performances that gives films the level

beyond the array of technical excellence which, however brilliant, rarely leads to a feeling of real satisfaction and fulfilment.

Next I moved on to the film which brought Scott his fourth Oscar nomination, *The Hospital* (1971), a very bizarre, dark comedy with an unusual plot and even more unusual characters. While the actors' performances were convincing and the Oscar-winning script really turned it all up a notch, *The Hospital* surely isn't a film fit for everyone's tastes, so approach at your own risk. In *The Changeling* (1980) he co-starred with Melvyn Douglas, in a film about a house with a dark past: a cross between the recent *The Orphanage* (2007) and something of an Oliver Stone-ian political thriller. Although not the most enticing of films – as it often happens when you simply go along for the ride – it's worth the time for fans of the spooky genre. My next step will be *Petulia* (1968), starring Julie Christie, of which I've seen a bit before being taken aback by the weirdness of it.

After I run out of films in which Scott takes up leading roles, I'll probably want to see his other two Oscar nominated films and hopefully change tracks to someone else, like James Stewart (likely) or Paul Newman (not as likely).

If you're wondering what this is all about, there are two points to my story. First, to write about the achievements of a great actor and perhaps attract some interest to his body of work. And second, to emphasise that watching films is not only about ticking away the great success stories, but also about exploring the unknown of cinema and, perhaps, ourselves.

If we get too bored of everything else, that is.

What is it about Indiana Jones?

It won't be long now before the whip-wielding, fedora-loving archaeologist graces our cinema screens again

Zuzanna Blaszczak Film Editor

Whilst waiting for the premiere of this fourth installation of an Indiana Jones movie, entitled *Indiana Jones and The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, and wondering how bad this sequel will turn out to be, I thought that it would be nice to try and find out what it is that made the first film such a cult movie.

Obviously there is the adventure aspect. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (the first in the series of Indiana Jones movies) starts off with an action-packed scene in an exotic location that sets the tone for the whole movie. The thrill of dodging huge, rolling boulders and dangerous, native inhabitants interspersed with numerous booby traps and the consequent near-misses that we are introduced to in the beginning continues throughout the whole movie, with a plethora of cliffhanger moments that make you move just that tad closer to the edge of your seat. And although

everyone knows the hero will always come out unscarred, the audience's fascination with the perilous incidents doesn't end till the very last minute.

The credit for this goes to George Lucas and Steven Spielberg who use, with excellent results, their ability to bring a childlike joy and happiness to the process of movie watching, reminding us that movies are ultimately about good entertainment. The additional bonus is that the film can boast a plot that is able to move the story forward in between all those bar brawls, long jumps over precipitous drops, and last minute escapes in airplanes.

Then, of course, we have Harrison Ford, who perfectly catches the essence of Indiana Jones. In the movie he is a fantastic blend of self confidence, reckless daring, quick wits and an ability to take himself a little bit less seriously than everyone around him, which saves him from being simply an arrogant smart-ass. It is Ford's tongue-in-cheek acting that ironically gives

the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* a warmth that I believe will be very hard to find in the new sequel.

Having said that, and despite the lead actor's significant advance in age since 1981, I'm still looking forward to seeing Indiana Jones on the big screen for the first time. Mainly because of the assurances made by Steven Spielberg that he has tried to keep computer generated imagery to an absolute minimum, using instead the traditional stunts that have proved so successful in the previous installments. If, on top of that, the director manages to somehow endow *The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* with an 'old school' feel (like the other sequels had) and doesn't forget that the success of the movie ultimately depends on whether Indiana Jones' personality and his character shines through all the action, it might be worth spending the 10 quid to watch the old man trying to find the treasure again. And who knows, maybe Harrison Ford just gets fitter with age?



I don't remember Indy having quite so much grey in his hair

Try our fantastic new evening menu at the Union.

Exciting new menu with all your favourites

Freshly prepared to order

Order at the bar and we'll bring the food to your table

Premium ingredients at non-premium prices!

Served weekday evenings in all of our bars.

Treat yourself to one of our yummy puddings

Including...

6oz Aberdeen Angus Burger

100%
Beef

Grilled Halal Chicken Breast

The Union Classic Fish Finger Sandwich

Cumberland Sausage & Mash with Onion Gravy

Caesar Salad with Parmesan Cheese and Croutons **V**

Wedges & Curly Fries
Try them with toppings!
Cheese
Chilli
Beans

Eat well; do well!

imperialcollegeunion.org/feedme

Food at the Union.

imperial
college
union



Music

Music Editors – Peter Sinclair and Susan Yu

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Susan Yu
Music Editor

Summer is well and truly here! According to me, at least, anyway. Glorious days of immeasurable bliss, of sitting in Hyde Park, chilling out and having music on full blast. Music at this time of the year may be palpably soothing and stress-releasing for those who are stuck in a haze of exam preparations, or for individuals who have already jumped the big hurdles; well, there is no better time than now to party away. Rock and roll!!

This summery train of thought has inevitably got me thinking of summer grooves. Songs that get us on our feet or simply sweet melodies reminiscent of past summers and the delicious memories of letting oneself go and getting high on cloud nine. For me, 'Mambo Number 5' by Lou Bega and 'Dancing in the Moonlight' by Toploader epitomise fun and laughter on hot summer days. I can almost hear the ice cream van purring in the distance...

Alternatively, both 'Summer Son' and 'Inner Smile' by Texas as well as the brilliant New Radical's sensation 'You Get What You Give' catapult me back to my high school summer vacations, where the pinnacle of life was pure enjoyment. Good old days. In contrast, 'Crazy in love' by the one and only Beyonce paints a passion-fuelled picture of the intoxicating nature of summer romances, of falling head over heels. In love or daydreaming perhaps...

The other day, I discovered a hidden gem in my iTunes library that I had totally ignored. A crime against Mother Music. Apologies. Basically, I had been given the first Scissor Sisters album and, as you do, imported it into my music library without really exploring what the music had to offer. It was by chance that I had an afternoon off one day that I decided to have a quick lie-down and chose to play the album. And gosh, Scissor Sisters are mindblowingly AWESOME! Previously, I had heard a few of the band's tracks on the radio and did fall for the resoundingly bittersweet 'Mary', as well as taking a strong liking for feel-good anthems like 'Take Your Mama,' 'Laura' and 'I Don't Feel like Dancing.' But what really captured my soul was 'It Can't Come Quickly Enough.' A rather bizarre and ambiguous title but you cannot help but be entranced by vocalist Jake Shears' breathtaking intonations, the exquisite melody and powerful lyrics. If you haven't given Scissor Sisters a shot, man, you are seriously missing out big time.

Even though Goldfrapp's new album 'Seventh Tree' has already come out this February, I don't think it's too late to give the album a whirl, so I have rightly included a belated album review for you readers. In addition, my colleague in honour has supplied us with a 'Cage the Elephant' interview. Don't ask questions. 'Tis very long. But simply read and relish!

We've got a mountain of CDs sent to us over the holidays, and there's always gigs that need going to. If you fancy getting some free stuff, give us an email at music.felix@gmail.com

Philosophical Elephants

Cage the Elephant delves deep into religion, their past and present experiences and on how one's upbringing can indefinitely shape one's music: or so it seems...

Cage the Elephant Interview by Peter Sinclair

The two guitarists, Lincoln Parish and Brad Shultz from Cage the Elephant gave Felix the pleasure of talking to them.

Tell me about yourselves.

B: We're from Bowling Green, Kentucky. Small town, There's only about 60 thousand people there at the most. It's a college town.

L: There's nothing really to do there.

B: That's why we got into music.

L: No, there's actually a lot of really good musicians who've come out of Bowling Green over the years. It's kind of bizarre. It's always had a good history for good musicians and good bands.

Like who?

B: Well, nobody notable. This guy named Bobby Baldwin who toured with the Band of Gypsies and Eric Clapton and Santana.

L: He actually taught me guitar for a couple years.

B: He's fuckin' badass.

L: I got a volume pedal on my wall that was Carlos Santana's from this guy. He's always been in rock and roll, then he came back home and decided to straighten his life out so he became a preacher.

B: That's what everyone does in our town. We live in the Bible Belt.

L: The Bible Belt consciousness got to him and he decided to come back home.

I've read that one or more of you grew up on a Christian Hippy Commune

B: That would be Tichenor. He was born on it, and my dad lived there with his dad. They were hippies and my dad always played music. He was in a few bands – one started to get big but then his drummer got killed in a crash, so then he turned real Christian and they live on this big Christian hippy commune thing, and they all sat down and played Christian music together.

How did that all work, how did 'Christian' and 'hippy' go together?

L: It's kind of you know, the last strain of hippies who found Jesus through acid. Jesus Freaks they call them, back in the States. Somehow they found God through all that stuff.



An uncaged elephant

Are you guys religious?

B: I'm religious to the point where I believe in God and Jesus and all that stuff, but it's not the institution that people make it. Church, it's been for several hundred, maybe even since it got started...it hasn't been the same ever since someone found out they could make money off religion that's when it started going down the shitter. I'm not saying that every church or that everybody is that way, but Church has become a big business now.

L: It's more a social thing, than people going there for religious reasons.

B: Back in the day, Christianity was mystical. People met in caves in secret, and you could get killed for doing it, it was like the rebels. Not that I think now people should be meeting in caves or anything, but people should still be wanting to learn about stuff, not just "Oh I'm here, I'm being seen. Everybody look at me putting money into the bag".

L: Seriously, no joke. Down in the south if you don't give money to the church people will look at you in a completely different way. You'll get evil looks.

B: People who take the pastor out to dinner and they think they're special for one day. How the hell does that make it special?

L: The preacher's not God.

B: Yeah not shit. If you said you were taking Jesus out for lunch or something you know..props!

You seem kind of cynical about it.

B: We're cynical about it becoming an institution but you know, the religion – I have faith in what I have faith in. I won't go around forcing it on people.

Can you describe your music for people who haven't heard it?

L: Rock and roll, punk, funk, whatever we come up with

What kind of bands did you listen to as kids?

L: A lot of us weren't allowed to listen to much

B: Me and Matt and Titchner were only allowed to listen to Christian music as young kids. Of course, I snuck a Jimi Hendrix tape into the house. And my dad, if he was feeling real good man, in a real good mood, he'd put on some Joe Cocker or some Pink Floyd or some Steppenwolf.

L: I had an Eminem CD that I'd bought when I was like 10 years old. I'd been hiding it in my room under some clothes, and my mom went to clean my room and was going through my shit and found it. She was like "You do not need to be listening to this." She threw it away and I cried. This was the Marshall Mathers LP. When I was 13 and I'd been playing guitar for about a year, my dad went out and bought me the Led Zeppelin 'Early and Latter Days', the two disk thing. So that was the first time I really heard rock and roll like that. It was cool.

B: Me and Matt got into rock and roll through sneaking it. Then our parents got divorced when we were about 13, 14. Once they got divorced, everything started being...I dunno, they just kind of loosened up a little bit. They had other stuff to worry about. And we'd play the two sides against the other. "Mom let's me do it" so dad was like "Well fuck it!" you know? Then we just got into a bunch of music after that. We were discovering all these new bands for the first time. It was weird because it was like we were discovering them on our own – we'd go to our friends and be like "Oh my God, have you heard of this band the Talking Heads, they're so badass", and they were all like "Dude, everybody knows

who the fucking Talking Heads are"

L: Once you open that door it's like a whole new world to you. It's just so cool be exposed to music like that when you've never heard anything like it.

What kind of music are you into nowadays?

L: All kinds of stuff

B: Jimi Hendrix, Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd

L: A lot of old stuff, but also a lot of new bands. Everybody in the band is always trying to find a really hip new band who are on the cutting edge. You wanna be doing something that nobody else is doing so you need to see what everybody else is doing.

B: Bands nowadays, we like The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Tokyo Police Club, The White Stripes, The Raconteurs.

L: There's a lot of bands that we'll play with on the road that we'll find nobody else knows of. There's this band called Mason Proper, they're really sick. There's all kind of cool bands you can discover that nobody else knows about. Like that band Illenios.

B: Yeah Illenios, they're supposed to be Jack White's new favourite band or something. A buddy of ours knows Jack White's tour manager, who's the guy that turned him on to Illenios.

L: Autovaughn, they're killer live. We saw them play in Austin and they put on one of the best shows. They killed it. Brad was so wasted he got up on stage and like, trashed the stage.

B: They're buddies of ours. I was standing in the front row rocking out and Darren came over and head-butted me in the head and pushed his head against mine so I pushed him back into the stage, and then they were just rocking out so I just got up on stage and started kicking the drums, it was crazy as fuck. The whole stage was just destroyed. This was at a place called Chuggin' Monkey.

What kind of places do you like to play in?

L: Playing small little shithole bars back him that hold about 200 people, and there's 350 people in there sweating their asses off, breaking everything, it doesn't get much better than that.



Cage the Elephant



Cage the Elephant's guitarist looking every bit the Mr Rock and Roll

But then when you do the really big shows it's got its own cool thing about it. They are just different.

B: I like the bigger shows where you can jump our and crowdsurf and get crazy with everybody.

What's the biggest show you've played so far?

L: 4000?

B: We toured with Queens of the Stone Age for a while, so there were probably about 5000 people at those shows. That was cool, 5000 is good enough for me.

L: It's so cool at those big shows opening for big bands, we enjoy it probably as much as everybody else does, so we'll go out there in the mosh pit. People are so surprised to see us out moshing with everybody else.

B: There's no reason to set yourself apart, I'm just as much a Queens of the Stone Age fan as everyone else.

L: Queens of the Stone Age were really good, really nice to us. That was the first big tour we've been on, and they kind of took us under their wing.

B: Yeah man we had no fucking clue. We'd done spot shows for a couple of bands, but we're still a pretty young band. We've only been together for a year and a couple months.

How did you come together to form the band?

B: Me, Matt and Jared had been playing music together since we were in

highschool. Me and Matt are brothers. Jared, we've been jamming with him since we were like 16 years old. We were in this other band, and one of our players went AWOL, and another one decided to quit and do his own thing, so we got together with Titchner who had never played bass before. He plays guitar. We knew him through our dad and all the things that our parents used to do together. So we were out one night and Titchner was wasted and he was like "Let me try out for the band!!". We were like "Can you play bass?" And he was like "Yeah yeah I can play bass". He goes out and buys a bass the next day, comes to band practice and he's absolutely horrible. I talked to Matt – "Dude let's give him a chance to practise up. So a week later he comes in, blows the roof off the place. I was like "Holy shit". Seriously, I couldn't believe it. Now you listen to his bass lines, and they are so complicated. I don't know how he caught on so fast but he did it. Then Lincoln, he was just this 15-year-old kid that kept hitting us up on the internet – "Hey guys lemme try out for your band". Jared was like "Fuck that. I'm not gonna be in a band with 15, 16 year old." We were 22 at the time.

L: I had just turned 16.

B: So that's when he first tried out, we kind of jammed together and then we just became a band after that. Started writing new material, then we were thought let's get into the studio and get

this whole thing started.

L: We just jammed and they were like "We're going to do these three demos tomorrow, why don't you come", and I was like "OK".

B: That was the first time Lincoln really jammed with us a lot, besides coming over for like an hour and mucking around. I guess after we did that demo we decided to be a band. Came up with a name. That came through a conversation Matt had with somebody about society and, talking about the elephant and a lot of different religions. In a lot of different things, the elephant is held in a good light. People are always talking about the elephant's memory. So him and a buddy were talking about how society kind of resembles an elephant and how, not just the media but everything in general tries to put a cage on the elephant. They want to cage that goodness that everybody has in them.

L: All you see on the news is negativie crap..

B: Yeah, you see war, three people got gunned down, five people got stabbed. You don't hear about anything good, nothing. I don't think that's how it actually is, it's just what sells. It's consumption by fear. You're afraid that you're gonna get zits so what do you do? Go out and get some pimple cream. You're afraid that you're gonna get gunned down so what do you do? Go out and get whatever you need to protect yourself. You're afraid that the world is gonna end so you go to the grocery

store and buy up as much canned food as you can, you know? There's so many different ways to scare people, it's all just a marketing scheme.

Are the lyrics geared towards that, or is that just the name?

B: Matt talks about certain stuff, but it's not like he's preaching to anybody, saying to anybody how to change their lives. It's just different thoughts that he has. As far as lyrics are concerned, it's just thoughts that he has on life that he'd like to see happen in the world

L: Social stuff

B: Social stuff more than government politics. It's more of a social comment. It all starts with the people, they have the power to do whatever they want.

L: It's how he observes things

Can you describe a typical fan?

L: What I think is cool about our music is that it appeals to all different types of people. Not everybody's the same, it's pretty cool

B: We mix a lot of different shit in our music. We get tagged as a rock and roll band, but we're not totally rock and roll music. We have different elements to our music. We're touching hip hop, we're touching obviously rock and roll, touching punk music, touching funk, a little bit of everything.

Are you guys into hip-hop?

L: Yeah man. Lupe Fiasco is badass.

B: He's off the hook. I like a lot. NWA, Public Enemy, Snoop Dogg, Ice Cube.

Snoop Dogg's older material. He got lost along the way. He needs to start smoking pot again.

What's the weirdest question you've ever been asked?

L: Do you want some crack?

B: We were staying at this backpacking place when we played a show in Canada. North by north east, everybody in a hostel.

L: This chick followed us back to our room and we were smoking a bowl, and she was like "Do you want some crack?" Probably the craziest thing that's ever happened was after a Koko show, and this dude comes up to us as was like "Hey man, want some coke?" and I was like "Nah man, whatever", and he was like "If y'all got any coke, I've got some heroin to trade"

B: Haha, I was like "Damn!"

L: Dude was straight up trying to get us some heroin. I was like "No way."

B: Most interesting questions we've been asked in an interview...lemme ask Matt [opens the van and shouts to Matt] Matt! What's the most interesting question we've been asked in an interview. Most weird.

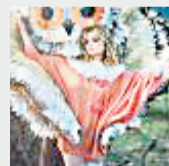
M: The weirdest question we've been asked in an interview was "Do you make any animal noises?" Don't ask me why they asked that. I replied "Only while I masturbate" That was the only answer I could think of for that. How do you answer a question like that? "Yes, actually I can make the sound of a lion."



The band trapped in a small, dark room and absolutely loving it

Goldfrapp's Seventh Tree blossoms gloriously

Album review



Goldfrapp
Seventh Tree
★★★★★

The genre-crossing pop sensation that is Goldfrapp have released their fourth album, 'Seventh Tree', which sold over 100,000 copies in the first week of release. Quite something. This follows the captivating, critically acclaimed, platinum-selling album 'Supernature'. Goldfrapp have delighted fans with their sheer diversity, from the electronic balladry of Mercury-nominated debut 'Felt Mountain' (2000) to the swaggering dancefloor beast of an album – 'Black Cherry' (2003), continuously bringing fresh and dynamic takes on the definition of true talent.

'Seventh Tree' is an electrifying maelstrom of sound, with cushy at-

mospherics, over which Alison Goldfrapp's sublime sensual vocals soar majestically. Her lush dreamy voice is as intoxicating as the overpowering scent of a rose, taking you to a dreamland of desire and ecstasy, evoking images of the Garden of Eden where everything shimmers with gold.

The album softly kicks off with 'Clowns', a misty concoction of gentle acoustic guitar and string instrumentation complemented by equally soothing, tender yet nearly incomprehensible vocals – 'Only clowns would play with...' One really does have to listen very hard to decipher the lyrics. Does it matter? No. The music does enough talking. The melody is simply and beguilingly beautiful. The picture painted defines the integral eerie stillness and the intangible, magical power of nature. 'Little Birds' carries on with the delicate, surreal dreaminess and undoubtedly bucolic feel, but sees the appearance of drums, swirling keyboards, a slinky bass-line and trance-inducing loops.

The pace dawdles in 'Road to Somewhere', part of the instrumentation subtly evoking water dripping in a

cave, tying in with the consummate natural essence of this striking album. 'Eat Yourself', a slow-burning, poignant number, envelops bittersweet chord changes, whilst Alison coos heart-breakingly, possibly reminiscent of Bjork. Seemingly effortless – 'If you don't eat yourself the pain will instead.'

Other notable beauties include 'A&E', which is their new single released 4th February. It will grip every listener with its gradual build-up, layered soundscape, culminating with a euphoric spell in the chorus. Meanwhile, 'Caravan Girl', a rare upbeat return to energy, will have you swinging back and forth, tapping your foot and jumping to the return of the pop cosmic soup.

Last but not least, 'Monster Love' brings together synthesisers and rich electronics, reverberating against the underlying rapid guitar riffs. Heavily textured and deeply ambient, bathing us in a haze of ebullient spring sunshine: 'the sun leaps out, it's clear again...'

No further proof is required. The duo's compelling ability to seduce listeners is at work once again.

Susan Yu



Goldfrapp's very own Alison



Imperial never looked so good

Nads Jumabhoy and Daniel Wan scour the crowds of Imperial College looking for those with style

A sunny Friday afternoon during exam time at Imperial, and every spare space in the library is taken up by a stressed-out student. It's probably one of the worst moments to approach someone to ask them whether they'd like to feature in this week's issue of Felix. Strangers scare me, and ones that look they've been reading obituary pages rather than revision notes scare me even more; and hence I didn't approach anyone. But the lovely *Nads Jumabhoy* did; completely unphased by the task of talking to people we thought had even an ink of style in their daily wear.

We seemed to inadvertently approach more Physicists than anyone else. We're not sure whether this is a correlation between studying Physics and looking good or not. Wouldn't that be a turn for a stereotypist's book?

I thought we'd struggle to find enough people who we thought deserved to be commended for what they were wearing that day, but also wouldn't mind being featured. However, we were pleasantly surprised at people's enthusiasm and cooperation in what Nads and I were trying to achieve.

Rather than shying away from the camera, many embraced the limelight they were due to receive in this issue.

The point of our little photo-snap-

ping expedition around College was to catch people during their usual day. You know, lectures, lunch and labs. (Our days are littered with alliteration!) We weren't looking for anything special, but after thousands of issues of Felix without the very people of Imperial College featured in Felix Fashion, Nads and I agreed it would be a good change from another article telling the latest decline of a supermodel or what to wear in the new season. If Fashion features one or two students from College, we feel it gives the readers something else; another reason to pick up the new issue of Felix on Fridays.

Hopefully, it'll work. Thousands, even millions, more people each week will grab Felix as soon as Tomo (the Editor) dumps them down in the distribution bins on Friday mornings, in the sheer excitement that Felix Fashion may or may not feature them and their friends. Or maybe not, but you never know.

I'd like to know what you think. Think we should have a similar feature each week? Got any better ideas you'd like to see? Email me at daniel.wan07@imperial.ac.uk.

For now, I'll leave you with this week's fashionable Imperialites we found pottering about College. Maybe it'll be you next week. Watch out for Nads with the notepad and yours truly with the broken Felix-owned camera.

Archibald, Medical Biogeographic Physicochemical Engineering, 6th Year

Firstly, we'll start with the standard dress around College; and people wonder why we have a reputation for being geeks. There's a few odd people that think it looks cool, even fashionable, to walk around with their lab coats on. The worst offenders are the ones that leave their lab coats open in a 'just nailed that electrophoresis experiment good' way. When they turn a corner quickly their 'coat tails' waver majestically in the air, and you can just tell they're thinking "How cool am I?" with a genuine lack of irony.

A prime example featured on the right is PhD student Archibald, his mates call him Prickface. He wears his labcoat outside of labs. When I said he had mates, I lied. Let's see what ol' Archie's wearing exactly:

Labcoat,

Issued in Fresher's Week, £15

Shirt,

Primark, £4

Spectacles,

NHS, £90

Petri Dish Accessory,

It doesn't even matter anymore.



Carlos, Maths, 1st Year



(Carlos, left)

Pea Coat,

Forever 21, \$48

Straight Jeans

Uniqlo, £20

Shoes,

Singapore, £10

Scarf,

Camden, £3

Badges,

from Kinder Eggs

Rosette,

Made by a friend

(Maddie, right)

Gold Smock,

New Look, £10

Cropped Jacket,

Moto Topshop, £25

Skinny jeans,

H&M, £15

Necklace,

made by boyfriend Tom

Sunglasses,

Camden, £6

Shoes,

New Look, £10

Bag,

Vintage, £15

Maddie, Biochem, 1st Year



Amandeep, Physics, 2nd Year

*(Amandeep, left)*

Cardigan,
Topshop, £15
Smock top,
Topshop, £15
Skirt,
Urban Outfitters, £30
Belt,
Charity shop, £2
Ribbed tights,
New Look, £4
Shoes,
Topshop, £15

Phil, Chemistry, 1st Year

*(Phil, right)*

T-Shirt,
Gap, £25
Blue cardigan,
Diesel, £80
Red skinny jeans,
Uniqlo, £20
Tan Jacket,
Zara, £Unknown
Brown shoes,
Kurt Geiger, £80

Melissa, Physics, 1st Year

*(Melissa, left)*

Dress,
H&M, £15
Hoodie,
Urban Outfitters, £5
Jelly Shoes,
Urban Outfitters, £10
Necklaces,
All Topshop, £10
Bag,
Topshop, £20

Christine, Physics, 1st Year

*(Christine, right)*

Knit top,
Unknown
¾ Trousers,
Topshop, £10
Tights,
Camden, £4
Pacman belt,
Camden, £8
Scarf,
Mum's
Bag,
Online, £3



Games

Games Editors – Azfarul Islam and Sebastian Nordgren

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Michael Cook Candle in the wind

Yeah, yeah, you've got exams. We've all got exams, big deal. But try as you might, you can't get through three, four or five weeks of work without needing some relaxation time at some point. And by relaxation, I don't mean collapsing into sleep for two hours, on top of a pile of notes.

That's what most people find best about gaming – it covers all the bases. I've got my Peggle for brief five-minute flirts with procrastination, and I've also got Grand Theft Auto III for when I'm looking to massacre a slightly larger portion of the day.

What I've found myself playing most, in fact, is GTA III. Not because I don't like GTA IV, or that I don't have a next-gen console to play it on, but simply because I've not played anything other than the original Grand Theft Auto in my life. A few weeks back, Steam tempted me into the land of Liberty City, and despite several years of rave reviews and friend recommendations, I was still surprised at just how good it is.

I have to say, I think it's the radio. The world does feel alive, certainly; there are plenty of people running around on the streets and the cars look nice. Buildings are decorated in that Rockstar manner of dark humour, and the sights still look lovely to me even with the graphics this old.

But the radio is the human voice. It's the background noise that every city needs, because even with missions and the like it's still the radio that feels most real. The radio doesn't talk to you about drugs busts or bank jobs. It just wants to sell you giraffes via mail order, and get you to discuss your views on military service.

Lips 106 is my station of choice for the first island. Cheap, commercial, it smacks of American media in all the good ways it can. The presenters are sugary, horribly happy and it feels great to bomb along Chinatown listening to some godawful pop. It gives that real Sunday-morning vibe to gunning down Triad members.

Like most good games, I'd initially been skeptical of Grand Theft Auto III. Because most people tell me that they enjoy just seeing how much damage they can cause, I assumed I wouldn't like it because that kind of will happens very rarely with me. I occasionally like to attract the attention of a helicopter, but in general I actually prefer the opposite – I prefer living in the city.

But that's why the game works, because it offers the freedom to do so. If you've got Steam and you want to know the minutiae of my gaming life, feel free to add me – I'm FinalSin on the Community. Alternatively, write and tell us your alternate gaming lives: games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Good luck with those exams, folks.

FYI Father, I have sinned

Michael Cook asks if you know what it's like to have killed a man. Then kills you



Sure, Blue Team wins... but at what cost?

Grass grows, sun shines, birds fly, and brother? I hurt people. But not in a childish way, or a loud and brash way. I don't run around with a stick of aluminium cleaving people's faces in, nor do I pump people full of lead. It's more subtle. In fact, even as the flickknife buries itself in your back, it's not the one-hit kill that hurts you. That's not how I work. I humiliate people.

When you go on to play Team Fortress 2 – Valve's epic first-person shooter that recently enjoyed a free weekend and a bunch of free content – you're not gambling much. There's no money on the table, and there's no fate-of-the-world scenario. Players gamble one of two things when they go online to game, and the most often lost of these is reputation.

Out of all of the playable classes, the Spy stands out as different. There are few gaming characters in multiplayer history who compare to him – hugely underpowered, incapable of dealing damage in most cases, and carrying items that are at best difficult to use, and at worst dependent on luck.

But when the Spy plays well, he stands out among every other player on the server. Spies are the passive-aggressives, they're the real bullies of TF2: more so than the Heavy or the Demoman. When you're disguised as a member of the opposite team, you have a special power over them. And it hurts on both sides of the monitor.

At the start of part of the Dustbowl map, the two teams tend to collect on either side of a corner. On the Red side, several gun emplacements are whirring, and Medics are preparing to heal the big damage-dealers. Heavies are

big and stupid, but they dish out the hurt like nothing else if they've got a Medic behind them.

I'm on the Blue side, wearing a pinstripe suit and smoking a delicate cigarette. It's decision time for the Spies, because disguises mean making a commitment. If someone sees you disguised at the start of a round, then people know you're there, and everyone gets edgy. Edginess means death.

Most people choose the average classes, the ones that blend in. Demo-

"I'm wearing a pinstripe suit and smoking a delicate cigarette"

man is a popular disguise, sometimes a Medic to lure people towards you. But good spies take the occasional risk too, and so today I'm slinging on a fat suit and disguising myself as one of the most obvious classes in the game – a Heavy. I tap the cloaking button and dash around the corner just as the last of my team die and go back to await respawning.

I dash up some steps, taking care to avoid others whilst I'm invisible, and leap into an alcove to wait for the right moment. The Reds are pushing around the corner, according to the stream of death messages flashing up, but it seems they're being pushed back. As the cloaking fades off, a Red Medic comes running back from the fighting. I'm sure he's seen me materialise out of

nowhere. There's a horrible moment where I see him switch weapon and consider running.

Only it turns out that he's switching to his healing gun. He turns it on. Interesting things start to happen.

A friend of mine says that he won't ever play the Spy on moral grounds. I don't know to what extent he's joking, and I suspect it's more to do with the fact that the Spy can be a little boring at times. When you're playing a Soldier – a more simple, damaging class that Halo fans might be familiar with – the game bobs along at a reasonable rate. You don't get any of the dizzying highs, really, but on the other hand you're always scoring, there's no dull period where you die repeatedly and have your plans dashed.

Because, other than reputation, the other thing we sacrifice by playing online is time. Team Fortress 2 helpfully reminds you of just how much time you've poured into it, and my top two classes alone score over a day's worth of play. That's not much, however, in comparison to others who have spent something approaching a week with a single character type.

So time is important. Time's important for Spies, because disguise and subtlety takes planning and patience. It's also important for Medics. By healing, a Medic can build up a special power that allows him to make a player invulnerable for a short time period. The standard tactic is to walk the player into the midst of the action, tearing apart player after player, before retreating to safety. That's why, as the medic begins healing me and I see that he's fully charged, I know that this is going to be a very awful sixty seconds for him.

I shout 'Medic!' once, for good measure, and then charge towards the front lines. To him, I look like a lumbering lump of muscle and gun – a brick shit-house that fires other, smaller brick shit-houses. But really, I'm a European chain-smoker with a knife fetish.

As we near the corner, I shout at him again and there's a reassuring 'whoosh' as he activates the charge and I glow a fierce red. I walk around the corner, and there is the rest of my team, all ready and respawned. To them, I appear as I really am. Small, weak, and tricky. A chorus of laughs goes out over the voice communication as they realise what I've done.

I walk further into them, and the Medic follows me to make sure he keeps the charge running. It's probably half full now, and I haven't fired a shot, something that will be making him suspicious. But, trooper that he is, he stays with it. A quarter left. A tenth. And the ubercharge is done.

Immediately, three heavies open up on the Medic, and he goes sprawling through the air into a bloody pile. He doesn't know what happened to me. He doesn't even know I was a Spy. In fact, as far as he's aware, his team is full of appalling players who get him killed and waste his time.

I run back to base and readjust my tie, my team still chuckling over the ingame chat. 'Do it again!' one of them cries.

But what they don't know is that, behind the cardboard cut-out mask, the balaclava is wet with tears. That Medic just wanted to help people. He just wanted to play the game, and have a good time.

What have I done?
* You Will Respawn As Medic

Games and Media 2008 at Imperial

Science meets Space Invaders, SHODAN and Sonic once again as the Imperial GaME Event returns



Last year's event included Peter Molyneux and David Braben discussing the future of the industry, as well as a host of technical talks on AI and hardware. These people came

Michael Cook

You probably remember the glory days when E3 was essentially its own nation for the three days that it took over part of America. People came, people discovered everything that was going to happen in the next twelve months, and then people left again.

Before you had the Internet, it was even more tantalising. You'd have to wait some time to learn what people had seen there, until the magazines began throwing exclamation marks on the covers and pictures that you hadn't seen before. It was an exciting time.

Some things change, and others stay the same. The Games and Media Event that Imperial plays host to each year is always a reminder that the world of gaming is branching out and making itself known elsewhere. It's also a sign that adding science to something always makes it more interesting.

GaME is designed to bring together people from the gaming industry – and further afield – with people from the world of academia. The series of talks and presentations organized each year range from the light-hearted to the mathematical, and this year's event looks to be no exception.

You can check out the expected itinerary to the right ("The Schedule So Far") – although it is still provisional, the lineup already includes a wide array of industry coverage.

The event, which falls on the 21st May this year, may clash with the exam

timetables of some departments, but its home department – Computing – will be free of revision by then. The event isn't designed to simply fill up space in the timetable with a few talks about maths, though.

"By developing a good long-term relationship with interesting university research groups, a company can both tap into the research community, and sometimes also guide it towards interesting problems" explains Professor Paul Kelly, one of the event organisers, "[The] industry still needs in-house effort, to bridge the gap between research idea and usable technique, and to make good choices informed by research, about when and how."

The relationship between media industries such as videogaming and research institutions becomes more and more important as technological innovation goes on. In particular, those with an analytical mind become in high demand, and so 'dream' jobs of working in industries that you used to dream of as a child, soon become more realistic when you attend events like this.

Framestore, for example, is a graphics and visual effects studio with an Academy Award-winning past, and a future that includes franchises such as Narnia, Batman and James Bond. But if you gave up hope of working in the film industry after you failed your Art GCSE, this event could help show you that there are places there for scientists too.

With previous events covering pro-

gramming for the Playstation3, stories of success from previous Imperial students in the big, wide, world of gaming, and requests for your help building games for the next generation, the event can be inspiring to gamers who never got into E3 before – which I'm fairly sure is most of us.

The event is free to attend, but registration is required on the website of the event, where you can also get up-to-date news on the lineup and the schedules.

The event may also showcase some work from Imperial that has ramifications for the industry – last year a wide range of presentations was seen: from facial recognition and graphics processing to massively-multiplayer online networking technologies.

"It is Imperial's mission to deliver scholarship, education and research," Professor Kelly tells me. "It's my belief this is a unique combination that makes universities very special."

Whether you're undecided about your future with research or careers; interested in the technology that makes today's games tick; or simply want to be in the same room as the guy who dressed Ian McKellen up in a polar bear suit, this year's Games and Media Event is not to be missed.

The Games and Media Event is scheduled for the 21st of May in Imperial's Huxley building. For more information, surf to <http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/game>

GaME 2008: The schedule so far...

While a lot of GaME's lineup is still unconfirmed, a few announcements have been made.

First up is Paul Miller from Rebellion – the development studio responsible for, amongst other things, Delta Force: Black Hawk Down and The Simpsons Game. He'll be talking about artificial intelligence in games, and this one's likely to be accessible even if you've never touched a computer except to play games.

A few industry-based talks have been scheduled from middleware developers such as Framestore, a company responsible for creating computer-generated graphics such as those seen powering everyone's favourite Polar-bear King, lorek of *The Golden Compass* fame.

Their talk – Tools and Techniques for Visual Effects – should prove a fascinating insight into some of today's cutting-edge visual work. Plus, hopefully, more clips of the bear.

In a similar vein, graphics and lighting company Geomerics will be giving a talk on how academic research can be applied to industries such as gaming and graph-

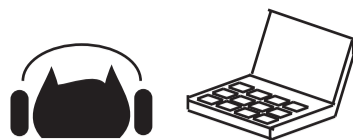
ics – of particular interest to people who might be considering applying their scientific skills to the media industries, or indeed to the polar bear industry.

For the more technologically-oriented, there are plenty of more meaty talks to be had too. Among the confirmed is Codeplay's Andrew Richards who'll be discussing multi programming and some solutions that Codeplay have come up with. Codeplay's work includes some incredible auto-parallellising technologies, so this is sure to be a worthwhile watch.

And there's more – the head of Imperial's Software Performance Optimisation Group will be giving a mind-expanding talk; co-founder of Games Workshop and all-round entrepreneur, Eidos' Ian Livingstone; and Kuju Studios' Adrian Hawkins will be talking about the industry skills shortage – and how you could plug it.

With more confirmations still to come, your best bet to keep abreast is to visit <http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/game>. You can also register for the event there, and look back on previous lineups.





Technology

Technology Editor – James Finnerty

felix@imperial.ac.uk

Social networking evolved

Alistair Turnbull discusses social networking sites of the past, present and future

In the beginning there was Myspace. It was new, fresh and exciting. The youth of the world flocked to this site, connecting with their old friends and making new ones. It quickly became one of the most popular sites on the internet. People could add anything to their profile page, and unfortunately lots of people did. Most profiles became a nightmare of badly implemented HTML, garish colours and automatically playing songs.

But then along came Facebook; with its fancy AJAX interface and simple yet stylish design it became a second home for a generation of university students. The novel way of connecting people through events and tagging in photographs forever changed the way people interacted online.

Then in May 2007 Facebook introduced applications. While on Myspace most people spent their time staying in touch with friends and visiting band pages, Facebook's applications added a whole new dimension to social networking. Almost overnight a plethora of ways to waste time arrived. Quizzes, games and hundreds of other applications for your profile suddenly appeared, and with them came application invitations. Annoyingly, these work in a similar way to pyramid schemes, by rewarding users for bombarding their friends with invites, who then often have to invite more friends to fully use the application.

These days Myspace is becoming much more like Facebook by giving people an updateable status and introducing applications. This is mainly due to the fact that Facebook's user-base grows by hundreds of thousands a day and in some countries has many more active users. This is bad news for NewsCorp who spent over \$500million buying MySpace and have yet to turn any meaningful profit. Therefore, desperate to keep their users while they figure out how to make a profit, they have to resort to imitating features from other sites. In my opinion, this won't help. Both sites became popular because they offered something new, and by copying Facebook, Myspace isn't doing this. That is why I believe that in the future neither site will reign supreme.

It reminds me of a statement I carry with me through life. As the story goes, King Solomon once asked his advisors for



6pages.com: Think Digg meets Facebook with a splattering of content from across the Internet

an assertion which would remain eternally true. They went away and discussed it and then came back with the phrase, 'This too shall pass'. All things change, for better or for worse. Though in the technological world, they generally get better.

The huge growth of Facebook in a matter of years shows how easily people will change between social-networking sites when something new comes along and there is no reason to think this won't happen again. Innovation drives the world we live in and sure as the sun will set, a new social-networking experience will arrive at some point. But in what shape will it come?

No-one can know, but perhaps it could take the form of 6pages.com, created by some of Imperial College's own students. It may seem like an insurmountable hill to try and compete with massive corporations, but Facebook was created by

students at Harvard: so perhaps they are trying to emulate the same success. The site clearly sports a similar clean and interactive feel to Facebook with all the elements of the page flowing together. But is it anything else apart from another Facebook clone?

From testing the site, apart from all the usual friends and groups, the main difference seems to be the emphasis on user-generated articles which can contain news, funny Youtube links or anything else you might feel like sharing with the world. These are connected to the network of the user (e.g. Imperial College). Only popular articles then get filtered up into larger networks (e.g. London) and finally to the national level for the whole country to enjoy.

This could, perhaps, put it in competition with Imperial's CGCU-run news-website, Live, which reports on news

around Imperial College and the wider world. However, unlike a traditional newspaper or online news-site, everyone can be a writer on 6pages. The obvious problem here is the possible low quality of the content that Joe Bloggs might post, perhaps talking about his new trainers or a video of his drunken mate, although through a system based on popularity, all the useless articles should just fade away into the bowels of the Internet, leaving only enjoyable content behind.

However, compared to the funded newspaper and website at Imperial, a site like 6pages.com would be free from any restrictions on what could be published. This could lead to very vocal opinions about various parts/members/policies of the union, more anecdotal experiences and generally a more 'on the ground' view of life. This could be good reading for when people aren't looking for 'proper' news.

Another interesting feature they have integrated into the site is the media centre, which brings together outside content from news-sites, online TV streams and also online radio stations. While it contains all the obvious BBC services they also collate an interesting range of other services from 'Martial Art TV' to the latest news from 'Lequipe'. It was actually surprisingly useful to have all these services melded together so simply with no need to visit each site. Again, over time the most popular sources will be prioritised to save users time, which appears to be a major aim of the site, to bring together lots of different Internet experiences in one place.

While 6pages may still have a few bugs and usability issues, it's still in beta and can only improve. Ironing out the last few creases in this web of networks could end up producing something very promising. A compelling mix between Facebook and Digg, squashed together with content from all across the Internet. But don't take my word for it, try it out yourself and see if you think it's got what it takes to be the next big thing.

Headlines we couldn't fit in

Microsoft backs down from Yahoo takeover bid

Pole dancing kit coming to Nintendo Wii

MP3 Trojan floods peer-2-peer networks

Torrentspy forced to pay \$110m to MPAA

GTAIV breaks lots of records making lots of money

Freesat launches across the UK

Japan to tax MP3 players

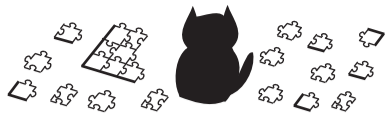
Home PCs legalised in Cuba. Internet still banned

EU launches public consultation of roaming regulations

Google Executive Elliot Schrage jumps ship and joins Facebook



Left: it all began with Myspace, and right: the mighty behemoth Facebook



Needy McNeedy: beating her chest since 7000BC

She performs better than brain-enhancing drugs. Email your problems to: agony.felix@imperial.ac.uk



It turns out that selecting problems that don't contain any references to exams from the bags of letters I receive every week is a full-time job. Frankly, I'm too goddamn busy and important. So, last week's promise is retracted. Exams are in. Welcome to the summer term. THE ONLY THING REQUIRED OF YOU IN AN EXAM IS TO SIT IN A CHAIR FOR 3 HOURS AND REGURGITATE A SMALL PORTION OF KNOWLEDGE, YOU WORRYING SHITS.

Dear Needy McNeedy

This might make me sound sluttish, but during Fresher's Week, I had a one-night stand with a really hot guy who I met at the union. I knew he wasn't a fresher, but I didn't know what department he was in. It was fun, but we didn't take it further than that – just a one-night thing, you know? I'm now in my second year, and have just been assigned a massive project. I was introduced to my demonstrator the other day, and it turned out to be... you guessed it... him. What shall I do? Do you have any tips for dealing with ex one-night stands?

CreamPie

Dear CreamPie,

Oh dear. The crucial thing in this is that he will probably grade you on your performance in bed. Think back to the night. If you did any of the following things: going on top, keeping on your high heels, using your mouth, then you'll probably do quite well. If you vomited on him, or kneed him in the balls accidentally, then get revising for those exams; you're going to need to make up the extra marks somewhere! If neither of you decided to make contact with each other after the event, then expect the worse, although given that you were just some random Fresher, you can hope that he just can't remember anything about that night.

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

I found a 50p coin down the drain the other day. I was not best pleased. My friend managed to find a £10 note! What did I do to deserve this?

Unjustified

Dear Unjustified,

Shut up.

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

I can't sleep at night. I've just finalised one of my exam papers and it's got a question on it that I didn't even hint at in any of the lectures I gave to the students. They're all going to fail! My wife says the stress is making me sweat more, and she's refusing to wash all my shirts on the grounds that they smell like cheese. How can I warn students of their impending exam disaster?

Lecturer104

Dear Lecturer104,

Think you're tired now? Wait until you reach hell. No, I'm kidding. Relish the fact that it's not actually you taking the exam, and buy some deodorant for the sweat. You could email every student individually with some hints. (*Clicks repeatedly on the refresh email button.*... please?)

Needy xxx

Dear Needy McNeedy,

I can't stop eating! When I'm revising the only thing I can think of to do for a study break is eat... I munch on biscuits and cake and sweets all day. And crisps. And I like to have a box of Maltesers on the desk so I can nibble when I'm working. The problem is that I'm starting to resemble a sumo wrestler (when viewed from behind) but I just can't stop. What's the best way to lose revision weight?

ChickenPie

Dear ChickenLickinPie,

I can completely understand your pain; currently I'm eating for six. (Myself, and five exams.)

Your main problem is those bastards who study so much they forget to eat, as they lose weight during this tough time and make the rest of us look bad. As a college we should work together and pile on the pounds so that no individual looks bad.

You could take up smoking, which I've heard both reduces weight gain and gives you a good reason to take lots of small breaks, although this probably isn't the best time to start as I think they banned it or something?

Needy xxx

H to the o, r, o, sizzle copes – it's the Horoscopes



Aquarius

This week the sun shines. College celebrates this occasion by shipping in 55 fine young ladies from around

the world. Where were they during the winter months, dammit, when I had nothing better to do than wipe my snotty nose on the back of my best friend's leevie?! Damn you College! Damn you for making me fall foul of your illusion, making me think this place is inhabitable!



Pisces

This week it's so hot your pores start seeping spaff. You wander into the Union's kitchens looking for a

refreshment but instead you find the DPFS hunting cockroaches on a skateboard. A quick judo chop to the neck and he's rendered prone on the floor. Serves him right for inviting Klaxons for a DJ set. We want to hear them jam mannnnnnnnnnn. Nu-rave 4 life! Thug.

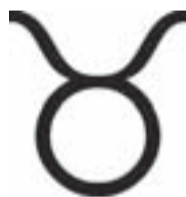


Aries

This week you attempt to reprint part of L. Ron. Hubbard's Dianetics in your newspaper...

...

... Hello?



Taurus

This week you trawl through last years Felix and notice something different. Really fucking hot page 3 models,

oooooh yeah. You go down to the Felix Office and beat the Editor whilst screaming "Get some fucking porno in the Felix, you cunt!". He pokes you in the eye and you stumble blindly into a computer and electrocute yourself. Serves you right for having an opinion.



Gemini

This week you empty your cupboard of all starch products onto your bed. You roll around in the

crispy, flakey mess, dressed only in your Papa Smurf outfit, however, you have turned an interesting shade of yellow instead of blue. It's funny how choking yourself whilst watching Japanese-tentacle-rape-porn just doesn't do it for you anymore. Crunch-crunch-crunch!



Cancer

Your illicit oncological treatment centre was busted by the feds today. They just don't understand

the blossoming love between a human-being and a festering tumour. It would have been less embarrassing if you hadn't have been wearing them when you were arrested like a big squelchy Michelin man.



Leo

This week you find your roommate indulging in a bit of auto-self asphyxiation. Your initial apprehension

subsides and you tighten the knot of his tie, watching him groan with excruciating ecstasy. You don't stop there though. You lose control of your nimble fingers and the noose slowly contacts around his neck. As he dies, he whispers "thank you..."



Virgo

A few weeks after this incident, having dodged police questioning, you rediscover Pokemon and watch every

single episode that exists on alluc.org. Later in the day you dig out your shiny charizard, fetch your roommate's corpse from the cupboard and use his mouth as a container for nacho dipping sauce.



Libra

Later that week, your sister comes to stay and you have to hide the body inside your mattress. Sigh, there goes

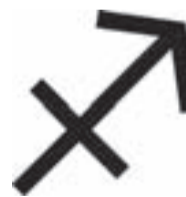
a perfectly good bedside cabinet. Later that night you wander into your room finding your new roommate pile-driving your sister which makes the corpse roll onto the bedroom floor. Next stop, prison, sonny Jim.



Scorpio

This week you have an '80s and '90s bands revival in your departmental computer room. No, really you will.

Head to YouTube and check out the following: Deacon Blue, Tears For Fears, The Outthere Brothers, Curiosity Killed The Cat, S Club 7 (especially the one where Bradley raps) Scritti Politti, Johnny Hates Jazz, Jefferson Starship, A-Ha, Level 42 and of course Steps.



Sagittarius

This week you go to Whole Foods to buy a watermelon. Ten fucking pounds you posh bastards. As you lug it back

to Beit Quad, you suddenly have a great idea. You head back to Whole Foods, approach the mostly poshly dressed 60-year old in there and throw it as hard as you can at his groin. His colostomy bag bursts over the fine cheese counter. Mmm, cheddar and stale urine. Mmm.

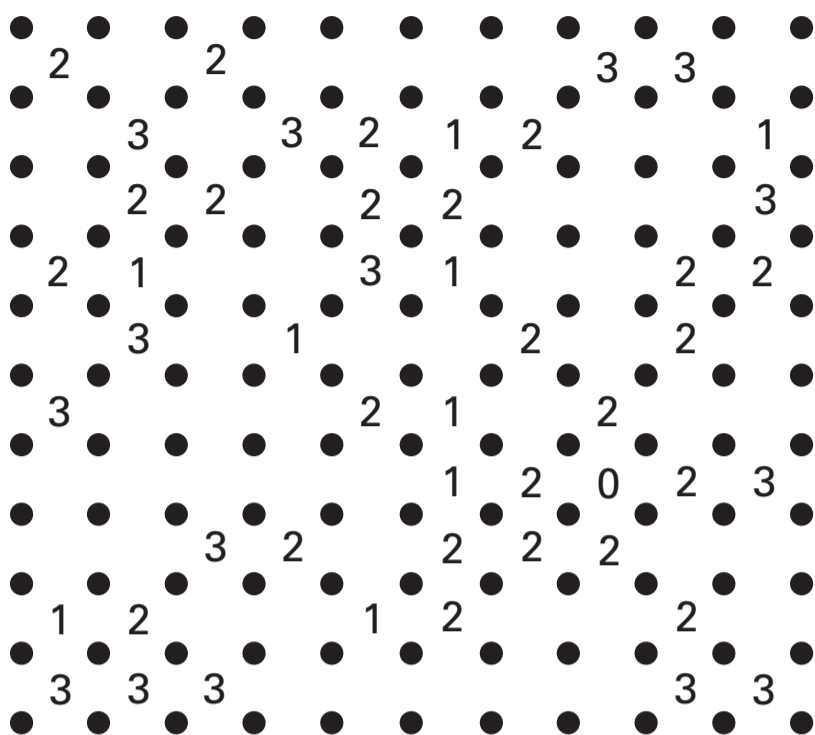


Capricorn

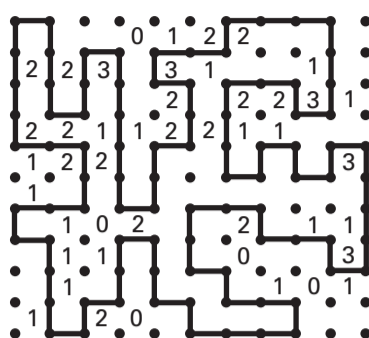
This horoscope is a speed horoscope. I'm going to write the first things that come into my head and see what happens.

Oh my god I just shot your mum with a crossbow. She's now leaping around your kitchen yelping for her little tabby-cat Francis. That's a mighty fine linoleum flooring you've got going on there. Mad props.

Slitherlink 1,402



1,401 solution



The winner of Slitherlink 1,401 was **Hringur Gretarsson** at the 11th hour! Well done chap, that couldn't have been any closer to the deadline. We'll give a prize out in the summer. The more entries, the better your chances.

How to play:

Crudely speaking, Slitherlink is similar to Minesweeper mixed with a dash of Sudoku. The object of the game is to draw

lines between the dots to create one long, and most importantly, looping line. It should have no start or finish; just like an elastic band.

Each number indicates how many lines should be drawn around it, for example:



Cells which don't contain a number can be surrounded by any number of lines.

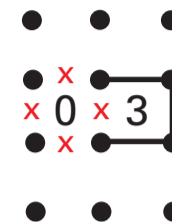
Remember, the line must form a loop, so the line cannot branch. The following situations are not allowed:



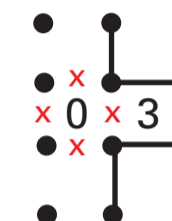
Squares are not allowed either. There are never cells containing the number 4 in Slitherlink.

So, where do you start? The most

common place to start on a Slitherlink grid is by drawing crosses around any zeros. Drawing crosses is purely done to so that you know where there can't possibly be a line. So, take the pattern below as an example. Begin by drawing crosses, then by filling in some lines:



Now the lines can only continue in the following directions:



Wordoku 1,402

	T					F
		R	A	F	C	
S		F	O			I
		I				C
		C	T	R	I	
E	I			S		
R				A	O	C
		T	E	C	R	
C						E



1,401 Solution

S	G	A	V	M	E	T	O	L
L	V	T	O	A	S	M	G	E
E	M	O	L	G	T	V	S	A
G	L	E	T	O	V	S	A	M
V	A	M	S	E	G	O	L	T
T	O	S	M	L	A	G	E	V
A	S	L	G	T	M	E	V	O
O	T	V	E	S	L	A	M	G
M	E	G	A	V	O	L	T	S

Wordoku is identical to Sudoku; we've just replaced numbers with letters. Once you've completed the puzzle, there is a hidden word to find. Email answers to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk.

The winner of Wordoku 1,401 was **Oliver Burrell**. Shocking! The hidden word was: MEGAVOLTS. Pat on the back for all winning entries.



07980 148 785

TEXT US! OR WE WON'T FEED THE CAT!

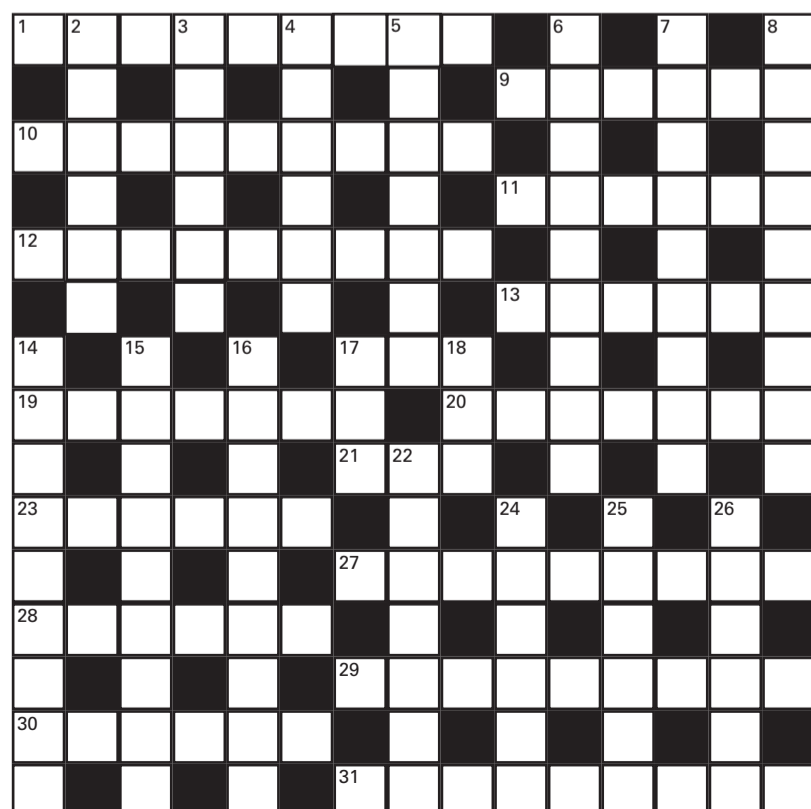
This week's texts:

"Once again, the Editor takes full responsibility for leaving the CatFone at home and hence, not being able to publish any texts that have arrived for this week's issue. If you would like a refund, up to the sum of 10 pence per text, please do come to the Felix office and we will be more than happy to help you out.*"

*Terms & Conditions apply. You will be required to fill in a brief form stating that you accept full responsibility for whatever happens to you or your personage upon entering the Felix office."

Crossword No. 1,402

Answers to: sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk



ACROSS

- Gradually getting better at walking after elf (9)
- Forgotten heartland collapses to form cave (6)
- Pretty good in demonstrating irritating others (9)
- Ban a natural container of fruit(6)
- To mix with Communist centre of England(9)
- Lost a South African Ford(6)
- Same Greek prefix is only at the beginning (3)
- Επθ - A. What a description! (7)
- Force units to be shown a newt on standby (7)
- The bulrushes revealed her (3)
- Play a half-note backwards to really hit the low points (6)
- Mature stutters about a philanderer (9)
- Piss off a plant (6)
- Spoil small simulations, in a way, by a refusal to believe anything else exists (9)
- Little Ronald sat in the golden chair (6)
- Thin curve to bathe naked (9)

DOWN

- Leave Burgundy (6)
- Dracula's gymnastics make him lose an eye - an improvement?(6)
- Our sixth king was a Scandinavian warrior (6)
- Heading northwards on more doesn't impress (7)
- A total collapse provides analysis (9)
- Maine senator flattened by appliance (5,4)
- Griper manages to fool painter (3,6)
- Emigrate North, somehow, to sprout buds (9)
- Hire a Conservative petitioner (9)
- Shuffling about with fake jewellery (9)
- It is often written wrongly (3)
- A number (3)
- Bilingual bionic man reveals poetic England (6)
- Island shirt (6)
- Teacher sounds like he makes sense, eh?(6)

I cannot apologize enough for last week's crossword numbering disaster. My only consolation is the thought that the five of you who bother doing the crossword on a regular basis probably did it anyway. At least, that was the case with this week's winner, **Sebastian Junemann**. In any case, it won't happen again.

Enoch

Solution to Crossword 1,401

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

Catching the last snow of the season

Sam Champaigne reports on the Snowsports Club trip to Saalbach-Hintleglemm



This year saw a respectable 39 students from IC make the journey to the chosen venue of Saalbach-Hintleglemm (not far from the Austro-German border, near Munich), where we joined more than 2,000 other students from universities around Britain in anticipation of a week of great skiing (or boarding, if you're into that), great partying and great experiences.

First, though, we had to get there. BUSC (British Universities Snowsports Council) offers a frankly fantastic package which includes 6 nights' self-catered accommodation, a 6-day lift pass (quite a valuable thing, it must be said) and travel to and from the resort, all for £329. At this price, one understands why travel consists of an exhausting, yet always somewhat amusing, near-24 hour coach journey (which might have been longer had it not been for the Autobahn). However, in my opinion this is all part of the fun – it is here where you meet the people that you'll be skiing / boarding with for the rest of the week – equally, you also quickly realise who you won't be – being woken at 4 in the morning as we were peacefully cruising through the French countryside by a drunken Southampton Uni student who simply couldn't contain his delight at the unspoiled environment, didn't rate him terribly highly in my books, it must be said. As cliché as it sounds, though, the journey really isn't that bad and as soon as you start seeing the white stuff gradually becoming more and more concentrated on the winding ascent up to the resort, you can't help but forget your tiredness. If it weren't for the fact that it was dark when we arrived, I'm sure a lot of us would have been out on the slopes as soon as we arrived. Instead, we settled for a quiet pint of Stiegl (the ubiquitous, probably-better-than-our-most-expensive, lager) and an early night in preparation for catching the first lift on our first

morning.

I awoke to a beautiful day – the highest peak, at just over 2000m, was shining bright in the fierce, spring sun. I slipped on my thermal undergarments, put on my waterproof jacket and trousers, donned my thick socks and boots, grabbed my skis and goggles and I was ready for the day. (The skis and boots I

“The experience is simply hard to put into words”

had rented as an addition to the BUSC package and it is also easy to rent clothing and other equipment if the need arises). A matter of minutes later six other students that I'd met on the bus (all from IC in fact) and I were stepping into a lift cabin, skis and boards in hand, preparing to be whisked up a mountain where we would begin our first run of the week. A few seconds to admire the splendid panoramic views at the top of the mountain before we clipped

ourselves in to our preferred mediums and we were away! The experience is simply hard to put into words – pistes (French for 'slopes') are the marked, maintained routes down the mountain (which are patrolled throughout the day) – they are very often as wide as a dry ski-slope is long and can go on for many miles, making skiing down them is a blissful experience. On the ski trip at Xmas, being a novice, I spent my entire time on pistes. 20 minutes later we were at the bottom of the slope, keen to get back to the top of the mountain to do another run. Another run later and it was just about time for my lesson – I unclipped my skis and made my way through the town centre to the main congregation area.

Regardless of your ability, I strongly recommend taking lessons – they are very good value (roughly £75 for 10 = 2 hours a day for 5 days) and really help you to either simply learn to ski or hone your skills. As I've mentioned, on the Xmas trip I was essentially a complete novice, barely even able to turn – but because of a combination of lessons in the morning and practicing what I'd learnt in the afternoon, by

the end of the week I was able to comfortably ski reds (moderate difficulty) and even attempt the odd black level slope. Of course, skiing/snowboarding is not all about being able to race down the slope at some stupid angle to the vertical, even if you just wanna play around a bit that's all well and good. In fact, this Easter we had a significant number of complete beginners attend

“Skiing isn't all about going down a hill, it's about the socialising too”

and I'm sure they won't disagree with me when I say that they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

As I've said, skiing/snowboarding isn't all about being able to race down the slope, far from it – a big part of BUSC is the socialising. Indeed, as soon as you arrive you are issued with a calendar of events, detailing what's

happening each night of the week. For instance, on the Sunday evening there was an hour-and-a-half long firework-lit display from professional and semi-professional freestyle skiers and boarders (basically an hour and a half of wondering who was going to be airlifted first) followed by VJs 'Urban Knightz' playing live in the main square with plenty of clubs to go to afterwards if you fancied it – but remember, the snow's best in the morning! Every other night of the week was similarly exciting, the most anticipated night of all being when the DJ trio 'Scratch Perverts' were due to play – the hype was right, a great night it was – hundreds of students in a packed venue jumping around to some mean tunes. If going out partying isn't your thing, though, or you're too tired from a day of skiing/boarding, then no worries, there's plenty of other things to do around the area – some nice restaurants and even cinemas.

So, in essence, my week @ BUSC consisted of plenty of skiing, plenty of partying and plenty of new friends. A typical ski trip certainly doesn't come cheap, but that's where BUSC is different – with a starting price of £329 and considering what a truly fantastic week you'll have, it's very easy to justify the price in my opinion. Plus the fact that it's the first week of a long easter break just makes it the perfect thing to look forward to.

And if you can't wait that long and you want some relief after the Autumn term, the Snowsports society will be running their annual Winter trip with prices starting from £300 (incl. travel, accommodation and lift pass). We'll also be running dry-ski slope lessons and trips to the Milton Keynes indoor artificial snow slope throughout the year. For more information and signing up, please visit www.sfahdsfhasjf.com or add me (Sam Champaigne) or any of the snowsports committee on Facebook. Have a great summer and hope to see you there!



The gang enjoying the warmth of the indoors



The end of the season

Snowsports Club report on their latest trip to the pistes, see page 35



Imperial host first inter-uni Wushu competition

Adam Omar

On the 30th of March the IC Wushu Society held the first ever inter-university Wushu competition in the main sports hall of Ethos. A total of nine universities and nineteen competitors took part in what is hoped to be the first of many such competitions. The competitors fought for medals in nine categories which included open hand, weapons, fight sets, taiji, and traditional forms.

Having spent most of the day before hauling around more than half a tonne of mats and carpets, the Imperial team were understandably fatigued. Still, we all arrived early and excited. The huge carpet was laid out in the middle of the sports hall looking quite majestic. For those who have no idea what competitive Wushu is, athletes perform various routines on a 14m by 8m carpet. The carpet is there mostly for safety, since landing in splits or on knees can be quite painful on a wooden floor. Athletes were given a warm-up area at the side of the hall to stretch and prepare.

After a brief speech from the head judge, the competition began at around 11am with Chang Quan (long fist). Imperial scored one silver and one bronze. This was followed by the Nan Quan (southern fist) category,

which brought with it energetic performances from Queen Mary, King's College, and Leeds Metropolitan. The event was won by Mitchell Pallet of Queen Mary who is also the current GB southern sword champion.

After the power and shouting of Nan Quan came a welcome peace in the form of Taiji (that's the proper pinyin way of spelling Tai chi). Shaopeng Li of Imperial received the gold thanks to his masterfully performed routine.

The traditional category came next. This proved to be really interesting and was the category with the most competitors, performing a variety of routines from different branches of Chinese martial arts. Luke Sanders of Southampton University amazed everyone with his Di Tang Quan (Ground boxing) which involved painful-looking falls and flips. The gold went to Allan Martin of Imperial who performed a powerful rendition of Da Hong Quan, a Shaolin form.

After the lunch break we were treated to a performance by Sam Mak, the current world junior straight sword champion. He displayed a level of Wushu rarely seen in the UK.

Next came the advanced long and short weapons, intermediate weapons and taiji sword categories. Intermediate weapons was a rather odd category;

due to the lack of competitors in this event, all three competitors were from Imperial. No prizes for guessing which university won that event.

The advanced categories, however, were simply amazing. Both the long and short weapon events showed the skill and athleticism of some of the UK's best. Both events were won by Scott Pallet of King's College, current GB national team member with two high-flying, amazing routines.

The competition ended with the Dui Lian (fighting set) category. Imperial were up first, with Adam and Jamshid and their largely improvised made-up-at-lunch-time spear vs. three section staff fight. Next came the team from University of East Anglia. They performed a long and highly imaginative spear vs. empty hand fight. However, victory went to the combined LSE-IC duo Zoe and Liane Athill with their spear vs. double swords fight, in which Liane suffered a slight facial injury.

While waiting for the award-giving ceremony, Sam Mak graced us with another demonstration, this time he performed an excellent drunken straight sword routine.

At the end, all the athletes lined up on the carpet according to university. The medals and certificates were given out and Imperial's Shaopeng Li bagged

the all-round award, having achieved 2 gold medals and 1 silver medal, the highest among all competitors.

It is hoped that this will become a yearly event from now on. We were very impressed with the spirit of competition displayed by everyone present.

We'd also like to thank everyone that made this event possible: the Union,

Sport Imperial and to our sponsors - IC Trust, Oriental City Supermarket, China Arts and New World Chinese restaurant. A big thank you to you all.

After all, it's not about winning medals, it's about getting out on that carpet and doing the best you can. As Jet Li's character Huo Yuan Jia said in the movie Fearless, "Through competition we can discover ourselves".



A spear versus empty hand fight from the East Anglia team