

“Keep the Cat Free”

ISSUE 1503

FELIX



25.11.11

The student voice of Imperial College London since 1949

Day of Action: Why you should care

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Too much aid for AIDS?

Medsin's Positively Red Week fosters debate: Page 7



Council Chairman calls on government to reconsider drug policy

Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller questions current status of UK cannabis legalisation

Matthew Colvin

The Council Chairman of Imperial College, Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller, has called on the government to reconsider its current drugs policy following the ongoing expense of the “War on Drugs”. Speaking at a meeting held by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Drug Policy Reform, the ex-Director General of MI5 and crossbench life peer raised potential points of consideration in a speech, including regulation of cannabis and a focus on drugs as an issue of health rather than of crime.

Stating her awareness that the issue is a “minefield” and that potential misrepresentation by the media was likely, Eliza acknowledged that drug policy is a “taboo subject for discussion”, while criticising “knee-jerk reaction to any change”. Eliza went on to state that her surprise at the lack of discussion: “Given its effect on us all and the enormous cost of our efforts

to limit the problems which drugs cause, I find it extraordinary that it is not at the forefront of national debate.”

Eliza continued with a dismissal of the “same well-worn policy” utilised by the government for the past 50 years, following the aim of a 1961 UN Convention on Narcotic Drugs to create a drug-free world: “We are unlikely to address the harm that is being caused to the world unless we accept, as the US Senate recently did, that much, though not all, of the vast expenditure on the so-called “War on Drugs” has been fruitless.”

In discussion with Felix, Eliza restated her aim to “reduce the harm that drugs do” following the recognition of “extensive human misery” caused by the illegal drugs trade.

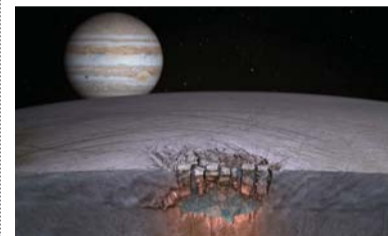
Eliza also criticised a response to the speech which labelled the call to review current policy as ‘waving the white flag’, as described by a mem-

...Continued on Page 4

Imperial College London



SCIENCE



Life on Europa? New evidence for water

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ARTS



New Labour memoirs brought to stage

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FASHION



Time for men to suit up for interviews

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UK UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONS

Student sit-ins grip the country once again: Page 3

HIGHLIGHTS

What's on

Bioinspired technology

Professor Chris Toumazou FRS discusses the current trend of biology inspiring technology, which in turn replaces biology. With ageing populations, fast-food diets and an increasing lack of exercise, Professor Toumazou presents his attempts to provide bioinspired sensor processing technologies to help resulting conditions such as Type 2 diabetes. Admission is free – no advance booking required. Doors open at 5:45pm.

The Royal Society
Monday 28 November
18:30–19:30

Preventing HIV

Robin Shattock presents a lecture on the prevention of HIV – with a focus on vaccines and ART prevention – as part of the John Humphries Immunology Seminar Series. Open to all, no advance booking required.

LT2, Wolfson Education Centre,
Hammersmith Campus
Thursday 01 December
18:30–20:00

Lunchtime Concert

Tamsin Waley-Cohen takes to the violin in this first come first served lunchtime concert. Contact a.robins@imperial.ac.uk for further details.



LT2, Wolfson Education Centre,
Hammersmith Campus
Tuesday 06 December
13:00–13:45

PICK OF THE WEEK

You love your puns. You might not know it yet, but you do



Having to think of countless terrible jokes does that to you

If there's one thing that's toughest to pull off, it's a decent headline. So, naturally, when I see a page full of effortless puns before articles, it's pretty impressive. Congratulations to this week's Arts Section (Pages 20–21), their comedy versus word number potential is to be feared. Literally. Other than a brief two second chuckle at the wordplay on offer, this week's section includes mention of Tim Minchin, Richard Herring and Greg Davies alongside the introduction of a 'Doodle of the Week' competition. Notepads at the ready.

Editor

CLASSIFIEDS

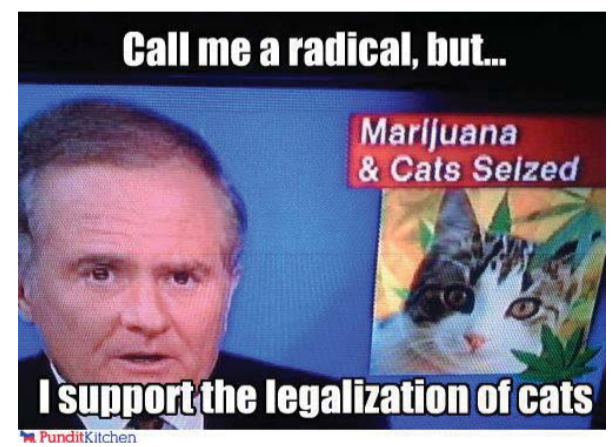
Four student volunteers are invited to St. Josh International School, Chennai, India during the 2012 summer vacation. June 11 onwards – flexible end date. Interact with children – teach English, songs and music and organize activities in a relaxed and safe environment

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Just so we're clear, Felix accepts no responsibility for services bought or sold, capiche? Good.

Lolcats of teh week



FELIX

Felix, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BB.
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News Editors: **Sophia David**
Alex Nowbar

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

NEWS

Student occupations return in force

Further protests begin with sit-in protest at Cambridge

Charles Betts

Students and staff affiliated with Members of Cambridge Defend Education have been staging a sit-in protest in a university lecture theatre at University of Cambridge since Wednesday 23 November.

“We’ve had occupations before. This is another one and I’m sure we will have occupations in the future.”

Protestors took over the lecture theatre as Universities Minister David Willetts was about to give a talk on The Idea of The University. The talk was intended to form part of the wider lecture series being delivered by the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities’.

Students were protesting against the plan to increase the cap on tuition fees in England to £9,000 a year and to withdraw public funding for university teaching budgets for many subjects.

James Robinson, an English graduate from Corpus Christi, stated: “We have all heard Mr Willetts’ idea of a university but we wanted to share ours, and also lend our support to next Wednesday’s public sector strikes, other occupation protests across Europe, and protests against the Government’s White Paper on universities.”

Further occupations have been reported at universities across the UK. Students have occupied part of the University of Birmingham in a protest that is also over a planned increase in tuition fees and education cuts.

Birmingham University said in a statement: “Students and staff have the right to protest peacefully but the safety of students and staff must remain our priority.”

Up to 100 students have taken part in a protest at the University of Warwick. University spokesman Peter Dunn said he was not concerned by the occupation, organised by the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC), stating: “We’ve had occupations before. This is another one and I’m sure we’ll have occupations in the future.”

The latest call to occupy universities across the country comes approximately one year after sit-ins at the University of Manchester and the University of Sussex. Students occupied a build-

ing at the University of Manchester, demanding access to the institution’s accounts to find out how cuts are likely affect their studies. Students at the University of Sussex in Brighton occupied a campus building in protest over proposed plans to cut 115 jobs and create 20 new posts.

“[The student movement in the UK] may well be closer to winning than many presume.”

Organiser for the NCAFC Michael Chessum posted a statement on the NCAFC website “Nothing could be clearer from the past year of struggle than the ability of clear political demands to mobilise numbers in the streets. If the student movement can spell out and fight for a genuine ideological alternative to fees, debt and marketisation in education, it may well be closer to winning than many presume.”

Life at Imperial continued as per usual.



Universities Minister David Willetts

University of Cambridge



Lady Mitchell Hall, where David Willetts was due to give his speech

Sponsored Editorial

More student cuts

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Women’s shampoo, cut and blow-dry £38

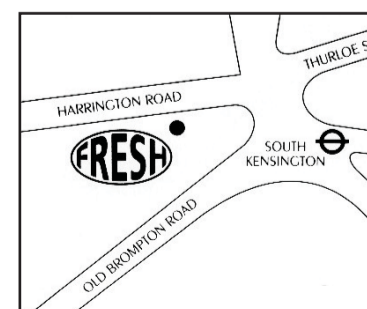
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NEWS

News Editors: **Sophia David**
Alex Nowbar

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Cost of War on Drugs “fruitless”, argues Imperial Council Chairman in call for drug reform review

...Continued from Front Page
ber of the Centre for Social Justice. In the speech, she was quoted as saying, “What I said [about knee-jerk opposition to any change] has been proved right.”

“Those politicians and commentators who may recognise, at the very least, that there are serious questions about the efficacy of current policies, go quiet or retract when faced by the crude assertion that any other policy would do corrosive and irreparable harm.”

“Given its effect on us all ... I find it extraordinary that [drug policy] is not at the forefront of national debate.”

Prime Minister David Cameron, once member of a Home Affairs Select Committee in May 2002, was once quoted in the full report, which examined the Government’s Drugs Policy at the time: “Drugs policy in this country has been failing for decades.”

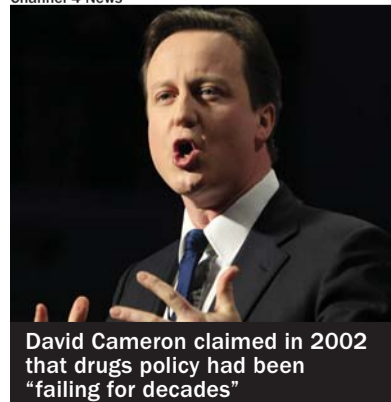
The report continued: “I hope that our report will encourage fresh thinking and a new approach. We need to get away from entrenched positions and try to reduce the harm that drugs do both to users and society at large.”

In her speech, Eliza acknowledged that “I don’t pretend there are easy options as this is a complex problem.” “We need to collect information on what works, on how harm can be reduced and on what is cost-effective.”

Eliza took on her current role as Council Chairman on July 16 this year following on from her role as Deputy Chairman since 2009.

Editorial: Page 16

Channel 4 News



David Cameron claimed in 2002 that drugs policy had been “failing for decades”

Hamish Muir



Could we soon be seeing cannabis being put on trial in a battle for legalisation?

The History of Legalisation

Originally made illegal in this country in 1928 as part of an international drive to rid the world of opium and other such nasties, the legal status of weed in the Britain depends on where it is classified under the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act. Up until the early part of the last decade, that was Class B, which comes with a maximum 5 year jail term for possession and 14 years for supply and trafficking. However in an attempt to free up police time the government announced the reclassification of cannabis to a Class C drug. According to some reports, 190,000 police hours were saved the following year because of the reclassification. What didn’t happen, though, was the complete or even partial legalisation of Cannabis.

The story resumes with Jacqui Smith, who announced that weed was to be reclassified back up to Class B in 2005. This was amusing in a not particularly funny way because it was completely and utterly contrary to what the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommended. Scientists resigned but the reclassification carried on as declared. Amsterdam is notorious in the tourist industry as the city where you can

easily obtain cannabis. Special ‘coffee shops’ are open with their drug policy, selling items such as cannabis-cakes and general marijuana. In previous years, the Dutch regulations were divided between ‘hard’ drugs and ‘soft’ drugs, where cannabis is classed as a soft drug. The policy on soft drugs is simply that they can be taken under ‘personal use’ so that even smoking weed in public is legal. Dutch drug policy is unique as it is centred on the idea that every human being may decide about the matters of its own health.

Unlucky for some, earlier this year it was announced that there will be a change in drug regulations in the Netherlands. The Dutch government decided that by the end of 2011, the infamous cannabis coffee shops will no longer be open to tourists. Instead they will only be open to Dutch citizens where each coffee shop will act as a private club of around 1,500 members. Dutch citizens will need to obtain a membership for a coffee shop in order to use it. Additionally, some coffee shops have been forced to close due to their proximity to schools.

Matt Allinson and Aemun Reza

David Nutt advocates new approach

Baroness Eliza Manningham Buller is not the only person connected with Imperial to voice concerns about the “War on Drugs”. Professor David J Nutt, who holds the Edmond J Safra Chair in Neuropsychopharmacology has long been an outspoken critic of British drug policy. Last week he joined Baroness Manningham Buller and other major public figures, including Jimmy Carter and Lech Wałęsa, in publishing a public letter, which appeared as a full length advertisement in the national papers, entitled “The Global War on Drugs has Failed, It is Time for a New Approach”. In the letter, they urge governments to “consider shifting resources away from criminalising tens of millions of otherwise law abiding citizens, and move towards an approach based on health, harm-reduction, cost-effectiveness and respect for human rights”.

Last year Nutt co-authored a paper in *The Lancet* which suggested that, taking into account the harm done to both users and others, alcohol was more dangerous than heroin. The paper also claimed that “present drug classification systems have little relation to the evidence of harm”.

Of course, Nutt is best known

by the general public for having been removed from his post as the head of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs after speaking out against the government’s decision to ignore official advice and reclassify cannabis from Class B to Class C. Alan Johnson, the then Home Secretary, wrote to Nutt, saying that he could not “have public confusion between scientific advice and policy”. Shortly after the incident, however, the Guardian reported Nutt saying: “All I was trying to do was help. I wasn’t challenging the government. We can help them. We can give them very good advice, and it would be much more simpler [sic] if they took that advice rather than getting tangled up in other sorts of messages which frankly really do confuse the public.”

Maciej Matuszewski



Professor David Nutt

Gospel Choir has the X Factor

Tobi Obisanya
Genevieve Pugh

If you were watching ITV closely this Saturday evening you may have seen some familiar faces. Members of the Imperial College Gospel Choir (ICGC) were featured giving it their all, with their best clicks, jazz hands and on Saturday evening's live edition of *The X Factor*.

15 members of ICGC and 25 members of King's College Gospel Choir were recruited to perform with Marcus Collins, one of the *X Factor* contestants, in his number of the week 'Higher and Higher', (originally sung by Jackie Wilson). The performance was crowned the "performance of the night" by Gary Barlow, and Kelly Rowland commented on the energy of the act which could be credited in some respect to the enthusiasm of the choir. Six girls from the joint Imperial/King's College choir were also selected to feature in Amelia Lily's performance of

the Aretha Franklin song 'Think'.

One of the *X Factor* producers commented after the show that the choir was, "The best choir we've ever had." This then led to half the choir spontaneously bursting into tears and wild screeches that almost brought down their porter-cabin dressing room.

The gospel choirs were selected for the show as a result of their involvement in July's University Gospel Choir of the Year competition, in which both ICGC and King's College were finalists. In true showbiz fashion the news of the upcoming appearance was very last minute. Members of the choir learnt of their potential TV debut at lunch time on Thursday, and confirmation that they had a place on the show was only received on Friday morning.

The choir spent all day Saturday at the ITV studios in Wembley Park, where they were taught their routine by the show's choreographers. The rest of the day was spent rehearsing... and discreetly stalking various members

of the *X Factor* team. As evidence on Facebook shows, this was very productive.

Saturday has brought welcome publicity for a thriving and fast growing Imperial society. Christina Crossette-Thambiah, President of ICGC commented that she "never could have dreamed something like this could have happened to ICGC". Chris Farrell, one of the original members of the choir when it was founded six years ago, said he remembered when the choir was only "ten people gathered round a piano".

With rumours of the joint choir being called back for the *X Factor* final, staged live at Wembley Arena on December 11, the sky is the limit and everyone involved is excited about what is to come. However, the choir can be seen in action a little closer to home at their Christmas concert at Holy Trinity church on Prince Consort Road on December 13; tickets are available through the Union website.



The university Gospel Choirs performing alongside contestant Marcus Collins

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Features Editors: **Katy Bettany**
Stephen Smith

features.felix@gmail.com

FEATURE

November 30th: day of action

Izzy Koksall and Luke Sheldon on why students should care about Wednesday's strikes

You may have heard news headlines describing the biggest strike in generations happening on 30th November, but perhaps thought little of it. What has striking got to do with students? Especially striking over pensions. Pensions seem ages away, we're only just dealing with our students loans! The strike may seem like a distant and irrelevant event.

This is more than understandable. We, the authors, have been struggling to get to grips with the whole idea of the strike despite seeing ourselves as politically engaged and politically active – perhaps we're just feeling weary after those 'total policing' tactics employed at the November 9th student demo.

But it is more than that; as students, striking – the mass refusal to work by employees demanding concessions from employers and/or the government – does not seem like something that we can take part in. The language, e.g. the use of the term 'workers', ostensibly excludes us, as well as other groups, including the unemployed.

However, there is in fact a long history of student strikes suggesting that the concept may not be so alien and irrelevant to us after all. Furthermore, perhaps the idea of striking seems antiquated – of a time when the majority of workers would put down their tools in the factory – not relevant in a service sector dominated economy, particularly when people's jobs involve care work.

Back then, striking would cause significant financial losses for the employer; in public sector strikes this is not the case. Instead, public sector workers withdrawing their labour has immediate

impacts on the people who they provide vital services for. This makes striking difficult for the strikers too, as they find themselves reluctant to see their library or school close. However, strikes are one of the only tools by which workers can try and negotiate the conditions in which they work every day. By withdrawing their labour, they remind us how important their services are. In this beginner's guide to striking we shall explain what N30 is about and what is happening. We will also argue that students can and do play an important role in strikes, and that it is vital that we take part in N30.

On Wednesday up to 3 million workers will be on strike (about 10% of the total workforce) in a long running dispute about the coalition government's plans for 'reforming' the public sector pensions. A strike of this size has not been seen since the 1926 General strike with a total of 24 unions involved, including teachers and lecturers, proba-

"Show our lecturers that we respect the work they do."

tion officers, library staff, police civilians, refuse collectors, bus drivers, nurses, and museum staff.

Although the government likes to highlight how the Unison ballot for strike action only received a 29% turnout, on average the turnout has been 44%. This is the same as the turnout for the London mayoral elections, so the vote was as representative as our local democracy. The numbers are also expected to be bolstered by the thousands who join unions in the run-up so that they can strike as well.

The government claims to be worried about what they describe to be unsustainable pension plans with an aging population. Their proposals include moving the retirement age to 68, increasing pension contributions, judging the pension on your average salary instead of your final salary, and linking pensions to the lower CPI inflation instead of the current RPI inflation. This has led unions to remark that the situation will be one where workers 'pay more, work longer, get less'.

This involves us, as students, because our lecturers will be directly affected by these changes to pensions – both the University and College Union and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers are striking on Wednesday and we should show our support to our lectur-

Why I'm striking: three strikers explain what has caused their outrage

"I will be striking on N30. It's absolutely outrageous cutting pensions. I do feel ambivalent; to forfeit a wage of money, when my wage is very low does worry me greatly, however, what they are doing is obscene. It is outrageous pensions are not protected, they're not fantastic anyway. You work the best years of your life for the pensions, which are then attacked, it's morally wrong to attack our pensions. I'd like to do something meaningful and valuable, I think I'll picket the library and town hall. It seems really important to do something meaningful with the time."

Susan Appleton, Library Assistant, London

"I'm striking and angry. The spineless gits are attacking the pensions of average earners in a thinly veiled tactic to reduce the deficit that we didn't cause. They even changed the offer to cost us more in the short term but promising more long term, condemning future governments whilst making money for theirs."

James Sheehan, Science Teacher, Liverpool

"I'm currently unemployed after finishing my master's degree, so I can't strike in the traditional way of stopping work, however I will be outside my local Job Centre and picketing there in order to demand better welfare provision and meaningful jobs. Just because strikes are traditionally associated with workers does not mean that the unemployed cannot take part and demand rights for themselves, in fact, it is absolutely vital that we take a stand. The situation for us is appalling – not only is there a great deal of stigma linked with claiming unemployment benefits (as if the individual is choosing to be unemployed) rather than realising that it could happen to anyone – but the amount you are given to survive on is an insult. Just look at the present climate with thousands of jobs being cut – it is clearly not an individual's fault if they find themselves out of work. I hope that N30 will see millions take to the streets against this government sending a clear message that we do not accept their cuts."

Elizabeth Milne, Unemployed, London

ers – speak to them about the issue or join them on the picket line. Or go further than this and arrange events on the picket line as students at the University of Birmingham have done.

The University of Birmingham Union have arranged for a teach-out on the picket with discussions including 'Whatever happened to the right to protest?', 'Cuts are not the cure', and 'The Student Experience: An Utterly Shallow Concept'. Showing our lecturers that we respect the work they do and that we believe they should be fairly rewarded at the end of their job would mean a great deal to them.

Our collective demand for pensions justice is about fairness, however, there is also a pragmatic argument to it: simple sums show that in contrast to the government's claims, pensions are in fact sustainable in their present state. The National Audit Office, the Office for Budget Responsibility, and the Institute for Fiscal studies all show how as a proportion of GDP the cost of public pensions will gradually decrease due to changes made by Labour and that they are currently at a peak. Thus, it is quite clear that our present pension system for the public sector is sustainable and fair as it is.

Yet, the government seems unwilling to accept this and back down. Whilst they have made two concessions regarding pensions, these do not go far enough to address unions' and their members' main concerns and therefore they have had to resort to strike action. Epitomising the ineptitude of the government's

bargaining in the talks with unions and just how little the government understand the grievances of ordinary workers, Cabinet Minister Francis Maude recently suggested that workers co-ordinate a 15 minute strike on N30 – also known as a tea break.

However, the strike action must not be seen in isolation, as a one-off event and solely about pensions. Therefore our role in the strike must go beyond students supporting their lecturers. The government's attack on public sector pensions is simply yet another example of the government trying to shift responsibility for the deficit on those who cannot pay and who also bear no responsibility for the crisis itself. It is one attack amongst many which also include education, healthcare, and welfare – or everything that is good about our society.

We cannot know exactly how N30 will unfold – it certainly has the potential to have a tremendous impact with millions of people coming together to reject the austerity measures and create a humane society – but its significance will be that it is yet another form of action following on from and building on actions by UK Uncut, the Occupy movement, and the student protests that show that a great number of people are against the government's austerity programme which is based on making the poor pay for an economic crisis that they did not cause.

The strike, therefore, is part of a wider movement against the government and its policies that is growing in momen-

tum. Indeed, this can be seen by James Sevitt's remarks from Occupy London which illustrates how many of these different movements are coming together:

"As Occupy London is very much in support of those unions coming out on strike on Wednesday 30th November, we are busy getting prepared and its great to see unions lending their support to the Occupy movement. Expect to hear more from us about this soon!"

Furthermore, N30 itself has become more than about pensions – many other people who don't work in the public sector will be looking to support the strike, as James describes above for Occupy London. As the Coalition of Resistance describe 'it is clear that November 30th also represents a fundamental challenge to the cuts and privatisation programme of the ConDem Government.' They have called for all those against the cuts to create a 'Festival of Resistance, with pensioners, students and unemployed people joining together in a massive day of defence for jobs, the NHS, the Welfare State, and free education'.

Our role in this society is not just as a student, but as a member of our local community, and as a citizen of this country. It is therefore vital that we participate in this festival to protect what we value in our society, as all of these things are presently under threat.

Talk with one another, with your lecturers on the picket line, join the marches, occupy somewhere, arrange teach-outs or teach-ins on campus, do anything that you find meaningful, for it is a day of possibility.

Get involved

November 29th:

Strike rally
SOAS, 7pm

November 30th:

Student march
University of London
Union, 11am

More details:

falseeconomy.org.uk
pcs.org.uk

FEATURE

For anyone who has an interest in the global AIDS pandemic and the prevention strategies underway to counter it, this summer proved to be a very exciting one. The results from a ground breaking international HIV prevention study proving the practical elimination of sexual transmission of HIV through the effective treatment of those infected with antiretroviral therapy were released this July and sent the AIDS community a tweet with possibilities. Shortly after, *The Economist* published a title of 'The End of AIDS?' as its cover feature. After 30 years of searching for a solution the hopes of many in seeing the end of this devastating infection have been revived. The only issue is that the idea of treatment as prevention is costly. In fact, it's the most costly prevention intervention ever seriously considered for HIV. A total of \$6.9bn was given in international assistance to HIV/AIDS in 2010 – that represents almost 10% of total foreign aid given from governments to assist less fortunate countries for last year – that's a large slice of the aid pie for one disease. So, should we really be demanding an increase in funding for this latest 'elimination' strategy?

Antiretroviral therapy or ART is the treatment given to HIV positive people at risk of immunocompromise to prevent the development of AIDS diseases. It works by preventing replication of the HIV virus in the body and therefore reducing the levels of the virus and its destruction of immune cells. This also reduces the infectiousness of an HIV positive person and their risk of transmitting the virus on to others and this is the basic premise in treatment as prevention. For a few years now there has been an excitement bubbling below the surface amongst those working in HIV/AIDS. There have been models put forward by hopeful souls foreseeing the end of the epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa within half a century and reports from across the world including Spain, Taiwan and Canada claiming reductions in HIV infection rates since the widespread use of ART, but it wasn't until Myron Cohen and his team at the HIV prevention trials network conducted a study which showed a 96% reduction in HIV transmission that people really began to take the idea of treatment as prevention seriously.

On the face of it, the idea of increasing funding for treatment seems to be perfectly plausible and morally justifiable. Treating people who are HIV positive earlier in their infection isn't such a huge leap from a clinical perspective as evidence shows that it's likely to prolong their life. If this also practically eliminates the risk of onwards transmission onto sexual partners that is a massive bonus and makes it well worth the increase in investment. The problem is many of those around the world who are HIV positive and should be receiving treatment under World Health



Next Thursday is World AIDS Day. As Medsin Imperial holds a debate to mark the occasion, **Red Elmahdi** investigates the arguments surrounding aid and AIDS

Organisation recommended guidelines are not. Currently, only 37% of people in need of treatment in sub-Saharan Africa actually receive it despite one of the Millennium Development Goals being universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all by 2010. Treatment regimens in these settings are limited. There is a continuing issue with resistance to the antiretrovirals and the need for second line drugs in these cases complicates regimens further and steeply increases the price of antiretrovirals. We're a long way off coverage for the most in need; expanding drug access to those who aren't even sick looks like a distant dream when faced with the reality of these facts. If the current cut of the pie that goes to AIDS isn't enough to fund treatment for those in need perhaps there should be more money going to AIDS treatment and, if this is the best prevention measure available to stop the spread of this virus, we should be whole heartedly pushing for an increase in funding for treatment as prevention.

Asking the cynical questions, howev-

er, is important when dealing with the issue of AIDS funding and one of the cynical questions here is exactly who is it benefiting from this funding for treatment? There is no doubt that treatment is good for the patient and it now appears to be good from a public health perspective as well, if it reduces transmission, but it's also very good for research institutions and drug companies. Expanding treatment to all those who are HIV positive means more investment in antiretroviral therapy development and much more money going to drug companies, the majority of whom are based in the high income countries that are kindly 'donating' all this money to prevent HIV/AIDS in the poorest countries in the world.

Whatever happened to those other interventions to prevent HIV? The original HIV prevention messages promoting abstinence, consistent and correct condom use and remaining faithful to your sexual partners seem to have been drowned out by the excited screams of the treatment as prevention advocates.

Many rightly argue that these messages have failed in greatly reducing rates of HIV infection but the fact is that condoms are almost 100% efficacious in stopping the transmission of HIV and aren't anywhere near as expensive as a lifelong course of antiretrovirals. Can't we persevere with these tools to tackle this disease instead of increasing funding at the expense of other causes?

And these other causes are important. It is a sad fact in international aid, that funding for a cause is dependent on how conscious people are of it and not necessarily how worthy the cause is. The Schistosomiasis Control initiative (SCI) is an Imperial-based initiative which treats Neglected Tropical Diseases or NTDs (so called because few people are aware of the impact they have on the very poorest in the world) in several countries in Africa. These devastating diseases result in huge amounts of long-term morbidity and mortality but are relatively unheard of. Treatment to cure a group of 7 of these infections, including Schistosomiasis, costs just 50p per person annually. 200 million of the most impoverished people in Africa are infected with Schistosomiasis and despite how easy and cost-effective it is to treat this and other NTDs they receive a fraction of the aid funding given to HIV/AIDS simply because they don't grab the headlines and move people to activism in the same way.

Perhaps the real issue with AIDS funding isn't necessarily the amount that goes to it but the highly directive way in which aid to countries must be spent. Aid for AIDS comes in a variety of forms but primarily bilaterally, from one government to another, or multilaterally through organisations such as the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The money received by national governments must go directly to funding HIV/AIDS programmes in the country with no scope for reallocation of these resources to other causes such as NTDs or wider healthcare needs. These other causes are all at least as worthy of investments as HIV/AIDS and some would argue, due to the number of people they affect, more worthy and in need of greater investment. Governments should be granted greater flexibility in the way they allocate aid resources and this can be achieved with the adequate checks in place to ensure it goes to the good of the population at large, whether this is investing in HIV/AIDS or other programmes.

Perhaps it is not be a question over how the aid pie is cut but more a question of how big the pie is. If current aid levels aren't enough to ensure treatment for those in need of it be it for HIV or NTDs surely the solution isn't greater funding for one or the other but greater funding overall. Convincing governments of high income countries to increase overall aid funding at this time is, however, in itself a whole new challenge and a different aid debate.

Positively Red Week

Monday 28 November

Central Line Pubcrawl starting in SAF, 7pm and ending at Tiger Tiger in aid of the Terrence Higgins Trust

£1 from each entrant on the Tiger Tiger Medsin Guestlist goes to the THT.

Tuesday 29 November

AIDS Union Super Quiz from 8pm 568, Beit Quad.

Test your HIV/AIDS knowledge. Face painting, red ribbons and free condoms!

Wednesday 30 November

Global Health Forum Debate: Do we give too much aid to AIDS?

6.30-8pm, LT1 Imperial College Business School, Tanaka Building

Thursday 1 December

World AIDS Day

Red Ribbon Projection, Queens Lawn, 5pm followed by after party from 8pm at KCL Union

Friday 2 December

Pre-bop Slave Auction, 9pm, Reynolds Bar, Charing Cross Campus

Fancy nabbing yourself an ICSM hottie? This is your chance with all proceeds going to HIV/AIDS charities!

Saturday 3 December

Red Rave in aid of AVERT, 8pm-1am Metric, £3 entry.

Prizes for the most creative red ribbon themed costume and games throughout the evening.

SCIENCE

Science Editors: **Kelly Oakes**
Alexander Karapetian

science.felix@imperial.ac.uk

In brief

Neutrinos still faster-than-light?



In September, physicists working on the Opera experiment announced that they had observed some subatomic particles called neutrinos travelling faster than the speed of light. The neutrinos in question undertook a journey from CERN in Geneva, through the Earth, and finally ended up at the Gran Sasso laboratory deep underneath the mountain of the same name in Italy. But they arrived at Gran Sasso a few nanoseconds earlier than they should have done, had they been travelling at the speed of light, suggesting that they had in fact travelled faster.

Opera published a pre-print paper of their results online on September 22 and held a press conference the next day. Since then, physicists around the world have been poring over their results and publishing papers trying to either find a mistake or use new physics to explain what is going on.

Carlo Contaldi, from Imperial College, suggested that differences in the force of gravity at Cern and Gran Sasso would make the clocks used to measure the time of flight of the neutrinos tick at different rates. This difference would reduce the significance of the result. Others have come up with different criticisms.

Opera have since refined their experiment and reported last Friday that the neutrinos still appear to be travelling faster than light. In the new version of the experiment, the pulses of neutrinos sent from Cern were made thousands of times shorter than in the original experiment. Many scientists criticised the original long pulses because of the large errors they could introduce when measuring the exact arrival time of the particles at Gran Sasso.

The shorter pulses allowed them to measure 20 individual neutrinos, each one associated with a specific pulse leaving Cern. But all still appear to be arriving too early.

This troubling result has the potential to overthrow Einstein's theory of special relativity and mess with the principle of causality, which says that cause must come before effect.

However, physicists working on the Icarus experiment, also at the Gran Sasso laboratory have cast doubt on Opera's results. Their work is based on a recent paper by Boston University physicists Andrew Cohen and Sheldon Glashow, a Nobel laureate. Cohen and Glashow say that if the neutrinos had travelled faster than light, they should have lost energy through releasing pairs of electrons and positrons. The Icarus experiment looked for this predicted energy loss but did not find any evidence of it, suggesting that the neutrinos did not travel faster than light after all.

We will not know for sure one way or the other until independent laboratories are able to conduct similar experiments.

Jim Al-Khalili, a Professor of Physics at the University of Surrey, who after the initial result said he would "eat his boxer shorts live on TV" if it was proved true, will surely welcome Icarus' findings.

Kelly Oakes

Shallow lakes on Europa

Maciej Matuszewski on the best evidence yet for water just below the surface

Europa is the second innermost of Jupiter's four large Galilean moons. Scientists believe that the Jovian satellite's icy surface hides a liquid ocean that contains twice the water than can be found in all of Earth's oceans combined. As such it is one of the most likely places in the solar system where extraterrestrial life could be found. However, given that it is widely believed that the upper crust of ice is on average 20 kilometres thick, probing for signs of life is likely to be difficult. But now a group of scientists led by Britney Schmidt from the University of Texas has said that they believe that pockets of liquid water may form far nearer the surface of the moon.

In a paper published last week in *Nature*, the team describe how they used ten year old data from the Galileo orbiter, and observations of ice structures in the Arctic and Antarctic to explain the formation of previously mysterious structures on the surface of Europa called "chaos terrain" – rough, vaguely circular regions which can tower more than a hundred metres above the surrounding ice. The team believes that the process of formation begins with the eruption of underwater volcanoes, similar to Iceland's Grimsvotn. This heats the lower layer of pure ice in crust, which brings the heat up to higher layers of salt contaminated ice, which has a lower melting point. As this melts, the water forms a sub glacial lens shaped lake of brine.

Since liquid water is denser than ice, a space is left above the lake, causing the ice above to sag in order to fill it. As the ice bends large cracks are formed, into which the brine is injected. Eventually pressure from the brine can cause the ice to split apart into blocks. A similar process happens at the boundary between the Antarctic ice sheet and the ocean. Being so close to the surface, the brine eventually freezes again, pushing the blocks upwards as it expands in volume and turns into ice. The fro-



Europa's 'Great Lake' – scientists speculate that many more exist throughout the moon

zen brine itself forms so called 'matrix domes', which may themselves reach higher above the surrounding surface than ice blocks.

As well as fully formed chaos terrains, such as the Conamara Chaos and Murias Chaos, the team believe that they have also found an area, called Thera Macula, that is halfway through this process. Galileo data shows that while it is in many ways similar to the Conamara Chaos its surface is dipped below rather than raised above the surrounding ice. This suggests that, if the team's model is correct, liquid water of volume equivalent to the Great Lakes could exist as little as 3km under surface of this region. While

the team believes that it will take the water up to a million years to freeze completely, the surface will have altered by enough the next time we send a probe to Europa to be able to see if the model is correct.

If it is, and there is shallow liquid water under Thera Macula, this will not only give scientists a prime site where they can look for life but would also confirm that Europa is geologically active. This would be an extraordinary discovery given that so far the Earth, Jupiter's moon Io and Saturn's moon Enceladus are the only known geologically active bodies in the solar system.

DOI: 10.1038/nature10608

Cna yuo raed tihs snentece?

Madhura Ghosh

Throughout the history of neuroscience, we have often been amazed by the brain's capability and workings. Instances like the ability to read the jumbled headline above intrigue us – how is a mess of letters comprehensible?

We have long known that skilled readers do not need to read individual letters, but until recently the mechanism behind this 'scanning' method was not well known.

This year in the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience, Georgetown University Medical Center (GUMC) neuroscientists reported their findings of a visual dictionary. One of the leading theories in word recognition is that the brain simultaneously retrieves the sound and the visual perception of a word

from the same area of the brain. Glezer et al. rebut this idea through their fMRI based study that allowed them to look at changes in neural activity in different areas of the brain.

Glezer says, "What we found is that once we've learned a word, it is placed in a purely visual dictionary in the brain. Having a purely visual representation allows for the fast and efficient word recognition we see in skilled readers." GUMC set out to prove this by testing word recognition for homonyms such as 'hare' and 'hair'. They found that different neurons were activated, much like different entries in a dictionary are required for the two words. If the notion of phonology and visual perception being interlinked held true, then the homonyms would activate the same or similar areas of the brain. "But this was not the case

– 'hair' and 'hare' looked just as different as 'hair' and 'soup'" explains Glezer.

While she admits that on initially encountering a word we need to sound it out in order to encode the word and match it to the written word; subsequent presentations need no sounds and simply letters to correctly identify the word.

While the relevance of this new knowledge is not immediately perceptible; Glezer outlines that these advancements hold exciting progress in the understanding of reading disorders like dyslexia.

"If people with dyslexia have a problem forming this visual dictionary, it may be that there could be ways of helping train children with dyslexia to form a more finely tuned visual dictionary."

SCIENCE

Extreme weather set to increase

Luke Sheldon

Last week the IPCC released the executive summary to their special report on extreme events and disasters that will be published in full in February next year. The review looked at extreme events in two ways, first considering how they have changed over the last 50 years and then looking at how models predict they will change in future climate change scenarios. The importance of this is to understand the human and economic damage that could be caused by climate change. The report was welcomed by Simon Brown, the Extremes Research Manager at the Met Office, who told the *Guardian*, “less emphasis has traditionally been given to these phenomena which are very likely to be the means by which ordinary people experience climate change.”

By definition extreme events are rare, which makes identifying trends challenging, especially for certain types of events and regions for which records of past events are poor. With this in mind, however, the report had high confidence that the number of hot days had increased in the past 50 years and statistical trends in heavy precipitation were observed with confidence in a general global increase. This highlights how our extreme weather events have already been changing.

Although the simulation of some future extreme events for different emis-

“Heavy rainfall events are likely to occur nearly four times as frequently as they do now by the end of the century, increasing flooding and landslides”

sions over the next few decades did not exceed the natural variation of the climate some extreme events allowed the report to make strong statements. The IPCC are almost certain that both extremely warm and cold days will increase in both their severity and frequency on a global scale by the end of the 21st century if greenhouse emissions continue as normal.

Everywhere but the highest northern latitudes, heat events that currently occur once every two decades will show up every couple of years and events that occur once every two decades will be up to 5°C hotter. As both extreme heat and cold kill, even in Western countries (the 2003 European heat wave caused



Hurricane Katrina is often used as an example of extreme weather

approximately 35,000 deaths), the increased frequency and magnitude of these events will have lethal effects.

Further simulations show that heavy rainfall events are likely to occur nearly four times as frequently as they do now by the end of the century. Although this result does not translate into changes in flooding events due to the dependency of flooding on topography, substrate, and development, an increase in the heavy rainfall will be expected to

increase flooding and also landslides. However, these models also predicted increased drought in the Mediterranean, southern Europe, and parts of South and Central America.

With extreme weather events affecting both food and energy production, the increased frequency, extremity, and location change predicted by this report will have damaging effects to people and economies over the next century if climate change continues unabated.

Are minds extended?

Paul Garwood

Have you ever wondered how your dog knows when your partner is on their way home even if they are miles away? Or how you so often know who is calling before you pick up the phone?

Most of the three hundred people (standing room only!) gathered in South Kensington on October 18 to hear a lecture organised by the Friends of Imperial College had experienced one or both of these phenomena. Is it real? Or is it just that we don't notice, or forget, the many times these things don't happen?

In his lecture on October 18, scientist and author Dr Rupert Sheldrake tabled evidence to suggest that these, and other strange coincidences, happen much more often than chance alone would suggest.

Current scientific knowledge does not offer an explanation. Dr Sheldrake offers the hypothesis that the mind creates a 'field' which can be sensed by other minds and can stretch over long distances. However, his lecture focused more on the evidence he had assembled rather than on possible explanations.

Dr Sheldrake is an able speaker and clearly knows his subject extremely well. He kept the audience engaged throughout his hour-long lecture and presented his evidence in a compelling way. He handled, sometimes doubtful, questions clearly and professionally.

In thanking Dr Sheldrake, Prof Igor Aleksander commented he was a brave man for taking on the scientific establishment. Dr Sheldrake's findings and theories meet with much scepticism from many people – both in his field and in the broader scientific community. For some, his work is pseudo-science at best and brings 'real' science into disrepute.

However, the feeling of this member of the audience at least was that the Friends of Imperial College had performed a service by giving Dr Sheldrake the opportunity to expound his ideas and perhaps stimulate the kind of fact-based response which either allows science to advance, or closes off blind alleys on occasion. It will be interesting to see which in this case!

The Friends of Imperial College is dedicated to spreading enthusiasm and knowledge of science, technology and medicine. It is independent of, but linked to, one of the premier scientific establishments on the globe and organises lectures and events to spread knowledge and stimulate attention to scientific developments. It can be contacted via www.friendsofimperial.org.uk.

Suicidal corals know what's coming

Samuel Cavenagh

Scientists in Australia have conducted research showing that corals can detect when adverse conditions threaten their survival, and can activate a cell death mechanism to save the organism as a whole. This process leads to coral bleaching, where corals expel or digest the symbiotic algae which feed them.

The researchers identified a complex cascade of molecular signals which lead to the self inflicted death of cells, known as apoptosis, in corals and their associated algae. Apoptosis is a process that occurs in many organisms – including humans, which exists to save the organism by eliminating damaged or diseased cells.

Coral bleaching is currently one of the most significant threats to coral reefs worldwide and is triggered by rising water temperatures which lead to the coral and its algae becoming heat stressed. The cell death process begins at temperatures which are 3



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sees coral bleaching as the greatest threat to the world's reefs

degrees less than those which normally cause coral bleaching, indicating that corals can anticipate poor conditions.

Strangely, the team from the Arc centre of research for Coral Reef Studies and James Cook University found molecular signals both encouraging and discouraging cell death were active at high water temperatures. They have therefore proposed a theory where corals kill off some cells in order to strengthen others

in expectation of staging a recovery once the warm water has moved away. This theory would explain how some corals are able to recover after a bleaching event if it has not been extreme.

Lead researcher Dr Tracy Ainsworth suggests that understanding the recovery process of corals will be beneficial to promoting their survival: “Understanding the recovery process for any living organism is always a big help”. Discoveries such

as this will help inform the conservation of coral reefs by helping “us to explore ways that coral reef managers and users can minimise other stresses on the reef to give it the best possible chance of recovery from bleaching” says Dr Ainsworth.

The team also states, however, that the control of apoptosis in corals is “highly complex” and more study will be required before it is fully understood.

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Want to write for
Felix Science?
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In brief**Drug takers can now be caught red-handed**

Scientists have created the world's first fingerprint drug-testing device.

The hand-held gadget detects drugs in the sweat from suspects' fingers, allowing mobile testing with instant results.

With in-built fingerprint imaging, this technology could give police a watertight, fool proof chain of evidence.

Across the world prisons, police forces and even workplaces have shown an interest in the device.

Professor David Russell, of the University of East Anglia & Intelligent Fingerprinting Ltd, said: "The first prototype will be able to test individuals for drugs of abuse but we will be working to widen the range of substances."

Jennifer Whyntie



Better get shopping for gloves, winter is coming

Confused by DOIs?

DOI stands for digital object identifier. A DOI will help you find the journal article a science news story is based on.

Just type <http://dx.doi.org/> into the URL bar and add the DOI to the end. For example: <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1038/nature10550> will take you straight to the Nature letter about the dwarf planet Eris. Alternatively go to <http://dx.doi.org/> and put the DOI into the search box on that site.

Or, if you're feeling lazy, Googling the DOI usually works too...

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Have sex, then select

Maya Kaushik on selection after copulation and 'cryptic female choice'



Chickens had the opportunity to get up to a little fowl play during Green Week

Last Friday night, I was sat in my favourite bar in London with my friends, when a well-dressed young man in a suit came up to me and offered to buy me a cocktail. Pretty exciting, for a single girl, right?

What this guy was subconsciously signalling to me was that he had money (at least enough for his appearance and a cocktail), and therefore probably also had good health and relatively good genes.

We're all probably quite familiar with the theories behind courtship and mating rituals in the animal kingdom – why the peacock has such a beautiful tail, or why male cranes dance in front of females. This is the male's way of saying to the lucky ladies "Look at me! I'm healthy and disease-free, I've got great genes, so let's make babies!"

These examples of courtship are about sexual selection before mating, before any form of copulation or insemination has taken place. But what people don't know is that, for some species, a lot of sexual selection can take place after the deed is done.

Domestic fowl, for example, are a promiscuous species, where most males get the opportunity to mate with most females, if they want to. Male fowl have developed some pretty sophisticated strategies for making sure that their sperm has the best chance of winning compared to their mates' sperm. Sperm is a costly thing to make, so our males want to give themselves the best chance of insemina-

tion, with the smallest possible cost – the best chance of winning the 'sperm competition'.

Researchers from the University of Sheffield found that dominant males increased the amount of sperm they ejaculated when mating with a female depending on how many partners she'd already had. If he was her first partner, he ejaculated the least... no worries there. If she'd had one previous partner, he produced more, and if she'd had three, he produced more still.

What was interesting was that subordinate males had a slightly different strategy. They increased their sperm investment up until the female had had one previous partner...if she'd had more, they let it go, and their sperm investment fell away. After all, if you're a subordinate male, you're not so likely to get anywhere if your girl's had a few, more dominant partners earlier in the day.

Not only did males change their sperm investment based on the female's promiscuity, but also depending on how attractive they found her. In fowl world, a female with a large, red comb on her head is a massive turn on. Males produced a far higher sperm investment when mating with a large-combed female than when mating with small-combed female, as well as giving the poor small-combed girls far less action.

Males also produced the highest amount of sperm the first time they mated with a particular female. After the first time, the sperm investment steadily decreased. Sort of

a 'been there, done that' attitude – the first time is probably the most important in terms of your chance of successful fertilisation. After that, well, the novelty appears to wear off somewhat.

So far we've talked as if the guys have all the control. But there's more at play here. It turns out that female fowl can use their reproductive tract to control, to some extent, the sperm that has the best chance of fertilisation. Female fowl were shown to expel some ejaculates immediately after insemination, and the probability of this sperm ejection went up as the social status of the male went down. Of course, it makes more sense for the female to avoid mating with low social status males at all, but unfortunately if you're a female chicken, you don't always have that much choice. The selection by females that takes place after insemination is called 'cryptic female choice' – cryptic, because this choice is hidden in the female reproductive tract, and can't be easily seen or measured.

Sperm competition and cryptic female choice aren't limited to fowl. There are plenty of studies showing these occurrences in a wide range of species...dung flies, fruit flies, sheep, and comb jellies, to name a few. Far less studied and harder to measure than the more obvious behavioural mating strategies, the sexual selection that occurs post-insemination may have had a far greater impact on the evolution of species than was originally thought.

SCIENCE

Wavefunction may be real after all

Alexander Karapetian

Scientists at Imperial College London have presented a theorem which suggests that the wavefunction is a physical object. The paper, which emphasises that the quantum state cannot be interpreted statistically, was submitted on November 14 and has potential to shake the foundations of quantum theory.

Wavefunctions are a means of describing the quantum state of particles in quantum mechanics and are given in values which lie in the complex plane. Being functions of space and time, they correspond to the probability density of finding a particle in a given place at a given time after measuring its position. Quantum wavefunctions are affected by the Schrödinger equation, which describes how the quantum state of a system changes in time. The wavefunction is the most complete description possible for a physical system, and solutions to Schrödinger's equation describe not only systems at the subatomic level, but also atomic, molecular, and other macroscopic systems, potentially the entire universe.

The paper, submitted by a trio of Imperial physicists led by Matthew Pusey, reasons that if a quantum wavefunction were purely a statistical tool, then quantum states that are unconnected across space and time would be able to communicate with each other. Since this ap-

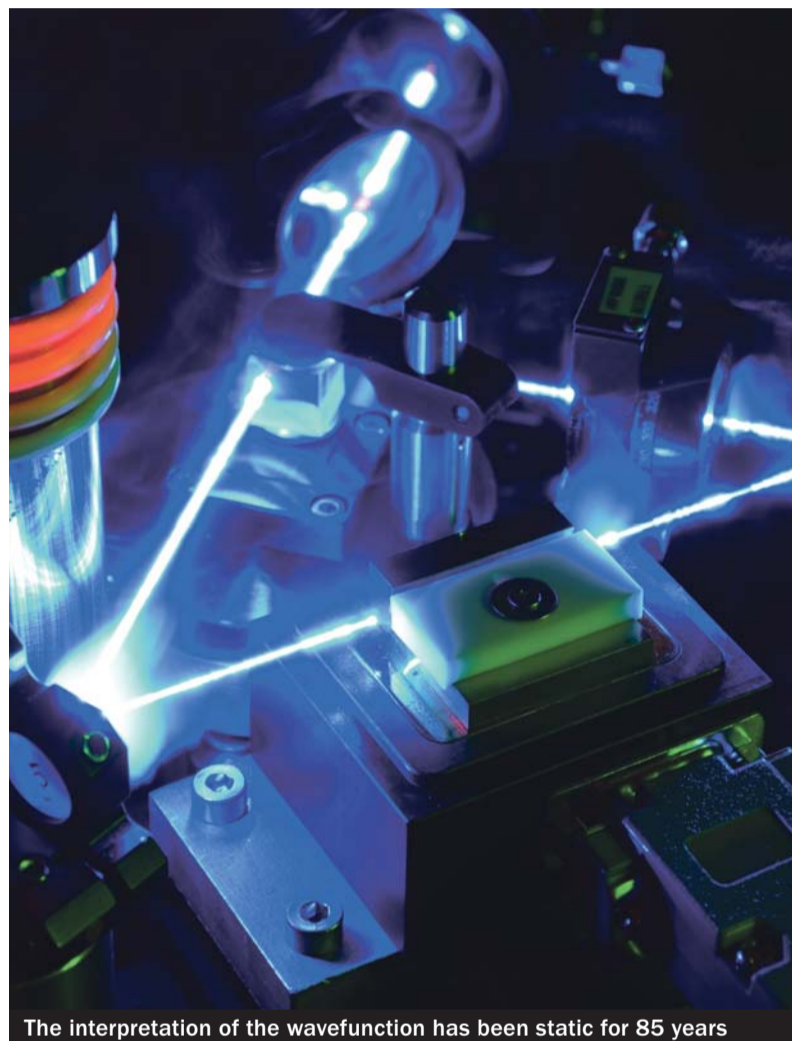
pears to be very unlikely, the researchers conclude the wavefunction must be physically real. The paper has been met with scepticism online, with comments questioning the its debunking of the claim that the wavefunction must be interpreted statistically.

David Wallace, a philosopher of physics at the University of Oxford said the theorem is "the most important result in the foundations of quantum mechanics" that he's seen in his fifteen year professional career. "This strips away obscurity and shows you can't have an interpretation of a quantum state as probabilistic", he continued. If the wavefunction is indeed real, it can no longer be set apart from other physical quantities such as momentum and velocity.

Antony Valentini, a theoretical physicist at Clemson University, believes the result may be the most important general theorem regarding quantum mechanics since Bell's theorem which proved that if quantum mechanics describes real entities, it must include the idea of entanglement between unconnected particles.

The researchers liken their theorem to the notion that a coin being flipped in a biased way has the physical property of being biased rather than it being a statistical property of the coin flipping events.

The wavefunction has been interpreted as a statistical tool for 85 years, and the theorem appears to reopen the question of what the wavefunction represents.



The interpretation of the wavefunction has been static for 85 years

Particles from thin air

Pavitar Devgon

40 years ago, physicists Hendrik Casimir and Dirk Polder, proposed that empty space wasn't really empty. This may seem counterintuitive, but the answer lies in quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics tells us is that a vacuum cannot have zero energy. It is actually a sea of virtual particles, usually photons, which exist for infinitesimal amounts of time and cannot be observed on the scale at which we live.

We may not be able to see these particles, but we can see their effects. Casimir and Polder's theory postulated that if you place two metal plates a small distance apart, so that more particles exist on the outside of the plates than within, the overall effect would be a net attractive force, pulling the plates together. The force would only be noticeable when the plates have velocities comparable to the speed of light and is therefore difficult to prove. Though theoretical, the Casimir Effect has since been used to explain attraction of nanoscale electrical components.

Now, researchers have gone one step further. Chris Wilson from Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden, and his colleagues were able to pull photons out of the vacuum in a process called the dynamical Casimir effect. Wilson says: "It was a difficult technical experiment. We were very happy when it worked."

The researchers used a superconducting electrical circuit and oscillator that rapidly alters the distance an electron must travel through the circuit. The electron's movement is determined by the location at which the circuit's electric field falls to zero. The team used a superconducting quantum interference device to control the circuit's characteristics.

The dynamics of the electron were altered and the team was able to change the distance from the electron to the zero-field location so quickly that the electron appeared to move at a quarter of the speed of light. This seemed to give the electron enough energy to transfer to the virtual photon, allowing it to become real and be emitted by the circuit. "Particles were produced in pairs, coming right out of the vacuum," Wilson says.

Göran Johansson, Associate Professor of Theoretical Physics, explains: "Relatively little energy is therefore required in order to excite them out of their virtual state. In principle, one could also create other particles from vacuum, such as electrons or protons, but that would require a lot more energy." Another interesting effect is that the photons materialise in pairs, and research into explaining why is still ongoing.

The significance of this breakthrough is sure to soon become apparent.

World's lightest material made

Jula Humphries

The lightest material to date has been created; weighing in at less than 10 milligrams per cubic centimetre, it is lighter than aerogels and dense foams. The Guinness world record beater has a density of just 0.9 milligrams per cubic centimetre, in perspective this is 100 times lighter than Styrofoam. The research was conducted by scientists from the University of California, Irvine, HRL Laboratories and the California Institute of Technology; it was funded by the American Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

It is comprised of periodic hollow-tubes, which are 1000 times thinner than a human hair. Despite having a low density, the micro lattice has a high strength due to the unity of many layers of periodic hollow-tubes. In contrast, aerogels although ultralight, lack strength due to their random structure.

Another attribute is super elasticity; it has a tolerance to local strains through the formation of relief cracks.

Furthermore, upon being compressed by a load of even 50 per cent, it can recover almost completely; a demonstration of its potential use as an acoustic, energy or vibration absorber.

Scientists carefully considered each aspect of design, for instance node geometry and cell symmetry. Through precisely controlling such architectural elements of materials, researchers are pushing the field of Nano-materials design forward. For instance, as pointed out by Dr Bill Carter of HRL laboratories, scientists have applied the design principles of modern buildings, such as the Eiffel tower, which are light and weight-efficient due to their architecture, to the material's creation.

Through combining the properties of strength, low density, super elasticity and energy absorption, a truly remarkable material has been created. There are a wide range of potential applications, from thermal insulation to next generation batteries.

DOI: 10.1126/science.1211649



I wish my student loan was this light

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POLITICS

West Sahara and the Arab Spring

One year on from the real start of the Arab Spring

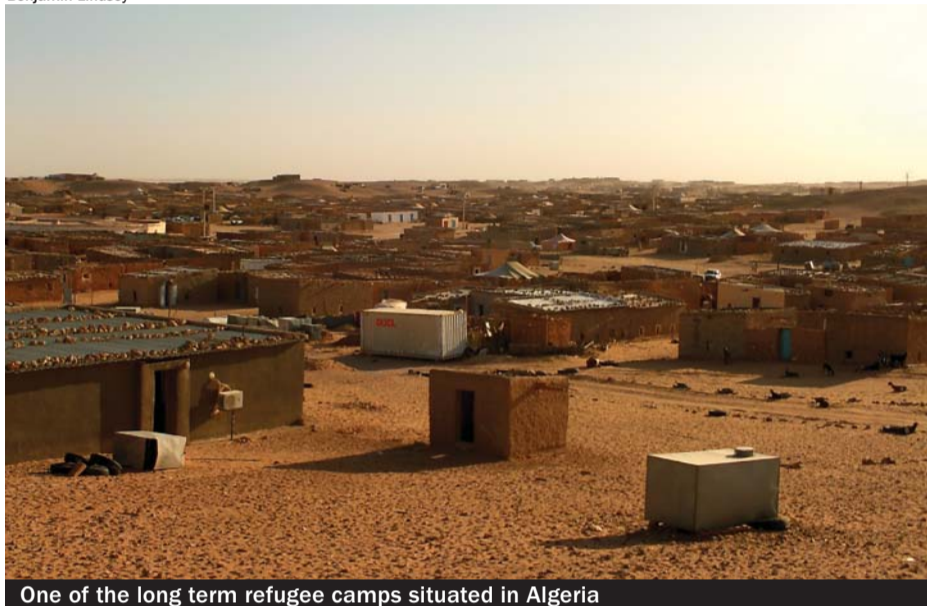
Benjamin Lindsey

On 10 November 2010 a protest camp in the Western Sahara was brutally dismantled by the Moroccan Government, representing the start of the real Arab Spring. One year on, despite huge media coverage of the Arab Spring, almost no attention has been given to the Western Sahara and its thirty-six year illegal occupation.

Previously a Spanish Colony, the Western Sahara is a country in the North of Africa bordered by Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania. When the Spanish withdrew in 1975 the country was invaded by Morocco and Mauritania. The International Court of Justice rejected the sovereignty claim of these two countries. Mauritania later withdrew from the Western Sahara but Morocco has remained ever since. Over thirty-five years later, the country is split in two by a 1,500 mile wall, and over 100,000 of its citizens are living as refugees in Algeria.

The United Nations has been active in the country since 1991, attempting to hold a referendum of Saharawi self-determination. Although there is a large body of evidence showing human rights violations from organisations such as Human Rights Watch, the UN mission has no mandate to monitor human rights. This is the only UN peace-keeping mission for over 20 years that has had no mechanism by which to monitor human rights. An appeal to extend the UN mandate to allow such monitoring has been put forward to the UN Security Council multiple times; each time it has been vetoed by France.

Benjamin Lindsey



One of the long term refugee camps situated in Algeria

Prior to the uprising in Tunisia in December of last year, the Saharawi people formed a camp protesting against ongoing discrimination, poverty and human rights abuses, as well as a call for Western Saharan independence. Noam Chomsky has stated that this protest camp marked the start of the Arab Spring. The month long peaceful protest was eventually dismantled by Moroccan police, resulting in multiple deaths, hundreds of injuries and over one hundred arrests.

A year has passed since the violent halting

of these protests and yet little has changed for the Western Sahara. Despite global support towards many uprisings throughout the Arab world, the Saharawi people have been largely ignored by the international community; a common theme in their thirty-six year struggle for independence. Surely now, with increasing pressure on Syria and new aspiring democracies forming in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, is the time to recognise the true beginning of this movement and give them the recognition and support they deserve.

The world beyond College walls



Who is Silvio?

Who is Silvio? What is he,
That all our swines commend him?
Wholly full of vice is he;
The seven such place did lend him,
That he might removed be.

Is he blind to his hair?
For arrogance lives with blindness.
Sloth doth to his mind repair,
To help him of his spineless,
And being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvio let us sing,
That Silvio is expelling;
He excels each immoral thing
Upon the good earth dwelling:
To him let his bungas swing.

John Hilliard (IC 1974-78)

From the United States with Love

Rory Fenton

The Twentieth Century has been marked and shaped by many international alliances. From NATO to the Warsaw pact, these alliances have changed our world, for better or worse. But even as NATO warplanes fly over Libya and the Arab League rails against Syria, the strongest and most enduring of these alliances has no formal founding documents, no official meeting chambers and no flashy logo. The so-called "Special Relationship" between Britain and the United States may well be the most important alliance of our time and this Wednesday marked the 200th birthday of the man who, in a very real sense, put this alliance in motion.

John Bright was born on the 18th of November 1811 into a very different cross Atlantic relationship to today's. America as a colony was still in living memory on both sides of the pond and tension abounded: Bright was just three

years old when the British Navy sailed into Washington DC and burnt down the White House. So when the American Civil War broke out in 1861, it was far from obvious that the British should side with the Union.

As the Civil War unfolded, Britain insisted on maintaining neutrality but many in the country were openly pro-Confederate. Incredibly, the City of London raised £17m to support the Southern war effort – a huge sum in today's money. The Confederacy even bought battle ships from British companies. Indeed, when the Union cap-

"Had the UK recognised the Confederacy, the world today would be a very different place indeed."



tured a Royal Mail ship containing Confederate diplomats, the UK threatened the Union with all our war unless they released the men. They duly complied.

John Bright, MP for Birmingham at the time, was noted for being a radical liberaliser in Parliament in his support of extended franchise and repealing the infamous Corn Laws. Importantly, he was also horrified at the continued

existence of slavery in the southern American states, which is what led him to seek his country's support for Lincoln's efforts against the Confederates. This was despite his family owning a cotton mill in the south of the USA, which was sure to lose out should the Union win the war. All the while, the UK was edging towards the Confederates, believing free trade to be more important. It was Bright's oratorical

skills and commitment that persuaded the then Prime Minister Palmerston to maintain neutrality.

It was as a result of Bright's support for the Union that a strong friendship developed between Lincoln and Bright, despite the two never meeting in person. In Lincoln's office hung two portraits – one of his predecessors, the other of John Bright. When he was shot dead, one of Bright's pro-Union speeches from a year before was found in Lincoln's pocket.

A lone pro-Union voice in a parliament and government split between neutrality and pro-Confederate military intervention, John Bright's efforts changed the tide of Anglo-American relations for good. Had the UK recognised the Confederacy, the world today would be a very different place indeed. The seeds of an alliance were sown by this man, 200 years old last week, which for better or worse matter more than any other today.

Business Editors: **Beñat Gurrutxaga-Lerma**
Nina Kearsey

BUSINESS

business.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Letter from the Editors



Northern Rock was bailed out by the Bank of England in late 2007 following the US subprime-mortgage crisis that was the spark to the recent global recession. The news became awash with economic and financial terminology, and in a cover of the Northern Rock story *The Spectator's* Allister Heath turned his attention to the BBC's invocation of the term 'moral hazard.'

"Jolted out of prosperous complacency by market turmoil," he wrote, "the public has started to care about economics: strange jargon and obscure concepts previously familiar only to investment bankers are going mainstream." Continuing the article, Heath moves on to say how moral hazard – the risk which arises when a party is spared from the full consequences of their actions – is a lesson that needs to be 'hard-learned'; that the government ought to guarantee only the extent of investors' deposits required by law, rather than the entire sum. This, he argued, would be the way to force depositors to check on the creditworthiness of their banks.

Heath's rationalisation of incomplete bailouts raises the important question of accountability, especially with regard to the investing public, but it seems perhaps too high a price to pay for what amounts to the encouragement of education and foresight in investors. And indeed we may go some way towards this aim by sticking to his opening premise: the importance of clarity from the media in demystifying the jargon describing what led us into our present situation, and what will lead us out of it.

– The Business Editors

The Virgin of the Rock*

Rajvinder Virdee comments on some of the political and social ramifications of the sale of Northern Rock plc to Richard Branson's Virgin Money

Last Thursday the Government announced that Northern Rock was to be bought by Virgin Money. Northern Rock was famously nationalised in February 2008 as the Credit Crunch took its first victim this side of the Atlantic. The deal that has just been negotiated says that Virgin will pay £747m upfront with approximately another £250m in further possible payments, valuing the deal at about £1 billion. This is well short of the £1.4 billion of taxpayers' money it cost to keep the bank afloat, so even though on the face of it a £400m loss (about 28%) looks terrible, it may still represent a good deal for us.

"The Northern Rock sold last Thursday is not the same Northern Rock that was bought in 2008"

Ed Balls, the shadow chancellor, expressed the view "[Northern Rock plc] is being sold off at a loss, and I think there is a question as to whether or not this is the best time, with the markets in turmoil, to get the best deal. George Osborne will need to explain that". The response from George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was to reveal that the deal that nationalised Northern Rock contained a clause stating the bank had to be privatised by 2013, hence the timing of the sale – and the consequent loss – might be somewhat justified.

Regarding market turmoil, with the exception of the sovereign bond market, the stock exchange



Business magnate Richard Branson holds up a Virgin Money credit card, presumably with a gargantuan credit limit; he is the UK's 4th richest man, after all

seems to have done reasonably well in the last year; however, bank shares specifically plummeted with the crisis, posing the question of just how long could the state hold on to Northern Rock? Its nationalisation was always supposed to be a temporary one, with pledges being made that it would be sold as soon as possible. The problem is, the markets (especially banks) do not look like they are going to get much better any time soon, especially not by 2013. Banking stocks have fallen dramatically over the past 5 years (Barclays: -75%, Lloyds: -95%, RBS: -96%, HSBC: -50%), and have all remained pretty much flat for the last three, with perhaps a slight further decrease in value. If banks are losing value, it could be argued there is no point in waiting any longer.

Lastly the Northern Rock sold last Thursday is not the same Northern Rock that was bought

in 2008. The bank currently has just 45% of the staff on its books as it did when nationalised. It has been gutted of all the risky parts of the business, and now has a more stable financial structure meaning it is actually quite a good bank. In terms of its loan to deposit ratio (now standing at 73%) it holds more in deposits than it lends out in loans, making it a safe bank. Also banks are almost never sold at 100% of their held asset values, there is always some discount.

"If banks are losing value ... there is no point in waiting any longer"

With banks losing value there is no guarantee that waiting until 2013 would have helped the Northern Rock situation, and at least now there is someone willing to buy. The most important thing this deal will achieve is competition. Virgin Money has always wanted to buy Northern Rock – in 2008 they made an offer for a 30% stake in the bank that was ultimately unsuccessful. They seem to have the ambition to expand the bank onto more high streets and try and break the stranglehold of Barclays, RBS, Lloyds and HSBC, and that can only be a good thing. Perhaps if Virgin can make a success of the bank, the additional £400m could be earned back in the form of taxes. If this means a better service and better products for customers going to the Bank, they should be pretty happy.

*After coining this headline the Business Editors became aware that a BBC article by Robert Peston was recently published under the same title, however having thought of it independently from Peston, and feeling rather pleased with themselves for this bout of creativity, they have decided to go ahead with it anyway.



The infamous Northern Rock received its notoriety in 2007 when it became the first bank in 150 years to suffer a bank run after having to approach the BoE for a loan

Silicon Valley comes to Imperial

The Imperial Entrepreneurs report on a recent boost to the College's entrepreneurial stature

Nitin Nihalani

Imperial College has joined the elite list of universities participating in 'Silicon Valley comes to the UK' (SVC2UK), an annual event that brings successful Silicon Valley entrepreneurs to inspire students across the UK. Silicon Valley comes to Imperial (SVC2I), hosted by Imperial Entrepreneurs and the Department of Computing in collaboration with MIT Enterprise Forum, brought a range of speakers to our doorstep. They were welcomed by an audience of over 120, and a waiting-list of over 150.

The first of the keynote speakers was the highly experienced Angad Paul, co-founder and major shareholder of several companies, and currently CEO of the \$1.5 billion Caparo Group. Soft-spoken and with calm confidence, he talked about the challenges of running his large business and shared the lessons that he had learned along the way.

Following him was the dynamic Rob Deeming of Gilt Groupe, an online shop offering luxury brands at discounted prices, which is based in the US but expanding into the UK. He spoke of his previous work, both entrepreneurial and otherwise, and taught the audience that joining a young startup is just as rewarding as starting your own, drawing on his own experiences helping Gilt Groupe grow from 30 employees to 900. He also entertained with fascinating statistics of rapid growth and critical points of website based businesses, outlining the importance of computing in solving these problems and offering these opportunities.

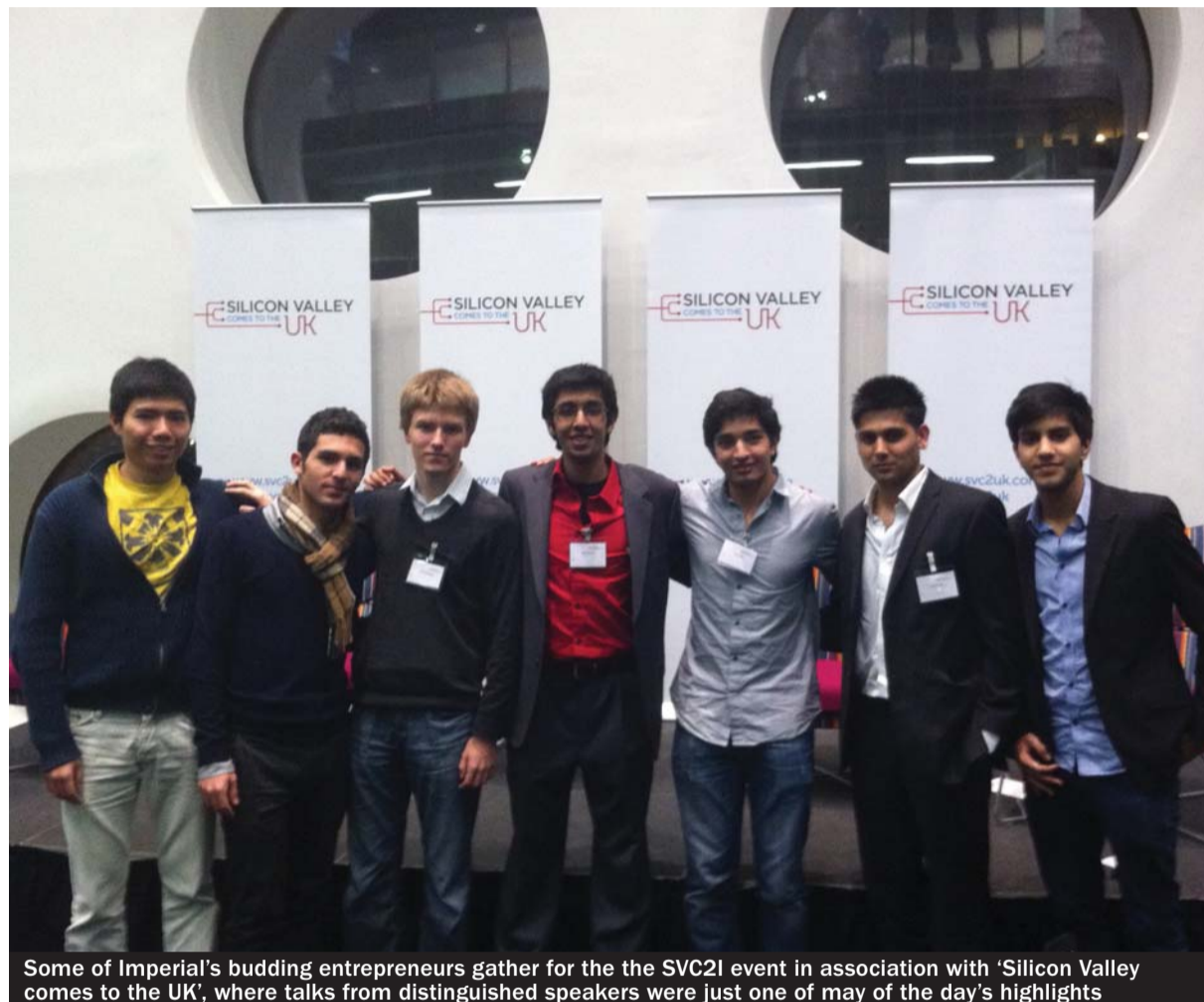
The session one panel discussion was moderated by George Berkowski, chairman of MIT Enterprise Forum UK, regularly involved in new ventures and startups. The panel consisted of the aforementioned keynote speakers, joined by Paul Joyce – founder of **Geck-**

board.com. Among many interesting discussions, they spoke of how they became entrepreneurs later in life and explained that going for it at a young age is not always the best scenario. Building experience first, even in investment banks as in Paul's case, is important but so is keeping the entrepreneurial vision keen until the right time.

“There is no point in becoming an entrepreneur without relentless determination to solve a particular problem”

Following a short tea break, the next session began with Alastair Mitchell, founder and CEO of Huddle, a cloud-based enterprise collaboration tool. He spoke of the importance of beautiful design on top of functionality, even for something as basic as file sharing interfaces. Along with this, he talked about having strong negotiating skills and not doing any favours when sorting out a deal – even if it is with friends. He also had the name 'Huddle' trademarked and believed in the power of having a short catch names. It turned out to be a smart move as many companies, including Google, have tried to use the name.

Martin Varsavsky, entrepreneurial genius and currently Founder and CEO of Fon, a crowdsourced WiFi network, was the last keynote speaker of the night. His witty anecdotes and opinionated stories entertained one and all, and truly portrayed the passion of a genuine entrepre-



Some of Imperial's budding entrepreneurs gather for the the SVC2I event in association with 'Silicon Valley comes to the UK', where talks from distinguished speakers were just one of many of the day's highlights

neur. He talked of his disgust when not being able to access WiFi when he felt he “deserved” it. Through this disgust he launched Fon. Being his own boss is his greatest motivator for being an entrepreneur, he explained, and said that there is no point in becoming an entrepreneur without relentless determination to solve a particular problem.

The final section of the event was a fabulous panel, with Alastair and Martin, joined by Imperial Joint Maths and Computing alumnus Omar Tayeb. He is CEO and founder of Blippar, the first in mobile advertising using augmented reality and image recognition. The fourth panelist was Reshma Sohoni, currently a Partner of famous incubator Seedcamp. This time the panel was moderated by Anthony Gell, a charismatic entrepreneur and currently Founder of **LeadersIn.com**, an online forum devoted to sharing the wisdom of world leaders. His questions were creative and led to many active discussions, one of which being the lessons that Steve Jobs will leave behind.

'Silicon Valley comes to Imperial' was one of the university stops on the larger 'Silicon Valley comes to the UK' tour, which originated in Oxford before mov-

ing to Cambridge and beyond. All the universities held their respective SVC2 events on Friday.

“The message of entrepreneurship is a strong one in Imperial and, with continuous support for these events, is sure to grow”

The organizers of these events and several other lucky students were invited to join other budding entrepreneurs to 'Silicon Valley comes to Tech City', held at Ravensbourne College. Hosted by Reid Hoffman, CEO and founder of professional social network LinkedIn, and Sherry Coutu, former CEO and angel investor, it was a day filled with several panels of the best speakers discussing the most pressing topics of en-

trepreneurship and innovation.

This was then followed by 'Silicon Valley comes to the Science Museum', an invitation only dinner for hand-picked students across the Oxbridge and London universities, who were given the opportunity to sit among and converse with these great entrepreneurial minds, and in doing so gain valuable contacts.

Silicon Valley comes to the UK has brought some of the most intelligent and creative people in the world to Imperial, and as a result we have reached a new entrepreneurial height. The message of entrepreneurship is a strong one in Imperial and, with continuous support for these events, is sure to grow.

Remember! If you are interested in entrepreneurship, starting your own company, the technology sector, or just want to listen to some very inspiring speakers, come to the talks organized by Imperial Entrepreneurs! Sign up for the mailing list at:

www.imperialentrepreneurs.com



Silicon Valley, just south of the San Francisco Bay Area CA, got its name as the birthplace of a large number of silicon chip manufacturers

Comment Editors: **Tim Arbabzadah**
Sam Horti

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

COMMENT

FELIX

A review into our drugs policy would be a triumph for fact

Council Chairman Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller concluded her statement to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Thursday 17 November calling on Government to hold a “proper, and preferably non-political conversation, on [the issue of drugs], to review current policies and explore whether there are others offering better hope of success.” Nevertheless, amongst the various reasoned and well measured responses to the suggestions, last week’s speech has perhaps predictably generated opposition solely focusing on the cannabis angle, leading to claims of “spongy liberalism” in one particular publication. Such suggestions could not be further from the truth.

A review into our current drugs policy is, at the very least, long awaited. Indeed, the effects that drugs have had on the criminal industry for the past several decades show no immediate signs of abating. Eliza remarked in her speech on the wide range of “misery” that drugs perpetrate. That is not to say (as some publications appear to have implied) that it was suggested that the immediate legalisation of cannabis would suddenly solve the problem at hand. Rather, Eliza said that a considered “non-political” conversation would certainly be a first step towards a full and frank review. Such a review would be a bold move by the government that has already taken bold moves with regards to the budget and other aspects of policy.

Obviously, with the ongoing concessions that can only accompany a Coalition Government, such an objective may appear to be increasingly far off, especially with the government’s current stance on drugs. Political machinations play no part in an issue so interconnected with areas as wide as crime and health. A review conducted by the country’s most informed scientific minds, outside of the country’s current political climate would, at least, avoid snap decisions in terms of legalisation. One can only hope that the government recognises the growing list of scientific figures calling for such a debate.

Felix applauds Eliza’s decision to add her voice to this list. Our Chairman’s message has generated much needed debate across the country on an issue that certainly needs a rethink, not least following the surge of popularity in ‘legal highs’ over the last few years. After all, surely it is better to have a full understanding of the potential dangers of drugs, rather than taking even greater risks?

Sri Lanka’s silent genocide



Visakan Balakumar

On Monday 21st November and Tuesday 22nd November Imperial’s International Tamil Society organised and ran a successful Breaking the Silence Campaign. They are one of eight different universities in London participating in the campaign. Their stalls quickly became overwhelmed with inquisitive passers-by, who were interested and, more often than not, shocked and infuriated at what they learnt at the stall. There was also a Krispy Kreme sale which helped raise £150 and will go towards those caught up in the final days of the war in 2009. For those of you who weren’t able to attend, or those who are further interested, this article details the message that Breaking the Silence is trying to convey.

Sri Lanka stands accused of war crimes by international human rights organisations for some of the most horrifying human rights violations in history. Despite the UN calling for an “independent investigation” into the bloody climax of the war in 2009, the Government has dismissed all international concerns as “preposterous”. In a little over a month, over 40,000 innocent civilians, who came exclusively from the Tamil community, which forms the island’s largest ethnic minority, were butchered, having been systematically shelled in public places. The Sri Lankan army, which is overwhelmingly made up of the country’s largest ethnic group, the Sinhalese, left no refuge untouched as they deliberately targeted hospitals, schools and even a governmentally declared “safe zone”. This so-called “safe zone” quickly became a killing field, with thousands of desperate Tamil civilians who had fled there (under the impression that they would be safe from the military’s indiscriminate bombing) being killed. Such a heinous act can only be described as genocide.

Worse still is the manner in which this genocide was carried out. In addition to aerial bombardment and artillery shells, the Sri Lankan army used cluster bombs and chemical weapons, which have been prohibited by numerous international agreements including the Geneva Protocol. These types of bombs, even if targeted at an enemy building, will wreak havoc on nearby civilians with devastat-

ing consequences. Using cluster bombs to target a guerrilla fighting force, who were defending thousands of civilians, suggests a deliberate attempt to inflict heavy civilian casualties. It will come as no surprise that Sri Lanka is not one of the 108 signatories of the Convention of Cluster Munitions, which prohibits the use of cluster bombs. Given the Sri Lankan army’s recent, unrestrained use of such weapons, there remains a very grave threat of further use to crush any future uprisings.

Human rights organisations and political analysts have pointed out that future uprisings are inevitable if the government continues on its path of oppression. Despite the conclusion of the war over two years ago, and the government’s promises to rehabilitate and relocate all of the IDP’s (or internally displaced persons) by 2009, 20,000 of the 300,000 Tamil people originally illegally detained, without charge or trial within these camps, are still languishing. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the UN, described the camps as “the most appalling scenes I have seen.” Indeed Channel 4 have released videos showing people incarcerated with a severe lack of food and water, women separated from families and even sexual abuse. A leaked US embassy cable, courtesy of Wikileaks, described how the army ran prostitution rings, trafficked young girls, and sexually assaulted very young girls. Bodies of the dead were left where they were and even more were killed in stampedes to secure food from the insufficient supplies. Unsurprisingly NGO’s were denied access to these camps and journalists were strictly forbidden.

The Sri Lankan civil war has its roots in decades of discrimination against the Tamils by successive governments, voted in by the Sinhalese majority. Any attempt by Tamils to peacefully protest against the state’s discriminatory policies, resulted in numerous anti-Tamil riots, in which thousands were killed by mobs.

One of the first of such policies was the “Sinhala Only Act” in 1956. This made Sinhala the sole official language in Sri Lanka and forced almost all of the Tamil people working in the civil service to resign, due to a lack of fluency in Sinhala, making thousands of highly skilled and highly educated Tamils unemployed. The economic existence and career hopes of Tamil people were further dashed by the “Policy of Standardisation”, introduced in 1973, which saw Tamil students having to achieve significantly higher marks than their Sinhalese counterparts in order to enter university.

These ills were not met without resistance from the Tamil populace however. Thirty years of peaceful protests, met only with brutal violence and further oppression, resulted in the Vaddukoddai Resolution being signed in 1976 by the



Sri Lankan armed forces are accused of carrying out genocide

then major Tamil party, TULF (or Tamil United Liberation Front). This resolution, with no end to the discrimination in sight, demanded a separate state for Tamil people in the North and East of Sri Lanka called Tamil Eelam, where Tamil people made up the overwhelming majority. The TULF won 18 out of the 23 seats they contested in the North and East and became the first time in history that a Tamil party formed the opposition. This unprecedented level of support reflected the Tamil nation’s aspiration for freedom. It was a demand that was given the mandate of the people, before the LTTE began its armed resistance.

Peaceful methods to achieve this state failed. Those who participated in the protests had their skulls cracked by bayonets and rifle heads. Protesters were stamped on before eventually being dispersed by shooting. However in 1983 one of the saddest moments of the war occurred. Sinhalese mobs, backed by the Sri Lankan military and police force, descended upon the homes and businesses of Tamil people in Colombo. Over 3,000 ordinary Tamil people were killed in just a few days, thousands more injured and 18,000 businesses burnt. Rioters were overtly helped by the government, who handed them voter lists in order to identify Tamil households. No one has ever been charged in relation to this slaughter.

Since that moment, the Sri Lankan Armed Forces have committed many heinous war crimes and human’s right violations. However, as in Rwanda and Srebrenica, the World chose to stand back and watch in 2009. Please do not let murderers and war criminals go unpunished. Please help us break the silence.

You can help by signing the e-petition, titled “Independent, international investigation into war crimes in Sri Lanka” on <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>. We also recommend watching the acclaimed Channel 4 documentary “Sri Lanka’s Killing Fields” if you are further interested.

Read online at: felixonline.co.uk

Maybe the headshots and names weren't enough of a clue.
The opinions of the authors, not Felix.

COMMENT

The dark side of democracy



Pietro Aronica

The reign of the tyrant is over. In Italy, people celebrated in the streets as Berlusconi resigned; across Europe, markets sighed in relief and hoped that his successor would be able to unscrew the pooch that he so thoroughly enjoyed screwing. The 'it has to get worse before it can get better' part of this financial crisis seemed to be behind us, and Italy could get back on the road to normalcy. Times, finally, are looking up.

It's easy to forget why we got here, why Berlusconi was allowed in the control room for so long. There is very little doubt that he was a terrible leader and a pretty reproachable human being to boot. So how could this man have been allowed such a heavy influence in the politics of the eighth largest economy in the world for close to twenty years? Simply put, he was elected. On three separate occasions, the majority of voters looked at this man and thought that, yes, that was the guy they wanted to run their country.

Arguably, Berlusconi is amongst the greatest failures that democracy has ever produced, rivalled only by the stint by a terrorist organisation in Palestine (and that time which cannot be mentioned without invoking Godwin's Law). He's living proof that you don't need sparkling ideas to convince a nation that you should lead them; a charismatic demeanour and a truckload of money to spare will suffice. He was hailed as a media genius, as someone

who spoke to the common man and handled information in a modern way. He was given far too much credit. Berlusconi simply managed to play the system.

Of course he looks like a media genius: he directly controlled three of the six main channels of Italian television (which exist only to propagate his message), alongside some of the most influential newspapers and magazines of the country. His stranglehold was almost total, and he made sure that it was only his views which got across to the general populace. He named his first party "Hooray for Italy!", which is about as uncultured as it gets, and he won on the back of the "revolutionary" slogan "Less Taxes For Everybody" – second only to "More Money For Everybody" in the ranking of inanely populist catchphrases.

Berlusconi has always been portrayed as an anomaly. An outlier, a freak occurrence. But the truth is that democracy will always be prone to these sorts of hiccups. On paper, democracy ensures that the best course of action is undertaken, because the people, who bear the consequences of those actions, get to choose; in practice, people are a cowardly and superstitious lot who rarely bother to research or care about the election. Elections, as Berlusconi showed, can become little more than popularity contests, with candidates winning simply because they have the tightest grip on the information channels, and are



Ladies, please, stop arguing. There's enough of me to share with you all

thus able to sway public opinion. It is not political creed or ability to govern that put people in charge, but the ability to control the media.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not advocating for some revolution to destroy the system; I would just like to point out that democracy, often seen as the gold standard of governments and hailed as the solution that, if implemented, will singlehandedly lead to the prosperity of a nation, is deeply flawed. As with many ideas that are great in theory, it relies on assumptions that simply aren't true: in this case, that the general public is a reasoning, rational beast which always makes the most intelligent choices for the future.

Democracy, as it is evolving, works better than other systems but is in

danger of falling in disrepair due to complacency on our part. Serious laws on conflict of interest and greater emphasis towards technocracy would be desirable in order to avoid a populist drift of the institutions. Most importantly, we need to reconsider the way in which we, the public, approach it. Holding as the ultimate authority the opinion of a population who may or may not be informed on the issue at hand and are easily swayed by the media is an idea that deserves very careful scrutiny.

Italy's latest mistake cost them fifteen years of missed progress and is threatening to collapse the euro; we must acknowledge, and prepare for the fact, that vox populi doesn't equate to vox dei.

“Arguably, Berlusconi is amongst the greatest failures that democracy has ever produced”

All aboard the nostalgia train



Rhys Davies

There are many ways to travel and I like to think that I've experienced most of them. Each one has its own charm, best suited to different needs and situations; from the humdrum of buses to the out-of-this-world splendour of airplanes, and, for the adventurous among you, the awesome majesty of riding an ostrich to college. But there is one form that will hold a special place in my heart.

Little boys and train sets go hand in hand. Little boxes with wheels on the bottom are suddenly transformed by the magic of the imagination into the Flying Scotsman. Most boys outgrow this tryst, moving on to Action Man or football or girls, or whatever, but I never did. In the most impressionable corner of my mind, trains will always be associated with magic and wonder. Basically, I think they're

pretty cool.

Now that I'm (for want of a better word) grown-up, the games have changed but the love affair goes on. I remember first coming to London and arriving at Paddington Station. My jaw dropped as I took in the cathedral of steel and steam, built by its prophet Brunel. The trains were modern models by First Great Western but it was not too hard to paint over the grubby diesel engines with shining brass pistons. I wept.

I have travelled from Paddington many times since, and from other grand stations, but the journey is never dull. The best form of cardio, I have found, is pelting down the platform, trying to catch the train before it leaves. Once, when I had a suitcase full of library books in tow, it was just as good for weight training as well.

And once aboard the train, I am

submerged in a most divine melting pot. Surrounded by strangers from all walks of life, I must sit and interact with people I would not normally mix with. On an island, said John Donne. I can only assume he coined this on the 9:17 from Euston. The train is for everyone and it is where we all meet. Apart from those bastards in first class.

It goes further than that. As well as meeting all peoples on the train, we can travel to all times on the train. All times after 1825, anyway. There are small village stations out in the middle of nowhere, with tiny red brick cottages that have not changed in a hundred years. When the train occasionally deigns to stop, the whole village turns out to see it. But the age of trains is not over yet. If we look to the future, and by that I mean Japan, trains shoot across the landscape at impossible speeds, powered by mag-

nets, gravity, faster-than-light neutrinos and other tools of science-fiction.

This all comes back to the same general idea. A train ticket is a ticket to adventure, as well as Didcot Parkway. Very rarely have I been bored with a train journey, and even then I pretended to like it as so not to hurt its feelings.

Even when the trains are gone, the magic lingers. In the woods near where I live in Cardiff, there is an old railway line. The tracks have been ripped up long ago but it still resists the encroachment of nature. For maybe a mile or more, an impossibly straight path leads through the forest, occasionally overshadowed by brickwork arches. There is a humble serenity about walking in the wake of something long passed.

And yet, I can't help looking over my shoulder in case the 17:36 to Tongwynlais is coming.

“Even when the trains are gone, the magic lingers”

Comment Editors: **Tim Arbabzadah**
Sam Horti

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

COMMENT

Occupying the middle ground



Angry Geek

George Howard wrote ever such an interesting piece on the Occupy protests the other week. You remember? It was the one that kept using the word socialist to describe a bunch of people expressing an opinion. You don't remember. That's alright, it's not really necessary for what I'm going to say anyway. Let's begin with the Occupy protests, and leave George to one side for a while.

The Occupy protests are interesting. I've long since stopped reading Internet news-wheel Reddit thanks to an increasing torrent of people using it to post opinions they know others will slavishly massage back at them, and a lot of this came down to posts about the Occupy protests. The protests were right, Reddit said. Everyone else was wrong, Reddit said. That was that. It's a special brand of single-mindedness, which, to me, almost always indicates someone who has not really thought through what they are doing.

Despite this, the Occupy protests have interesting points. If you go to the homepage of Occupy London Stock Exchange and look at their public statement, the first point is simple and concise, and mostly apolitical. It's a simple statement of opinion, and it reads: "The current system is unsustainable." These people are protesting because they believe the people who have the capacity to change the current system are also the people who stand to lose least from

the way the system is currently running. That is not the statement of a socialist. That is the statement of someone who has a concern about the way a government is being run.

Socialism is a talk for another day, but – and George, you can come back now, thanks for waiting – whenever it is to be used in conversation it cannot be used as a vague cudgel with which to smack around arguments. You don't have to be socialist to object to government action. You merely have to have an opinion, and a voice.

I don't think people have to stay out in the cold at night to make use of their voice (incidentally, the thermal-scanning of the tents was debunked a few days later as fraudulent), and I don't think people have to be nice, clean, well-dressed and well-behaved people in order to be allowed to hold an opinion. If we were allowed to expel people from society for the way they looked then I'd have exiled any and all people who decided a white shirt under a jumper looked 'trendy' at the start of the century. But that doesn't make the people who wear those shirt/jumper combos less justified in holding an opinion. It just makes them look like a sixth-form student who recently discovered Marks and Spencer.

George's article is troubling. Like many people who hold views similar to him, George is interested in attacking the people behind the protests, their ways of life, their standards of living,



Some people just can't do anything right...

their worth as people – instead of looking at the reasons for their protests, and discussing those issues properly. This isn't troubling because it's poor journalism – that would be rich coming from the man who wrote six hundred words comparing porridge to atheism. It's troubling because Imperial, unlike other places where such matters might be discussed by people our age, actually contains many of the people who will go on to make up the 1% in decades to come.

While I joke on an almost weekly basis about my reasons for despising all of you, the truth is that there are moments of genuine disgust as I read Twitter, Felix or listen in to conversations in the

JCR. Many of you aren't just humourously dislikeable. You're worryingly single-minded. That goes for both sides of the political spectrum, whether you cry socialists when people express opinions that differ from yours, or cheer on the Occupy protests as evidence that the Government was out to get you all along. If you think the answer to any of our future problems lies in just the one ideological textbook, then you're going to do more harm than good.

Think I'm wrong about the Occupy protests? Do you think the shirt/jumper combination helps you score with the ladies? Feed me your wrong opinions at: anangrygeek@gmail.com

“If you think the answer to any of our future problems lies in just the one ideological textbook, then you're going to do more harm than good.”

The best way to die



Richard Oberdieck

A couple of weeks ago, I had an interesting discussion in the kitchen in my hall about a quite exotic topic. I wanted to share my 'insights' into the issue with you and maybe give a helping hand to those of you struggling with this peculiar question. The question is: "How would you kill yourself?"

Now, don't get me wrong, I don't have any desire to do so, and neither did anybody who participated in that discussion (I hope). But this is the kind of topic you come up with if you've worn out the question "how was your day?", which, if we are honest, just deeply annoys us. I mean, seriously, if you ask that question to somebody, it is just to make conversation. On most occasions you don't even listen to their answer. And since most people at Imperial study all day long, even when I occasionally listen to other people telling me how shit their day was, the only thing I get out of it is that I'm not the only one feeling like Amy Winehouse

sober – and we all know how that one ended, right?!

So here we are again, back on to the question I asked earlier. Would you just drink yourself to death like somebody famous whom I don't have the balls to mention here, or would you take poison and fall asleep? Would you throw yourself off a bridge or a tall building, or would you rather cut your arteries open? Would you throw yourself in front of a train, or would you hang yourself fixed to the ceiling of the men's room?

All of these methods have been proven to be successful, with some more effective than others. Personally, I would never throw myself in front of a train because you create a) emotional trauma for the train conductor and b) a major delay for all the people in the train. No, if I go, I want to leave no mess behind and no major inconvenience. I also don't want anybody to be traumatised for the rest of their life after finding me.

So what remains: drugs? Yeah, that

would be an option, although I have to say that I don't like the thought of that brief period of helplessness between taking the pills (or whatever form of drug I am using) and death. The idea of waiting for death to come sounds like hell to me. Throw yourself off a building? A bridge? The building is not an option because I could fall on somebody, accidentally bringing harm to others, when really I was only trying to end my own miserable existence. The bridge would be better because any major obstacle could be spotted in advance and if I fall on a seagull, I pretty much don't give a shit. My problem with that solution is that I don't trust all these guys that say "water becomes as hard as concrete after 15 meters", maybe because I've seen too many C-class movies where guys survive 100 metre falls out of hovering helicopters.

Well, this leaves us with two viable options: to cut your arteries open or to hang yourself, preferably in a bath tub/men's room (or girl's room, I don't want to dis-

criminate against anybody) so it's easier for others to clean. I know, it is not ideal, mainly because the person that's going to find me is going to be quite shocked. That's why I would call the cops and tell them that I heard a noise in my room and that I think that somebody broke in. Of course, I would leave a letter on the floor apologising for the inconvenience since, although they are cops, they don't see dead people every day like Haley Joel Osment in *The Sixth Sense*. The only question that remains is: what is worse? Finding somebody hanging from the ceiling looking down at you with a pale, white face of death? Or seeing somebody submerged in a bath tub full of blood?

As you can tell, this discussion has gotten both rather detailed and a little disgusting. And with an inexhaustible amount of ways to end your own life, it is a discussion that could last for a very long time. So, maybe, after all, it is best to stick with a simple "How was your day?"...

“I've seen too many C-class movies where guys survive 100 metre falls”

COMMENT

Poverty should occupy your mind



Rory Fenton

When a friend came from home to visit me this weekend, the Occupy protest at St Paul's Cathedral was an obvious stop on the tourist trail. Whether you agree with the protestors or not, the creation of a functioning tent civilisation with its own library, media centre and even a 'university' is really quite impressive. But you don't need to see what they've done to the City of London landscape to see the impact they've had on the political arena – our economy and society are under the microscope like never before in our generation. And as the long suffering Felix Comment editors know only too well, the debate has been raging fiercely in these pages.

The Occupy legitimacy debate has been going on for more than long enough. But one thing that has come out of it, and other related pieces in this paper, is the prevalence of a certain view among some students in this college. This isn't a question of the standard right/left divide – there are perfectly sensible people and arguments on either side – it's a question of attitude, of outlook. Your political opinions should be formed by an honest look at the world around you and by thinking how best it should, and realistically can, be organised. But in addressing the issue of poverty and why it exists, certain commenters have instead

chosen to justify and defend their own social positions at all cost, as a default, regardless of the consequences and self-delusions involved.

Without naming names, we were here told that poverty is "the appalling situation that ten abysmal years of serially incompetent socialist Labour government has created". Which is curious, because I recall poverty existing before 1997. But more fundamentally this betrays an instinct to blame first and think later, if at all. The world is simply more complicated than that.

Most of us, myself included, have very little experience of what it is like to live below the poverty line in the UK. I have always wanted to believe that you can achieve anything if you work hard enough at it, and in my own life I have found this to be fairly true. And surely if you work hard you should enjoy the fruits of that labour? Bankers work bloody hard and get duly compensated for it. The problem is this: they aren't the only ones working hard. Few Imperial students will have to know what it is to wake up early to take the bus to work because you can't afford the tube. Surely that too is hard work. Few of us will know what it is to go to a school where we are branded collectively as failures, where we are only ever expected to achieve a few GCSE passes and feel the overwhelming pressure to simply comply. For most of us, the road



Poverty is a complex issue with no set solution

to success has been clear and defined – we go to good schools, get spoon fed our A Levels and get into a great university. Of course this takes hard work along the way but it is a clear and well-trodden path. Just how open is this path to the 14 year old in a failing comprehensive? That 38% of students here were privately educated should give you some idea.

To be poor is to face challenges beyond what most of us are used to. To rise above them is laudable but it is all too rare. There are undoubtedly lazy people in this world who earn very little and hard working people who earn a great deal but to infer that those who are poor

must therefore deserve it is a failure of understanding.

Poverty is a complex issue with no easy solution. But simply laying the blame at the feet of feckless individuals and an overgenerous government is unhelpful, lazy and cruel. Where exactly poverty's "solution" will come from is still a subject of much debate, although it's clear that it won't necessarily come from the left (New Labour showed pretty well that simply throwing money at poverty won't make it go away). But until we face up to the realities of the challenges faced by the poor in this country, no meaningful debate can be had.

FELIX

Cat got your tongue?

Didn't think so.



Is there a burning issue that you want to write about?

Email comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk.

ARTS

Arts Editors: **Will Prince**
Eva Rosenthal

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The Poet's Column

FOIL

by **Osas Omoigade**

I suppose it was my choice to come here...
So,
Oktoberfest?
Nah, gotta practice psychometric test
Final year project assigned
Some one or the other engineering design
Movember?
Don't you remember -
I've got an interview this week
Can't afford one misteek!
Thank you for your application...
Finance is a complication
Literature review issued
Change of Career; Science pursued
December ...25th ?
Christmas? You must be having a laugh
I've got January Exams !
But it was my choice to come here wasn't it.

FOIL

Felix Arts is constantly looking for new poets. If you want to see your work appearing here, do get in touch. Additionally, those interested in joining Poetry Society, contact Osas at: oo2409@imperial.ac.uk

DOODLE OF THE WEEK



As we reach that stage in the term when our already short attention spans begin to shrink, let **Doodle of the Week** help you turn that unhelpful scrawl on your lecture notes into a prize-worthy masterpiece.

We welcome doodles of any artistic calibre from elfin figures idly reclining in the shade of a willow or just a prodigiously detailed biro penis, we judge on ingenuity and aesthetic quality alone. Expect prizes!

This week's winner comes from Maria Han Veiga, who wins the right to call herself the first ever holder of Doodle of the Week. Congratulations!

Devil May Blair

The memoirs of Chris Mullin MP are brought to the stage to give a revealing account of the goings-on behind the scenes during the Blair years



The judges weren't impressed by Matt's offering for the village talent show

Kadhim Shubber

Those of us born around the end of the 80s and the start of the 90s have a lot to chew over. Too young to remember a time before Blair but old enough to recall a precious year or two before Bush fucked the world – sorry, “took office” – we not only grew up in an era where wars were fought against nouns, at the end of it all we were garroted by a bunch of banksters.

You might think that I'm being sensationalist by saying Bush “fucked the world”. That's nothing. In *A Walk On Part: The Fall of New Labour*, he gets called, “a morally and intellectually deficient serial killer”, and that's before he fucked the world – dammit, I really must start spelling “took office” properly...

A Walk On Part is the stage-adaptation of ex-Labour MP Chris Mullin's political diaries. It follows his time as a minor player in the New Labour circus, from his re-election to Sunderland South in 1997, up to resigning his seat before the 2010 “bigoted woman” general elections. It is a comic treat, serving up witty one-liners, sweetly sharp satire, and delicious impersonations of the

“(Bush) gets called ‘a morally and intellectually deficient serial killer’”

full array of New Labour buffoons – inevitably Gordon Brown's lower jaw conjures the biggest laughs.

Despite the high-minded content that it deals with, it is a very human play. John Hodgkinson does a fantastic job delivering a portrait of Chris Mullin: a politician who is sensitive, principled, ambitious, and ultimately frustrated by his inability to effect real change. Ultimately Chris Mullin is about as likeable a politician as one could encounter (he was ridiculed during the expenses scandal because, although was one of the lowest claimants, he claimed back money for a tv license – for a black & white screen TV...) But at its core, for me at least, the play forces us to remember how thoroughly rotten a world you and I '89ers' grew up in (someone's got to come up with a name; why not me?) I laughed heartily at the jokes – Geoff Hoon talking about “astonishingly accurate bombing” is delightfully skewered – but it was a sad laugh. The kind of laugh that only arises when there's naught to do but laugh, for to take it seriously would make you cry in despair.

I could write all day; to properly review this play would be to consider the whole morally pathetic 13 years of New Labour government. But that would probably kill me and bore you. The play is intelligent and it is funny; it's human and it's emotional; it's almost certainly a great evening out with a friend. All of this means that you can truly consider what it is saying without being distracted by awful acting or terrible

“The play is intelligent and funny; it's human and it's emotional; it's almost certainly a great evening out with a friend”

writing.

The only gripe that I would have with *A Walk on Part* lies with its treatment of Tony Blair. Hywel Morgan captures his mannerisms and style masterfully. He conveys Blair's over-earnest faux-sincerity with great skill. But Blair is never ridiculed directly; he's a boyish rogue, a figure that we are never invited to take seriously. Worse still, at the very end, Chris Mullin concludes that Blair was only ever led astray by Bush, that naiveté was his only crime. (For Christ's sake, the Tories seem to get blamed for Iraq more than Blair). *A Walk on Part* is certainly a hilarious and smart indictment of our politics and, of course, New Labour. But it seems to conclude that it was not Blair's fault; that none of the lying, the sleaze and the murder carried out in our name was Blair's fault; and that is simply not good enough.

A Walk on Part: The Fall of New Labour continues at the **Soho Theatre** until December 10

Friends of the Mirth

Paul Beaumont

Me being me, and this being only my second ever comedy gig, I was a little sceptical about certain aspects of last Friday's line-up at **The Hammersmith Apollo**. A childrens' entertainer? Musicians telling jokes? Charity?! Retrospectively, however, my aversion to live comedy was wholly unfounded. I loved it. Being a one-night-only gig, I'm not sure however as to what a Felix report should say other than "ha, I got to see the show and you didn't". My perception of reviews is that they are a tool for promoters yearning to sell more tickets to subsequent nights' shows. Perhaps I'm supposed to plug next year's concert (it's an annual thing for 'Friends of the Earth', a charity whose main focus for the foreseeable future is Climate Change). Or perhaps I'm sup-

"As a mathematician, the evening particularly appealed to my inner geek"

posed to plug comedy gigs in particular. Whatever it is, overall the whole night was exemplary.

Our host for the evening, The Inbetweens' Greg Davies skilfully compered. Whilst his 'bulky' 6'8" frame and ill-fitting T-Shirt was the cause of much discomfort for the front three rows of the stalls, it was also the main subject of his self-degradation and consequent enjoyment of the audience.

As a mathematician, the evening particularly appealed to my inner geek. Richard Herring, after warming up with a few disconnected jokes finally stuck with the story of his Fererro Rocher Valentines Day promise, as well as to how his failure to appreciate exponential growth ($\Sigma\{2^{\text{years together}}\}$) will bankrupt him.

Headliner Tim Minchin stuck with the mathematical tack and convinced the audience that comedians who try out new material in small groups aren't taking large enough sample sizes – and that anything below the Apollo's (sold-out) capacity of three-thousand two hundred would make the test unfair. He noted that 90% of the audience had no idea what a p-val-

ue was, and that out of those that did, 90% would again notice he hadn't a clue what he was talking about. With any sample size, Minchin's "new" material – a song called 'Context', which he sang twice (once with only half the words, and once with the full set) – rivalled, in my opinion some of his classics.

"crude, yet hilarious 'alternative' verses slurred by as the wine took its toll."

A musical interlude just prior to the interval caught me slightly off guard; Badly Drawn Boy, the once homeless man, wasn't quite what I was expecting from the evening, but he seemed to go down well with the majority of the audience. The musician's jokes however, were slightly less well received; his tales weren't a patch on those told by his colleagues over the course of the evening.

The music continued and took a Christmas-sy twist after the interval



Greg clocked up his sixth failed marriage proposal this year

with "childrens' entertainer" Jeremy Iron, and his drinking-game version of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. Thankfully the evening hadn't been marketed at children, as, apart from the FIVE GOLD RINGS, not many of the lyrics remained intact: crude, yet hilarious, 'alternative' verses slurred by as the wine consumed as part of Iron's drinking-game took its toll.

The encore for the evening transported me back to three years to school via a song I remember singing at my own Leavers' concert. Minchin closed with a magical audience participation rendition of Buckley's 'Hallelujah'. Performed in pitch black, the song completed a perfect eclectic mix of entertainment, calling a close on a superb evening.

Pint of titter down at the local?

Iain Bower

The residents of South Kensington haven't laughed so hard since a local Science University said it was going to publish a newspaper! Cue the drums and cymbal.

Don't worry, you can expect much better material from the actual comedians. The Comedy Hoopla is, you've guessed it, a comedy night. It takes place in the underground bar of The Hoop and Toy (near South Kensington station) at the start of each month. The old-school-pub and down-the-cellar-feel combine to give an intimate atmosphere, transporting you out of London and imbuing one with the sense that there is nothing to do in the world but enjoy the acts.

This, in my opinion, is almost a certainty. The comedians ranged from self-proclaimed German Comedy Ambassador Henning Wehn through a very loud, fairly Northern Tony Tinman to the wacky, sex-lined folk duo Clantessential with more innuendos

than you can shake a stick at.

The show is split into three parts with several acts in the first two; the headliner taking the last third. In between, you pop to the bar, grab a pint and chat with some of the other comedy enthusiasts. If you're feeling brave, the petite nature of the venue allows you to go and chat with your favourite comedian, something I avoided following a failed heckle.

There was some real talent on show that night. Present was the much acclaimed Tez Ilyas (victor of the aforementioned heckling match, and other less prestigious accolades), with Pattie Brewster and Sam Furniss, amongst others. The comedy itself was a real mixed bag. Ilyas used a Stewart Lee like dissection combined with the subversion of several stereotypes; the difference between Catholics and Muslims being a memorable one. Brewster did a good impression of a mad cat lady, despite being a pretty attractive young lady. Tony Tinman used his obvious charm to

discuss the delicacies of anal bleaching and Sam Furniss, something of a regular at the Hoopla I gathered, regaled us with tales of his family. The headliner, Henning Wehn has recently appeared on QI and brought a bit of class to the proceedings. By this I mean he brought some good old fashioned Brit-bashing banter, observations which seemed to go down well with a South Ken audience.

Not one of the acts was poor and this is testament to the hard work the organisers put into finding great people for the event. The M.C (Master of Ceremonies) and other organisers blatantly take pride in their work. It was this and the fact that we all thoroughly enjoyed the night that makes me sure you won't be disappointed if you take my advice: buy a ticket and get giggling!

Comedy Hoopla at **The Hoop and Toy** (South Kensington); returns on December 7. Doors open at 7:30pm



Pattie Brewster. Can she really pull off mad-cat-lady?

MUSIC

Music Editors: **Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto**
Stephen Smith

music.felix@gmail.com

Kadhim's totally hot album of the week



Main Attraktionz
808s & Dark Grapes II
2011

Searching out new music is not a lone pursuit and cannot be meaningfully automated. You can't hope to get past the tripe on mainstream radio or last.fm's "1+1 = U2" algorithm without a friend giving you a nudge and saying, "we literally won't be friends anymore if you don't love this band".

There's a lot of music out there. Enough to fill your ears a million times over for the rest of your days. As a single intrepid soul, you can't possibly listen to enough music to filter the bad from the good. Music websites/blogs/magazines do most of the work for you; just as I'm hopefully doing in this column every week. But even then, you need to be terminally unemployed to keep up with all the music that a site like Pitchfork sends at you.

Ultimately you're most likely to find an album you love the new-fashioned way: a friend posting music on your Facebook wall. Which brings me to *808s & Dark Grapes II* by **Main Attraktionz**. If you listened to **A\$AP Rocky** last week (which I know you all did) and thought "I'm gonna need some more of this" (which I know you all did) then Main Attraktionz is the heroin to your addiction. This is forward-thinking, groovy hip-hop; this is late-night, bedroom music; this is a roll-your-shoulders-and-shake-your-head-in-public album.

Jamie Fraser, who was kind enough to recommend this album, sadly doesn't have Twitter. So say "Cheers" to his Scottish namesake instead @Jamie-Fraser. Better still, tweet @JamieFraserFan and tell her hip-hop didn't die in the 90s.

Be sure not to miss... Jan Jelinek + AM/PM + Inch-Time

Cafe Oto (Dalston Kingsland)
Saturday 26, November

Mystery Plays Records return to Cafe Oto to welcome the winter season with a spectacular evening of sublime and hazy electronica from label-head **Inch-Time**, swiss architect **AM/PM** and German glitch legend **Jan Jelinek**. Since the release of *Loop-finding-jazz-records* 10 years ago, Jan Jelinek has influenced much of the deepest and grooviest electronica of recent years, while founding the ~scape record label as an outlet for the more adventurous strains of electronica. Catching him in London is a rare opportunity and certainly worth a trip up to North London.

Inch-Time's music soundtracks a snowflake crystallising in the breeze or a dandelion bursting in slow motion, as the night sky paints circles inside circles with the stars. If that sounds a bit like balderdash, listen to *Aurora* and hear what you think. Or better yet, if you still own a tape player, track down *A Handful of Dub* for slowed down and smoked out visions.

Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto

Music elitism begone!

Emily Beech thinks Felix Music needs more Wham!

What does your CD collection consist of? Oh, wait a second, I remember now. Nobody buys those things anymore... it's all about the Internet nowadays.

At the risk of sounding old fashioned and out of the loop, I will admit that I have only ever downloaded two songs: one a rather funky number by the electro-swing group **The Correspondents**, and the other? 'Last Christmas' by **Wham!** I realise that the confession I am about to write will win me no friends in the 'cool' music crowd but I want to start the fight against music elitism!

I didn't buy that song because it was Christmas. It was, in fact, January. I bought it because I can honestly say that I am a Wham! fan and that song is a classic all year round. I am often told by a close friend to not mention the presence of Wham! in my music collection to new acquaintances in order to avoid the inevitable backing away, "Sorry... I have somewhere else to be..." scenario. But to tell the truth I often use it as a test. In my book, if you can't accept my love of Wham! then you are not worth having as an acquaintance.

I am no 80s freak. I don't own a pair of leg warmers or have pictures of George Michael adorning my walls. But I do love a good mel-



Snowflakes, dandruff or... cocaine? Well, it is the 80s

ody and something that can make me dance: 'Club Tropicana' just does that for me.

I am not ashamed to say that since becoming a student over two years ago, I have been to see **LCD Soundsystem**, the **Jonas Brothers**, **Rufus Wainwright** and **Brad Paisley**, amongst others. A mix for sure but something I feel like I should be able to write about without fear of reprisal.

Be sure that this 'lack of musical taste' is not down to being uninterested in music. I will listen to anything and I can generally find some-

thing I like about it. In all honesty, I don't listen ironically to any of the questionable things on my iPod; I really do just enjoy listening to them.

Like the classic body-image/magazine argument, perhaps the Felix music section is just not representative enough of Imperial's surely diverse music taste. So I say this to you. Come out of the woodwork fans of all things kitsch or previously-considered-awful! We must not be made to file our music under the category of guilty pleasures!

The return of The Maccabees

Lily Le

Say "**The Maccabees**". The response from most people, in order of frequency, would probably be a blank look, "is that something to do with the Jews?", or one of intense gushing adoration.

In a way, they've had quite a bit of a struggle as five young men churning out indie-pop amongst a sea of countless others doing exactly the same. They were dismissed by many at first as just another hipster band that would no doubt fade away soon enough, and have had a lot to prove.

With a much anticipated third album on the way, it seems they finally have managed to make their mark on the British music scene.

Indeed, their early releases of jangly guitar pop about first loves, nans, and a local swimming pool did not have a depth of meaning which was immediately apparent; except maybe to adolescents who could relate to the emotions behind the songs and old fogies who weren't old fogies enough to have forgotten such wistful memories.

The development of those teenage fans into young adults between their first two albums seemed akin to the whole attitude of the band. Their growth and refinement between releases has certainly not been demonstrated to such an



Waiting in line at the hairdresser or posing for the waiting room magazines?

extent by the majority of of their peers.

Their second album, *Wall of Arms* hones in on what makes The Maccabees great: universally relatable lyrics about realistic relationships which are simple yet profoundly moving, the impressive use of instruments which evoke emotions from within the listener, and an underlying tone of honesty and authenticity straight from the heart of the boys without any pretence or insincerity.

For their next album, *Given to the Wild*, the

group themselves say it is a record that finally demonstrates what The Maccabees should sound like.

A snippet of this can be heard in the form of their new single 'Pelican' which maintains all the brilliance of the *Wall of Arms*, brings back the liveliness of *Colour It In* (their debut), and asserts a confidence and self-belief of a fully-matured musical artist.

Say "**The Maccabees**". The response should be, "a truly excellent band".

APOCALYPSE

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TELEVISION

So bad it's good - *Waterloo Road*

Far-fetched state-school drama tops National TV Awards

BBC



The Ofsted inspection suddenly seemed to have become a little less orthodox than usual

Maciej Matuszewski

I don't normally watch shows in the 'so bad it's good' category – there are far too many genuinely good programmes which I can devote my time to. The one exception to this rule is *Waterloo Road*. The first time I saw it I was instantly hooked: it was truly the most ridiculous thing that I had ever seen on TV. The action takes place in an unbelievably incompetently run secondary school in Rochdale, where the average pupil death rate is one per term. This is a show in which the staff go drinking in the pub every day after lessons; where everybody in a position of authority higher than the Headmaster is insane or frankly just plain evil and where the school motto, "ex nihilo omnia" (everything from nothing) actively insults the pupils.

In my favourite episode, the series six finale, a student and a teacher elope to Gretna Green to get married; two other pupils set off explosives during the school play and then run off to mess about on a railway viaduct where one of them gets stuck; and a fourth pupil becomes paralysed after tumbling to the ground when he goes up onto the viaduct to rescue his friend (of course he is miraculously and inexplicably cured over the summer holidays and the incident is never spoken of again). To add to the staff's troubles this all happens on the day when the school is being visited by the head of the governors.

Given that everything that happened could be traced directly to their ineptitude and poor supervision of pupils, in the real world the Head Teacher and her deputy would have immediately been suspended. Here, however, in what is the most hilarious scene that I have ever seen on television the head of the governors actually congratulates them on their good work, based solely on some good predicted GCSE grades. Having seen the behaviour of the students in class I wouldn't have been surprised if it turned out that these had been falsified.

I'm sorry to say, however, that the latest series has been getting better. Not by enough to be called good by any means, just enough to become mediocre and boring. Fortunately the final episode of this series, broadcast last week, saw the writers returning to old habits and giving us another laughter inducing offering.

The episode opens with the Head of PE lying depressed on his friend's sofa after having just found out that his wife Sian, who is the Deputy Head Teacher, had been cheating on him with the new Head, Michael Byrne. He's soon feeling better, however, as he's back in school to lodge a formal complaint against Michael and to unexpectedly take his children out of class to tell them that they are leaving for Ireland later that very same day.

The funny thing with *Waterloo Road* is that, no matter how many plot holes this creates, each episode takes place over the course of just one school day. An episode focusing on a longer period of time might develop some pacing issues, but nothing that a skilled writer and director couldn't handle. Of course, such people aren't in abundance on the show's creative team.

For Michael the day begins with him standing outside and grabbing one of his student's arm to get his attention. Now, having volunteered at secondary school I know that physical contact with pupils is a really big no-no. It's an especially bad idea if the pupil in question just recently saw you threaten a man, Wayne Johnson – a former pupil who once stabbed Michael, outside the school gate and run off when he is hit by a truck. As the episode progresses we see Wayne waking up from his coma and breaking out of the hospital to confront Michael. He takes Sian hostage and makes our Head admit what he's done, which of course doesn't go down well with Sian, who runs back to her husband.

Michael also gets a lecture from veteran teacher Grantly about how no other Head at the school had "promised so much and achieved so

little". That's not all that fair – while Michael is probably the most unlikeable of all the *Waterloo Road* Heads on a personal level he's at least so far managed to avoid any deaths on his watch. He also hasn't hacked into staff email accounts to identify a whistleblower, like his far more popular predecessor Karen did. Now that I think about it, one of the whistleblower's emails to the LEA mentioned "falsified grades" so perhaps my guess about the GCSE results at the end of series six wasn't just an overreaction.

A subplot of Wednesday's also deals with pupil Jodie Allen finding out that her foster parents are planning to move to Bristol. Not wanting to be separated from her best friend she takes her advice and decides that the best thing to do is accuse her foster father of child abuse. Eventually she admits that she was lying, but not before he is arrested and the family pretty much torn apart.

By the end of episode, and the end-of-year awards ceremony (where it is heavily implied that Head of English Linda Radleigh rigged the vote to win the pupils' choice Best Teacher award), almost everybody seems to have, improbably, made up. All I can say is that Jodie's foster parents are the most forgiving people that I've ever seen. It seems we're going to get a happy ending until Linda, whose grip on sanity has been slipping since spending a night with Michael and then being rejected by him, decides to run him over with her car.

This is a very fun show to watch, for all the wrong reasons. I'm happy to hear that fifty new episodes have been commissioned and that it will remain on our screens until at least 2014; though I really have no idea why it remains so popular. Surely not everybody can be watching it ironically, like I am. After all, it won this year's National Television Award for Most Popular Drama. Whatever the answer to this little mystery, I thoroughly advise you all to watch the next series – you're sure to have a laugh.

Pick of the week

It's not your nose



Friday | 2100 - 2210 | Channel 4

The Experiments

Derren Brown plays mind games with groups and the concept of right and wrong.

Saturday | 2055 - 2145 | BBC1

Casualty

Jeff and Dixie suspect an elderly man of using their ambulance as a taxi service, but Lloyd investigates the patient's medical history and uncovers the cause of his health complaints. How exciting.

Sunday | 2100 - 2200 | BBC1

Da Vinci: The Lost Treasure

Fiona Bruce travels to Florence, Milan, Paris and Warsaw to tell the story of Leonardo da Vinci's life, exploring why a man whose reputation rests on only a few pictures – including the Mona Lisa – is regarded as one of the greatest painters of all time. Also, Fiona Bruce.

Monday | 2100 - 2200 | ITV

Doc Martin

Martin Clunes.

Tuesday | 2100 - 2200 | BBC1

Death in Paradise

British DI Richard Poole is trying to get used to his new Caribbean surroundings when news comes through of another murder.

Wednesday | 2100 - 2200 | BBC2

Your Money and How They Spend It

Part two of two. Nick Robinson explores the difficulties politicians face when trying to change the way tax is collected, and how Chancellors have persuaded people to pay more in the past.

Thursday | 2100 - 2130 | BBC2

Rev

Fantastic religious comedy starring Tom Hollander. The church school is up for religious inspection.



We've got text bigger than a Samsung 102-inch TV, why not write an article for **Felix Television**? Email tv.felix@imperial.ac.uk!

FILM

Recommended films this week

Take Shelter (15) – Plagued by disturbing visions of the Apocalypse, a dedicated family man's strength and sanity is put to the test as terror and paranoia start to eat away at him. Michael Shannon portrays one of the most likable, relatable American heroes in recent memory with quiet intensity, whereas rising star Jessica Chastain pitches in a moving supporting turn as the concerned wife. Without a doubt one of the best films of the year, *Take Shelter* treats the audience with a fascinating blend of family drama and some haunting disaster film special effects.

Moneyball (12A) – You don't need to know a thing about baseball to be wholly captivated by this moving sports drama of beating the odds. More interested in the dynamic between a struggling team's general manager and his various obstacles than on-field matches themselves, Brad Pitt gives a self-confident, cheeky, yet warm performance as Billy Beane, a real-life character who brought about a string of unprecedented victories for his joke of a team, the Oakland Athletics. With solid supporting turns from Jonah Hill and the ever-so reliable Philip Seymour Hoffman, *Moneyball* is a heartfelt, moving piece of work.

50/50 (15) – Another film about fighting against the impossible, this time it's about surviving a rare form of spinal cancer. When a young man in his 20's (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) is diagnosed with an aggressive tumour that gives him a chance of survival of 50%, he must find a way to cope and live through its many painful effects. Supported by his best friend (the hilarious Seth Rogen), his amateur therapist (the warm and sweet Anna Kendrick) and his slightly over-bearing mother (Anjelica Huston in a supporting role that is finally worthy of her name and phenomenal talent), our brave hero fights and finds humour along with his fight for survival. With its delicate balance between drama and comedy, this is one of the most touching, yet hysterical films of the year.

My Week with Marilyn (15) – Michelle Williams gives the performance of a lifetime as the late American icon, Marilyn Monroe. Whilst filming *The Prince and the Showgirl* in London opposite Laurence Olivier (Kenneth Branagh), the director's assistant (Eddie Redmayne) catches the eye of Monroe. Desperate to escape her hectic life and pressures of work and celebrity, the two decide to run away to the peaceful English countryside. The two fall for one another, despite the fact that Monroe is a married woman. It's a tragic love story, although peppered with light humour here and there. For fans of Monroe this is a must-see, and anyone yearning for a breezy light-hearted film should also check this one out.

And one to avoid...

Dream House (15) – A predictable, painfully slow haunted house horror that drags on for far too long relying on its ridiculous twists, there hasn't been a more scare-free film with a cast as good as this. Daniel Craig and Rachel Weisz act well together, but even their chemistry cannot elevate this sub-par effort from being nothing more than a lazy attempt that starts off with a good idea, but ends with many of its obvious genre clichés. You want a better Rachel Weisz film? Watch *The Deep Blue Sea* (also out this week) instead.

A pearl in the ocean

Ocean of Pearls

Director Sarab Singh Neelam
Screenwriters V. Prasad, Sarab Neelam
Cast Omid Abtahi, Heather McComb, Ron Canada

Pavitar Devgon

A couple of weeks ago, the British Sikh Doctors Organisation and Imperial Sikh Society worked together to put on an outstanding meet and greet event with Sikhs from all around London, a few charities and talks on a variety of topics, culminating in the screening of the new-to-the-UK movie: *Ocean of Pearls*. Director Sarab Singh Neelam, a doctor living in Michigan, originally had the idea based on countless real life experiences of migrants throughout the world. *Ocean of Pearls* won multiple awards at various film festivals: Best Feature Film at the Detroit Film Festival in 2009 and the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Choice Award at the 2008 Los Angeles Pacific Film Festival, to name a few.

The story follows Amrit Singh (Abtahi), whose family moved to Toronto, Canada, and is largely involved in the Sikh community developing there. Amrit shows himself to be a hardworking doctor and practising Sikh, though he never really understands why his family left "the old country" to be in Canada, yet still follows the old ways. I'm sure many of you, even those who aren't Sikh, know what it is like to be in a foreign country and can relate to the experiences shown.

Amrit is approached with an excellent job opportunity in Detroit with millions of dollars of funding for leading a team in his research, if he can impress the board of directors. He soon realises though, that if he really wants to achieve his goals and get the money he needs, he will need to be "flexible" and adaptable, even going



so far as to compromise his ethics and his identity. During one tearful scene, Amrit cuts his hair, shedding the turban image and devoting himself to get that job. Meanwhile, his family and girlfriend notice how aloof he has become and though Amrit keeps it a secret, soon he reveals that he cut his hair in a heated debate with his father. How does his life go on from there? Does he meet his ends and achieve the top job? You'll have to watch and find out.

However, what is important is that while there appears to be a *Pursuit of Happiness* theme in terms of Amrit and his profession, there is a much deeper and more significant message: should outsiders compromise their identity to realize their dreams? Many of our Imperial College London colleagues are foreign students and know how intimidating it can be being in a strange new country, where people ridicule us for our looks, our accent or our beliefs. It does seem so much easier to give in and be like everyone else. For Amrit, the choice to remove his hair was made so he could present a recognizable face to not just his board of directors, but to the subconsciously xenophobic community he finds himself in.

Is this the way forward? For each of us, we

have to make the choice and that means deciding whether we will follow our dreams to the end, regardless of what we may have to give up, or remaining steadfast in our beliefs, despite the setbacks, despite the bullying, despite the racism that threatens us. Amrit's father says during the film that during a period of Sikh history, there was a bounty on every Sikh head and anybody known to be a Sikh was instantly put to death. Despite this, the Sikhs did not cut their hair or shirk away; they proudly wore their turbans and denounced the injustice, fighting against terrible odds. I'm sure a lot of you have seen the film *300*? The odds were stacked even higher against them.

I know I've talked a lot about Sikhs in this, but it really applies to everyone. Whether you are oriental, African American or European, female or male, disabled or suffer from illness, I'm sure that we've all experienced prejudice in our lives, but we all have the right to be treated fairly and equally. We all have things which make us who we are and you just wouldn't be you without them. However, we must make sure that when chasing that £10m dollar contract, we do not lose sight of our ideals, our history, our identity. Ultimately, the choice lies with you.

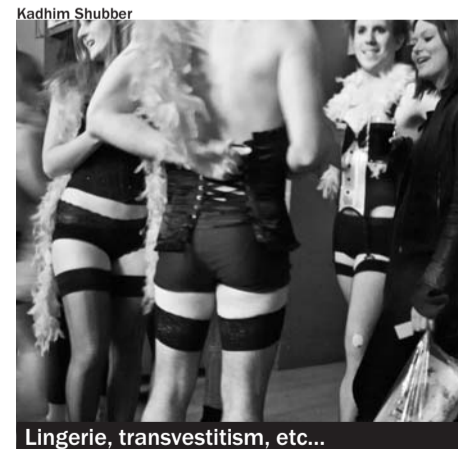
Give yourself over to absolute pleasure

Kadhim Shubber

I'm a *Rocky Horror Picture Show* virgin. Or, at least, I was a *Rocky Horror Picture Show* virgin until last Thursday, when my innocence was taken from me in a flash of lingerie, transvestitism, and hilarious heckling. Musical Theatre Society provided the girls, guys, and the pizzazz, while iCU Cinema provided the film that's built a rock-solid cult following since 1970s.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show, for those who don't know, is a weird and perverse musical about the sexy and mad Dr. Frank-N-Furter (played by Tim Curry) and a straight-edge married couple's, Janet Weiss (SLUT!) and Brad Majors (ASSHOLE!), release into debauchery.

But this is much more than a film. It truly is an experience. For those in the know, it's a chance to dance, to sing, and to heckle the screen. Whenever anyone in the film says Ja-



Lingerie, transvestitism, etc...

net (SLUT!) or Brad (ASSHOLE!), scores of people scream 'slut' or 'asshole' at the screen. The narrator is derided for his apparent lack of a neck, and that horror film plot device of going to an old castle because your car broke

down is lampooned as people shout, "CASTLES DON'T HAVE TELEPHONES," at the hapless characters.

However, if you're not in the know, if you're a Rocky virgin (as indicated by the 'V' drawn on your forehead by the MTSoc guys and gals running around in lingerie) the effect of all this madness is really quite smart. You end up mimicking the experience of Janet (SLUT!) and Brad (ASSHOLE!) They've turned up at this weird castle with a bunch of barely-dressed people, and you've turned up to iCU Cinema with a bunch of barely-dressed Imperialites. They're taken away by the dancing and aren't sure what to do, and you're... well you get the gist.

By the end of the show, though, you've been converted (rather like Janet [SLUT!] and Brad [ASSHOLE!]) You begin to look at the people in lingerie and begin to feel like your jeans are a bit... stifling. But don't tell my mother I said that.

Film Editors: **John Park**
Lucy Wiles

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Mirror, mirror, on the wall...

John Park tries to determine who really will be the fairest of them all...

Two films. Two Snow Whites. One fairytale. Within a short span of three months next year, we are incredibly un/fortunate (delete as appropriate), to have two films based on the popular story of Snow White. *Mirror Mirror*, out next March, takes a much lighter, colourful, and slap-stick approach, whereas *Snow White and the Huntsman*, released in June, as its title may suggest, has a more violent, sadistic, and dark spin to it. Much like this year's *No Strings Attached* and *Friends with Benefits*, there will be stiff competition to see which the better adaptation is. Trailers have recently been posted for both films, and it's time for Felix Film to predict which has the upper hand.



The Queen

When the sinister, techno music starts setting the tone for *Snow White and the Huntsman*, chills are sent down one's spine as the devilishly sexy Charlize Theron (left) starts narrating. And she does this with a flawless English accent, something that gives her a more majestic, elegant presence. But don't be fooled by her beauty: she is full of bitter resentment and hatred, as she quite literally sucks life out of a beautiful maiden, murders someone in her bed, sports some nasty-looking claws, bathes in questionable white-looking liquid, and turns into crows. She's clearly a nasty piece of work, and it's hard to imagine the queen not getting what she wants.

Julia Roberts (right) on the other hand, might just deliver nothing short of a major flop of a performance, and that's just from watching the trailer. She's supposed to be a funnier evil queen, meaning whiny and immature, which is fine, if only Roberts could speak any one of her lines with consistency. She goes for the English accent. She fails. She retreats back into an odd hybrid of English and American. Then she just gives up. She goes into full-blown American towards the end of the trailer. And this is in the space of two minutes. This does not bode well for the entire film. Not everything is her fault though. Her evil Queen is too low-key and trivial to care about. All she wants is to marry the good-looking young prince to sort out her... um... financial troubles. This is an insult to the evil Queen, not to mention an unwise move to diminish a well-known character to mere caricature.



The Princess

Kristen Stewart (left) is harshly and unfairly criticised for everything she does because of that *Twilight* franchise. She has given good performances in the past, and it comes as good news that her usual blank, withdrawn expression is somewhat suitable for the role of a victim. A slight problem though; the trailer for *Snow White and the Huntsman* oddly sidelines her, so much so that she doesn't get the chance to utter a single syllable of her dialogue. The only unique aspect of her character we find out is that this time, our fairytale princess is a fighter, dressed in armour, wielding a sword. Was her performance so bad that it had to be cut?

Lily Collins (right) of *Mirror Mirror* looks younger, more innocent and has fancier dresses as she dances away in her dizzyingly radioactive coloured palace. She's all smiles even when her queen banishes her into the woods, and she seems to spend some fun times with her new friendly dwarves. The twist here is that not only must she master fencing to overthrow the woman responsible for her many troubles, she must also fight for her love, as the queen is also pining away at the tall and handsome prince. Collins is certainly cute and lovable, more fitting for the kind of Snow White we are used to. *Mirror Mirror* is a more light-hearted adventure film, and Collins is suitably fitting for the lead role.



The Prince

Swinging an axe is not very different from swinging a hammer, which is why Chris "Thor" Hemsworth (left) is perfectly suited for the Huntsman opposite Stewart. His rugged physique and scruffy features firmly establish that he's a tough man of the wild. He even has the guts to ask "Why is she of such value?" to the scary Theron when she dispatches him to hunt down Snow White. What a lad.

The Social Network's Armie Hammer (right) steals the hearts of not only Snow White, but also the queen in *Mirror Mirror*. Hammer is a talented enough actor to fully embrace the humorous side of his character, with his playful attitude looking as though there could be convincing chemistry between him and Collins. There is one very disturbing scene though: Hammer is given a "love potion" by the evil queen, as she tries to use magic for his love. It turns out the potion is labelled "puppy love." The result? Hammer starts acting like a puppy. He asks the queen to "rub [his] belly." Creepy...



Top 10 Box Office films in the UK this week



1) **The Twilight Saga - Breaking Dawn Part 1** - 12A - Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart, Taylor Lautner

2) **Arthur Christmas** - U - James McAvoy, Jim Broadbent, Bill Nighy

3) **The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn** - PG - Jamie Bell, Andy Serkis, Daniel Craig

4) **Immortals** - 15 - Henry Cavill, Freida Pinto, Mickey Rourke

5) **In Time** - 12A - Justin Timberlake, Amanda Seyfried

6) **Tower Heist** - 12A - Ben Stiller, Eddie Murphy, Casey Affleck

7) **Johnny English Reborn** - PG - Rowan Atkinson, Dominic West, Gillian Anderson

8) **The Rum Diary** - 15 - Johnny Depp, Amber Heard, Aaron Eckhart

9) **The Ides of March** - 15 - George Clooney, Ryan Gosling, Marisa Tomei, Evan Rachel Wood

10) **The Help** - 12A - Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, Emma Stone

Verdict: At this point, I'm leaning towards *Snow White and the Huntsman*, purely because of Theron's spot-on portrayal of the antagonist.

Games Editor: Laurence Pope

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

GAMES

Sex, Drugs and Video Games

Voxel-based morphometry, left ventral striatum volume and adaptive neural plasticity; **Sam Horti** breaks down some of the science behind video game addiction

We've all been there. We've all played games that we are unable to put down, and the responsibility comes down to others to crowbar the controller – or mouse and keyboard if you're so inclined – out of our hands. We've all got up early before school to spend a few golden hours with our latest, engrossing purchase. We've all daydreamed in lectures about how we can't wait to get home to complete our diamond mine in *Minecraft*, to rack up those head-shots on *Team Fortress 2*, or get through that edge of the seat relegation battle in *Football Manager*. Some people may have even missed said lectures to do just these things, although they'd never admit to it in public, let alone in a student newspaper.

“This study was published in *Nature's* Translational Psychiatry journal, and looks like it could be the real deal”

Why exactly do we do this? What is it that gives us that insatiable appetite to keep playing and playing, even when we know we have much more important things to do? Well, scientists this week have come up with an answer. It turns out that gamers are different in more ways than just the obvious, potentially socially embarrassing ones; our brains are structurally different. And as it turns out, we're all addicts.

The study I'm referring to isn't one of those unreliable, waste-of-time-and-energy studies on video games which only gets enough respect to feature in the middle pages of *The Sun* (or the front page of the *Daily Mail*). In fact, this study was published in *Nature's* Translational Psychiatry journal, and looks like it could be the real deal.

(Warning: neuroscience ahead.) Essentially, the study has found that frequent gaming is associated with higher levels of grey matter in the dopamine-related ventral striatum. This area of the brain forms an integral part of our internal reward system and has been shown to be closely related to addiction on many separate occasions. Additionally, the study showed that this increase in grey matter correlated with less deliberation time when making decisions during a gambling task and more loss-related activity during a monetary incentive delay task.

So what can we glean from this? Well, if we were being reactionary we might say that playing video games causes our brains to swell, encourages us to make rash decisions and forces us to continually carry out tasks which we are doomed to fail, with no thought of nobly accepting defeat. However, the study provides, oh so predictably, no evidence that playing video games causes any



“Frequent gaming is associated with higher levels of grey matter in the dopamine-related ventral striatum”

of the features that I have already described. In fact, it seems logical to me that the reverse is much more likely to be true: people with brains that predispose them to addiction, with more grey matter in their ventral striatum, are more likely to engage in potentially addictive activities, and I am placing video games firmly in this category. Indeed, it was Henrietta Bowden-Jones from our very own Neuroscience division that suggested that the findings "further close the gap" between video gaming and other addictions. The idea that people whose brains predispose them to addiction are more inclined to play video games is something that I wish to use as a base for a potentially controversial observation that I can't help but make: video games are a lot like drugs.

I'd like to introduce this idea with a joke:



What's the difference between a drug addict and a gamer? One parts with a lot of their hard earned cash in order to achieve short term pleasure – the other is a drug addict. Video games, like drugs, satisfy our brains in ways which keep drawing us back to them. We cannot get enough. As you start to accept this fact, yet more similarities will open up. For example, it is a well known fact that the more drugs you take, the more you need to take to achieve that elusive high. Tell me, can you remember a game that was as magical during your first playthrough as it was during your tenth? If you can, then I'll certainly have whatever you're having.

Another similarity can be drawn between the corresponding suppliers in each cases: the drug dealers and the video game companies. Now I'm

not particularly familiar with the way in which a drug organisation starts up, and what understanding I do have is drawn from the questionable realism of *The Wire* (which I would recommend to everyone, by the way). I would hasten to guess that this first step requires that you produce a better product than your rivals. Once you have this product you will gradually get more and more customers, utilising economies of scale, and before you know it you're sitting on a mountain of cash. When you get to this stage you can start to relax. From then on, to some extent, you can get by on your name alone. Your business model becomes more about exploiting the irrational minds of those who are so hell-bent on buying from you than about creating a quality product.

“Video games, like drugs, satisfy our brains in ways which keep drawing us back. We cannot get enough”

With this in mind, let's examine a random gaming franchise. Say, I don't know, *Call of Duty*. For me, this is a series that started off with real promise. The franchise was built up by Activision, alongside developers, with real quality at its core, and managed to better (or at least match) its rivals in its early days. It gradually attracted more and more customers, utilising economies of scale, and before you know it, Activision was sitting on a mountain of cash. You see where I'm going with this. And by the way, the same could be said for a whole lot of other video game producers.

So, what does this all mean? Should we all start checking ourselves into rehab? Well, no, not really. Because video games aren't like hard drugs. But for a few, *World of Warcraft* related cases, you won't die because of video game addiction in the same way that you are likely to if heroin or cocaine is your poison of choice. No, video games are more like marijuana – practically harmless substances (check the studies if you don't believe me) that will let you sink into your own little world of bliss. From what I hear anyway. I can honestly say that I have never smoked marijuana in my life. If I had, however, I imagine that it would be a lot like slipping through a green pipe into *Super Mario World* for a brief period of time.

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Video games aren't all about reviews and scores out of 10. If you've read an interesting paper related to video gaming or just want to write a game-related discussion piece simply email games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Fort Dwarfness. Wait, what?

Dwarf Fortress: challenging, captivating, and almost completely unheard of. Keir Little sheds some light on this hidden gem

Deep underground, a lonely dwarf miner breaks into an expansive cavern. As he stumbles out into the darkness, two trolls immediately set upon him. “Bugger,” I say, pausing the game to take a sip of tea, and plan best how to save him. I order my soldiers to go down and join the fight. Meanwhile, my carpenter, desperately waiting months for the turtle shell she desires to finish her project, finally snaps. After chopping her own baby’s head off, she runs around in a rage, butchering my fort’s other inhabitants, while my soldiers are deep in the caverns fighting other threats.

There are no reloads in this game: I abandon my fort, and start again. After a few hours, goblins attack much sooner than expected. I hurry my dwarves inside to safety, but my beloved mayor is caught and killed. The other dwarves, mourning his loss, become depressed, throwing themselves off cliffs or refusing to eat until they die. I quit, get another cup of tea, and start again. I accidentally flood my fort with lava. Quit, start again. I embark upon an area so frozen, no water flows, and my dwarves dehydrate. I quit, ready to start again before I realise that I’m meant to be writing an article on *Dwarf Fortress*, not just playing it.

“Losing is fun!” is the unofficial motto of the game, and for good reason: every playthrough ends in the eventual demise of your fortress. How long you wait for that moment is a matter of experience and a lot of luck. There’s a lot that can go wrong, from the mundane (starvation, freezing, flooding) to the insane, (dragon attack, magma, murder sprees). *Dwarf Fortress* makes no pretence at be-

ing easy. In the indie gaming community, it’s revered: heard of by many, its influence felt in countless games (most notably *Minecraft*), but played only by a hardcore few.

It’s not all doom and gloom. Once you’ve got a hang of the basics, and can expect your fort to last for a reasonable length of time, *DF* becomes a game of opportunity, complexity and challenge. *Skyrim* may be “staggeringly ambitious,” but it’s Blackpool Tower compared to the Burj Khalifa heights of ambition reached by *Dwarf Fortress*. Recreate your greatest *Minecraft* city for your dwarves to live in, pump magma to the surface to boil goblins alive, arm your soldiers with steel plate, encrusted with jewels and all engraved with depictions of their victories. What you can do is near-limitless and equaling each other only in their difficulty.

“*Skyrim* may be ‘staggeringly ambitious’, but it’s Blackpool Tower to *Dwarf Fortress*’ Burj Khalifa”

Oh yes, even when things are going perfectly, this game is hard. Without graphics to hinder your imagination, you’re left with ASCII characters. Like looking at the Matrix, it’s bewildering until



Little known fact – God is actually an avid *Dwarf Fortress* player

your mind begins to fill in the gaps. There’s no mouse control – the interface is a series of key-strokes, with the in-game menus being inconsistent and little help. Of course, it’s still in development, but the game’s sole programmer would rather work on new features than on optimisation. “The interface is coming – it’s not coming in your lifetime, but it’s coming,” he says. The players prefer it this way.

Having been in alpha release for over five years now, the game has built up a diehard fandom. The community is tight-knit, but welcoming, which is fortunate: without careful guidance from veterans, almost all new players would run away screaming. Most still do. The fan-made wiki is so comprehensive that even the developers refer to it, and the forums are a friendly place where noobs are encouraged to ask questions. The community are part of what makes the game such a living, evolving thing: sharing their creations, reporting bugs, suggesting and commenting on new features.

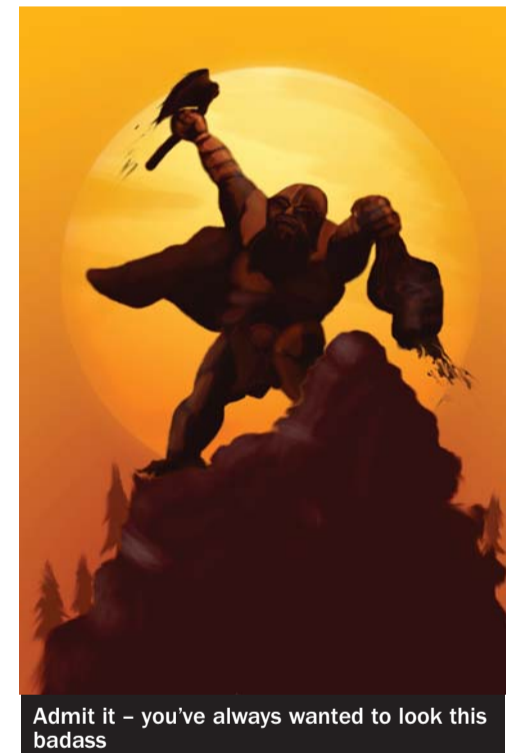
“The game world is larger than you could ever hope to explore; each town has limitless random quests”

The game is the brainchild of two people: brothers Tarn and Zach Adams, more commonly known as ToadyOne and ThreeToe. Toady has a PhD in maths from Stanford, but currently works full-time programming *Dwarf Fortress*, living off savings and donations from grateful players. He has no current plans to charge for the game, and with its almost complete lack of graphics and notorious interface problems, it’ll never gain the mainstream attention or revenue attained by more user-friendly indie games.

Part of the reason for its difficulty is that the game, fully titled ‘*Slaves to Armok: God of Blood, Chapter II: Dwarf Fortress*’, shares many similarities with its predecessor, the original *Slaves to Armok*. Known as “roguelikes,” it and others like it were a genre of dungeon-crawling RPGs famed for having permanent character deaths, and a myriad of things which could kill or harm your character.

DF takes more than just the ASCII graphics from this genre. Its adventure mode pays homage to roguelikes, and unlike the fortress mode lets you control a single character. The game world is

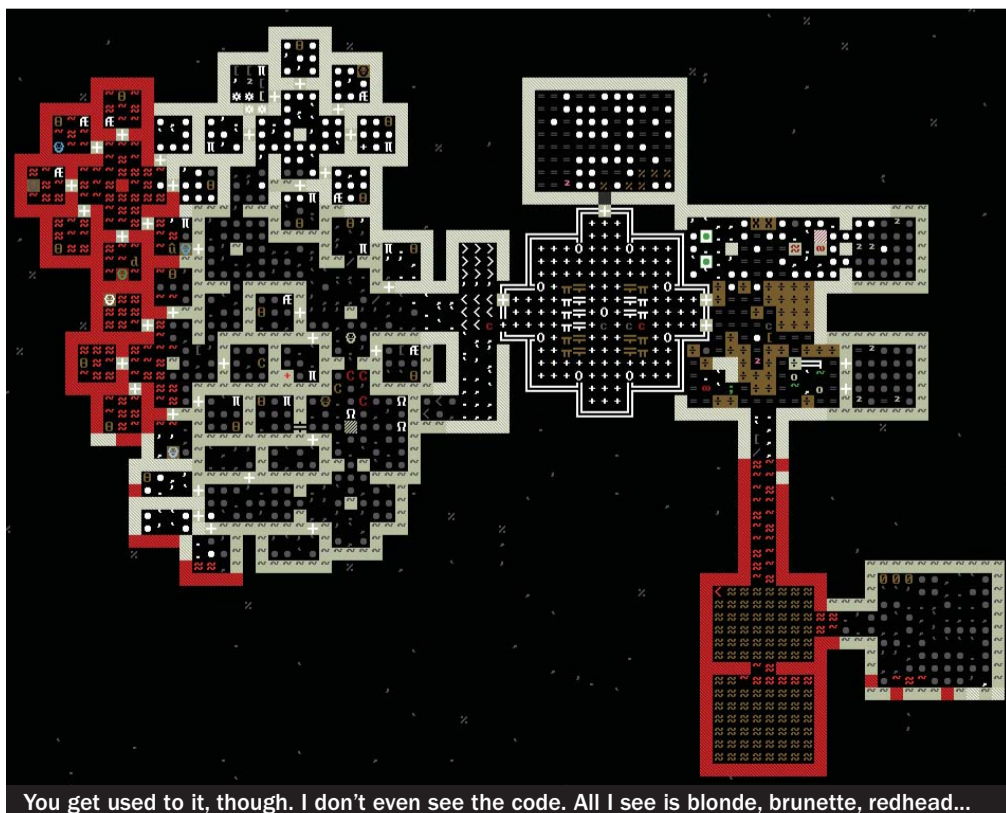
randomly generated; unconstrained by graphics, it details the lives of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants in text. It’s larger than you could ever hope to fully explore; each town has limitless random quests. You can even visit your abandoned dwarf fortresses, and see what foul beasts have taken over since your dwarves left. The latest version saw a revamp of the injuries system: if you’ve ever wanted a game where you can grapple and break every bone, down to each finger and toe, you should consider seeking help. In the meantime, play *Dwarf Fortress*! “You can’t yet strangle people with their exposed guts,” Toady says, “though I suppose that’s now within reach.”



Admit it – you’ve always wanted to look this badass

Dwarf Fortress is defined by the brilliant moments that occur by chance: when your miner, set alight by the magma he just dug to, decides to get a drink from the alcohol stores, blowing up every barrel in the process; when your butcher, about to, ahem, deal with your kitten overpopulation problem, adopts them instead; when the Captain of the Guard witnesses her baby’s murder by invading elves, and vows bloody vengeance upon them. The challenge of the game becomes part of the fun: without it, these moments, greater than any scripted cutscene, wouldn’t be so satisfying.

This is a hard game, but so rewarding for those who can master it. If you’re up for the challenge, tread lightly at first: read the wiki, read the forums, watch one of the many getting started guides on YouTube. Find and read *Boatmurdered*, the brilliant, hilarious story of a playthrough by members of the Something Awful forums. If that doesn’t interest you, don’t worry: you’re not alone. You can go back to playing *MW3* now.



You get used to it, though. I don’t even see the code. All I see is blonde, brunette, redhead...

Games Editor: **Laurence Pope**

GAMES

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Skryrim, Saints Row? You've got nothing on *Creatures*!

Philip Kent puts aside the big releases of this season and talks about one of video gaming's granddaddies, *Creatures*

With blockbusters such as *Skryrim* being released, and modern legends like *Minecraft* celebrating its birthday, it is often possible to overlook some real masterpieces. One of these is *Creatures*, and the sad thing is that many of you will probably have never heard of it!

“Creatures; one of the first games to simulate artificial life down to its neurological and biological underpinnings”

Creatures is the brainchild of Steve Grand OBE, an ‘independent scientist’ who focuses his research on artificial life. It is this research that lead onto *Creatures*; one of the first games to

simulate artificial life down to its neurological and biological underpinnings.

One of the most appealing things about *Creatures* is the fact that, whilst incredibly complex and even scientifically accurate (insofar as it was possible to back in 1997 – computing power has come a long way!), it was still incredibly fun, and even emotional! Many a player had to hold back a tear when one of the Norns (one of the species in the game) more dear to them decided that it would quite like to give suicide a try. Indeed, the publisher (Mindscape – remember them?) even printed the tagline “They’ll make you laugh. They’ll make you cry. They’ll make you think.”

Those with a bit more of a scientific inclination can always fire up the Science Kit or (in later versions) the Neuroscience Kit for some (potentially lethal) tinkering – it’s possible to probe brain cells, examine organ status or even

inject a cocktail of chemical mixtures. In later versions, the ability to inject specific chemicals was added and, as attempted to follow reality as closely as possible, you could inject some ATP to give your Norn a much-needed kick, or if you’re

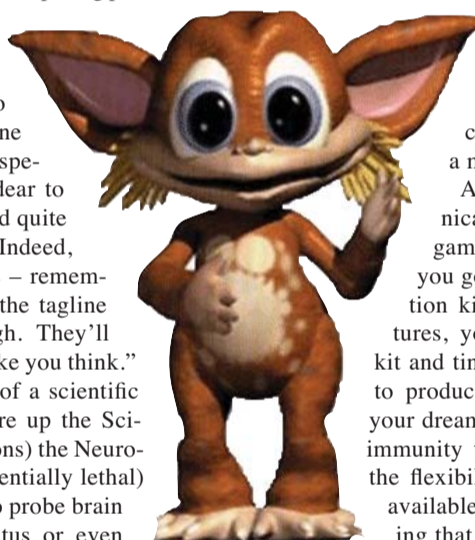
slightly masochistic, you can even pump your creature’s blood vessels full of cyanide. Followed by sodium thiosulphate, of course – I’m sure you’re not a murderer!

Another example of the technical excellence behind the game is the Genetics Kit. When you got bored with natural selection killing off the weaker creatures, you can simply fire up the kit and tinker to your heart’s content to produce the genetic sequence of your dreams. Ageing can be disabled, immunity to poisons added; most of the flexibility of real-life genetics is available at your disposal – meaning that you can go wrong and end

up with a stillborn more often than not! And I haven’t even got space to mention CAOS!

“Whilst the series is still available to purchase, the current owners appear to be sitting on an unsung hero of British engineering.”

It is quite sad that, whilst the series is still available to purchase, the current owners appears to be sitting around on what is an unsung hero of British engineering. So while we wait for Grand’s next A-Life game (*Grandroids*), I do hope that new people can experience the joy to be had from the fun, yet realistic world of *Creatures*.



Humble Bundle brings the DRM-free deals

Laurence Pope

Never heard of the Humble Bundle? Shame on you! The pay-what-you-want-for-a-selection-of-great-games (completely DRM free!) scheme? Did I mention that all the games are available on Windows, Mac and Linux systems? No? Well I just did!

Did I also happen to bring up the fact that you decide how your money is split, divided between the game’s developers, two registered charities (the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Child’s Play Charity) and the Humble Bundle site’s running costs? Well Mister (or Ma’am), you’ve just been re-educated.

Seriously though, the Humble Bundle deals (The Humble Introversion Bundle this time around) are a good deal for both you, the developers and the charities. The game selection includes a few small, award-winning games such as *DEF-*



The Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Child’s Play Charity are the two charities the HB supports

CON and *Aquaria*, and for amount of money you can potentially shell out it’s a bloody good deal.

Just don’t be a stingy bastard!

Activision shuns free advertisement

Laurence Pope

Activision you muppets. What on Earth are you on?

For no apparent reason this week Activision requested, i.e. demanded, that the YouTube video series *Weapon Guide Express*, for the *Call of Duty* series, be taken down.

OK, I lied, there is a motive for their actions. The guy’s videos were so good that Activision hired him to make channels for Elite TV, a section of *Call of Duty Elite*, a premium service offered by Activision. Being of sound mind the guy accepted, but also continued on a smaller, free series on YouTube for his fans. That is, until Activision pulled that particular plug, meaning the only way people can see his stuff now is to pay.

It’s well known that Activision loves money in the same way we need oxygen, but seriously? Are they so blinded that they can’t see the huge potential in



Your guess is as good as mine folks

free YouTube advertising? The guy had 160,000+ subscribers. That’s a lot of potential customers. A lot of potential sales.

Is this going to be a future trend for Activision? Who knows. Let’s hope not.

Fashion Editors: **Saskia Verhagen**
Alice Yang

fashion.felix@imperial.ac.uk

FASHION

Men: How to dress for an interview

As the dreaded season of interrogation kicks in, even the most macho of men start to wonder how they can dress to impress. **Ross Gray** shows you what to wear to that all important interview

Shirt and Tie



This is the one area where you can really put your personality into business dress. Well, not quite – if you are interviewing for city positions, forget any shirt that's not blue or white.

It's generally best to go for solid twill or poplin cotton as it can provide you with more creativity in the tie area, and under no circumstances should you use French cuffs; your interviewer will think you have a high opinion of yourself.

If you have gone for a solid shirt and a fairly solid suit, make sure you do not also wear a solid tie; while you are not going to stand out as bad, nobody will remember you for your dress.

If wearing a solid shirt go for a dotted or striped tie, and try to match colours as well as possible. It's hard to go wrong with red or yellow/navy on pale blue, or any shade of blue on white. As a good general rule, your tie and shirt should never have the same pattern – if your shirt is striped, get a solid or dotted tie. If the same pattern is to be employed, make sure there is a large difference in pattern size, or the combination will be too busy and difficult on the eye.

Accessories and Grooming



A very simple area for most university students preparing for interview, grooming should probably be weighted heavily at our most grand of institutions.

Basics that shouldn't need stating: shower, shave, cut your nails and keep them clean, brush your teeth. Use wax or gel if your hair will appear messy without it but avoid drowning it – nothing will make you seem less professional than looking like you have just discovered gel. Do not use cologne as in a small space like an interview room it will be overpowering and create a negative impression.

Accessories may seem unimportant but it is the little touches that make all the difference in business dress. Always wear a belt matched with the colour of your shoes.

If you are going to wear a watch, try not to make too much of a statement – nobody appreciates a 19-year-old interviewing for an internship trying to be flash. Your watch should never be better than your interviewers'.

A pocket square (white matches everything) can help to complete a look and help your tie patterns to pop, but be careful when considering other colours; only attempt if you are confident in your matching.

Shoes



They can be in any colour, as long as it's black.

If you are considering wearing brown shoes to an interview, then you really need my guidance and you'd better start paying attention.

Your shoes should be black, leather, and polished – they should shine, but not to a military level. A lack of shine on your shoes indicates sloppiness in your appearance, and any dust/dirt will make you look like an outright slob.

The kind of shoes you can go for will vary from role to role, but always make sure the toes are elegantly rounded, and generally it's a pretty good idea to avoid loafers.

For City roles, it is standard to go for a clean Oxford or an understated brogue. It is worth paying for quality where shoes are concerned, and even if you aren't shopping at Church's you should make sure your shoes are at least leather soled and fit well.

Suit



The key to successful interview or business dress is being conservative without being boring, but forget trying to be interesting when it comes to the suit.

For banking, and any client-facing business role, you want a dark – navy or charcoal – single breasted suit with a notch lapel of medium width (skinny is very fashionable at the moment – avoid this like the plague; it will be uncool in half a year).

Small or average height men should buy two button suits, while those on the taller side should go for three. Always fasten the top button on a two and the middle button on a three, unfastening every time you sit down when it comes to the interview itself.

Try to resist the temptation to shoot down two birds with one stone and get a black suit as interviewers generally do not appreciate their applicants being dressed for a funeral.

NEXT WEEK: The Best First Impression – A girl's guide to the perfect approach to subtle style and formality in interview dressing

FOOD

Food Experiments



I know you've had it with eggscruciating yolks

Young science students from Sherborne Girls in Dorset have discovered what makes the perfect boiled egg and soldiers. In an "Eggsperiment" commissioned by the Royal Society of Chemistry, a team of 12 girls tested one of Britain's favourite breakfasts and confirmed the optimum time for boiling an egg, as well as the key variables that make up the perfect dipping soldier.

Stella Botes, a 13-year-old student, told me that "The inspiration for the 'eggsperiment' was to perfect something that everyone does at home, using science. My particular group were working on the runniness of yolk and flexibility of bread. The conclusions of the data were that margarine makes a stronger soldier than butter, white bread makes more effective dunking soldiers, the optimum toasting time is 2.5 minutes, the perfect soldier dimension is 1.5cm in width, and the perfect boiled egg takes six minutes."

Iram Hasan, who is a 17 year old student, confesses, "I believe that gastronomy is inevitably defined by taste and a person's own preferences. The perfect boiled egg and soldiers might not be the perfect boiled egg and soldiers for another person. However, scientific food experiments can help give a more objective overview of food; reducing biased and subjective results which can lead to inaccuracy. Heston Blumenthal highlights that scientific food experiments can add to gastronomy, and as scientists, we are always looking for the reason behind observations, even in food! Science can make food even more exciting, as Heston does so well."

Science is everywhere. And as a scientist you must be able to cook a proper breakfast!

Anastasia Eleftheriou

The young food scientists are happy to answer any more questions you might have about the experiment at office@sherborne.com.

Warm up your winter

The stunningly festive bar and restaurant Spiegel Saloon returns to Hyde Park's Winter Wonderland

Michael Krestas

Spiegel Saloon returns to Central London as part of Hyde Park's Winter Wonderland. Open from last Friday 3 January, the stunning bar and restaurant is the only fully heated place within Winter Wonderland. Going back to the early 19th century, Spiegel Tents were travelling ballrooms and entertainment salons, originating in Belgium. Spiegel Saloon maintains this charming aura of tradition; the bar is spacious – the saloon seats up to 200 visitors – and the comfy sofas and beanbags contribute to a warm welcoming.

If you're up for just a quick drink or seeking a place to dine, Spiegel Saloon is the perfect place in Winter Wonderland. Choice in drinks is wide; Spiced Hot Farmhouse Cider, Hot Toddy, and Mulled Wine are all great, especially if winter flu has knocked on your door and coursework deadlines are all over the place. Foodwise, Spiegel Saloon offers a Prix Fixe menu, with two courses for £14.95 and three courses on offer for £19.45. The selec-



Everyone's obviously too busy watching the latest John Lewis Christmas advert

tion ranges from seasonal dishes, such as The Spiegel Christmas Plate to firm favourites such as Bangers and Mash. The food will not be the best you've ever had, but looking at the price together with the Christmassy atmosphere, it is the best for those who need refuelling after a fun time on the Winter Wonderland rides. Desserts are nothing less than fulfilling; my suggestion would be the Chocolate Soup Platter for two, a warm bowl of melted chocolate

served with marshmallows, strawberries, profiteroles, and waffles – the perfect chocolate experience for the cold nights to come.

Finally, what would a saloon be without live music and entertainment? Certainly, it wouldn't be a saloon at all. Here, live entertainment is essential, daily and, above all, free! Check www.spiegelsaloon.co.uk for more information on bookings, menus, and gigs taking place.

Recipe: Stuffed Vine Leaves and Pourgouri

Ingredients

For the stuffed vine leaves:

- 1 cup rice Arborio
- 3 carrots
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 tsp chopped garlic
- 2 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried mint
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 500g vine leaves
- Salt and black pepper to taste

For the Pourgouri:

- 1 small onion chopped
- ½ cup chopped tomatoes
- ½ cup bulgur wheat
- ¼ cup cut vermicellini(pasta)
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Method

For the stuffed vine leaves:

First make the stuffing. In a bowl mix the rice, the chopped carrots and onion, the

Yiango Mavrocostanti



garlic, the basil, the mint, the oregano, the lemon juice, the olive oil, and the salt and pepper.

Then, take one vine leaf at a time and place it in a plate. Put 1 tsp (depending on the size of the leaves) of the stuffing in the centre of the leaf. Fold the sides of the leaf towards the centre and then roll it. After you fold each vine leaf, place it in a pot. When you finish, cover the vine leaves with water and add 1 tbsp of olive oil. Place a plate on top of them, so that they will keep their shape while they are boiling. Put it on low heat.

For the Pourgouri:

Put the olive oil in a pot and add the chopped onions. When they begin to take a light golden colour add the vermicellini. Fry them until they become brown. Add the tomatoes and the bulgur wheat and then add water so that the bulgur wheat is fully covered. Add the salt and pepper. Place it on medium heat and stir every 5 minutes. When there is no water in the pot, reduce the heat to low until it becomes dry. Then remove from the heat.

Yiango Mavrocostanti

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TRAVEL

Travel Editors: **Dushi Arumuganesan**
Chris Richardson

travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Wishing you were here



'The Night of Baths, Budapest' by Balazs Mohai

Travel on your doorstep



First Thursdays returns to East London

Get there: Any tube that takes you to E1
See: Galleries, museums, 'dickheads'
Eat: The Albion, Shoreditch
Cost: £5 for some top pub fare

Next Thursday marks the first Thursday of December. On the first Thursday of each month, countless East London museums and galleries are open late, and also give out free booze! Check out the art on show and stick around for some evening entertainment. Visit FirstThursdays.co.uk to find out more!

Planning a trip? Want some quick advice from experienced travellers? Have a travelling tale to share with Imperial?

Drop us an email at travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk, or send us a tweet using [#FelixTravel](https://twitter.com/FelixTravel)

Terrific Tarnovan tales

Exploring the "Old Capital" of Bulgaria to discover the deep-seated history of a state abundant in old-fashioned splendour and beauty

Dushi Arumuganesan

Veliko Tarnovo is one of the oldest settlements in Bulgaria, dating back at least five million years. Nicknamed 'the Old Capital', this timeworn city sits in a mountainous region of northern Bulgaria, surrounded by forestry and wildlife unlikely to be seen almost anywhere else in Europe.

Bulgaria has undergone more than its fair share of transformations through a political timeline heavily peppered with dynasties, uprisings and wars. It's this rich past that has yielded such incredible Bulgarian sights and wonders including, but not limited to, some of the world's oldest churches, monasteries and mosques (a reminder of the 500 years or so during which Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire and sequestered from the rest of Europe).

"a city defined by its ubiquitous feeling of renaissance"

But where a suddenly booming economy has led to real estate tycoons and construction company giants laying claim to many major cities, especially along the extremely popular Black Sea coast, Veliko has largely managed to resist. Don't get me wrong, cities such as Sofia and Varna – so different in nature to Veliko – are still well worth visiting. Both of these places, among others, have retained their inherent historical significance and charisma while making a fluid transition from Balkan cities trapped behind the Iron Curtain to cosmopolitan Eastern European hubs. Veliko, on the other hand, holds an equal if not greater allure in its antiquated setting of old markets, artisan workshops and Tarnovan inns.

In fact, as central as Veliko has been to the most momentous points in Bulgaria's history, it is most importantly associated with its role in the 'National Awakening of Bulgaria', a time of uprisings and revolts against the Ottoman rulers of the country. Unsurprisingly, even today Veliko remains a city defined by its ubiquitous feeling of renaissance; a feeling entrenched in not only the buildings and natural wonders but also in the city's inhabitants.

The city's tourist trade is dominated by the imposing Tsaravets fortress, which stands at the summit of the hill of the same name and is a reminder that Veliko was once the capital city of the Second Bulgarian Empire. These ruins of the extravagant palaces of former monarchs and the once impenetrable fortress with its several bulwarks (running up to almost twelve feet thick!), are a stark contrast to the gently meandering Yantra River below, another of Veliko's picturesque attributes. Stambolov's bridge, a striking structure made of steel, is a more modern, man-made symbol of Veliko's part in gaining Bulgaria's independence. Standing at



Looking down on Veliko and the Yantra from midway up the Tsaravets...

the very centre of the bridge and looking down provides an incredible vantage point from which to admire the overwhelming display of Bulgarian beauty spiralling out from the river for miles and miles. The bridge also leads the way to Asen's monument and the city art gallery (which, incidentally, offers free entry on Thursdays).

Venturing slightly further afield, the village of Arbanassi (pronounced most satisfyingly, if not entirely correctly, in the strongest Scottish burr you can muster) lies four kilometres away from Veliko's centre and is famous for being at the crux of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire. Comprehensively dispersed with monasteries, convents and churches all ornately decorated and well-preserved from up to five centuries ago, an afternoon in this village is easily passed.

Veliko's Main Street is home to most of the workshops and market stalls mentioned earlier. The districts of Gurko Street and Samovodska Charshia are the best examples of archaic Tarnovan charm. It may feel as though you've stumbled onto the pages of an oddly Balkan Dickensian novel as craftsmen ranging from carpenters and potters to blacksmiths and farriers set up shop for the day. This central vicinity of Veliko is very hilly and, although walking is the common mode of transport here, you shouldn't feel too guilty about hailing a taxi or two at the astonishingly cheap fares they charge.

Numerous eateries, from small, family-run cafes to chain restaurants, are located along Main Street, many serving solely Bulgarian

fare. A warning to all vegetarians: you will feel severely limited in choice when eating out – Bulgarian food is exceptionally carnivore-friendly. Not only is food (and everything else) ridiculously cheap, but the amount of it dished up at one sitting will leave you immobile for a good few hours post-meal. And then there's salt. Salt is a big deal here. Naturally, it's distributed by the bucket-load onto standard items such as meat and vegetables... but then there's salted yoghurt. And the Frosties in Bulgaria are frosted with, you guessed it, salt.

Tourists should take advantage of Veliko's surroundings, and spend a day hiking nearby. It is not uncommon to come across excavation groups made up of archaeologists and amateur history buffs digging to discover historical remains and artefacts en route to the top of the mountains and hills enclosing Veliko. There are still exhilarating finds being made here to date, and no doubt will be for years to come. For many of the locals however, the neighbouring greenery is just their back garden – a fact that was only really brought home to me when upon asking to speak to the owner of a shop regarding his (hand-crafted) wooden toys, I was told that "his phone is not ringing, he must be climbing mountains – perhaps you wait an hour?"

It would not be impartial enough of me to finish without at least mentioning Veliko's 'new town', consisting mainly of the very recently built shopping mall with its bowling alley, casino and cinema complex. However, I will say this – just skip it. The old quarter is where Veliko's spirit and, dare I say it, Bulgaria's heart, truly lie.

Jaipur: up, up and away

Discontent with the restricted views offered by India's tuk-tuks, Chris Richardson takes to the skies to catch a bird's eye view of India's Golden Triangle

Having been on the road for a while at this point in time, I'd lost all sense of a sleeping pattern: probably for the best when facing a 4:30 start. After overcoming that bitter morning sensation we peered from our hostel window to see what appeared to be a hot-rod straight out of *Kill Bill*: we hopped in and it roared through the dark, dusty streets of Jaipur and took us to our take-off point.

Thanks to travelling during monsoon we had a spot of drama as the team decided whether or not a flight was even possible. We were well catered for and sat with milky, sugary chai and soft biscuits as we cursed the black clouds overhead. Thankfully the winds subsided and the rains decided to be fashionably late, and the balloon was inflated and set to go.

“the usually arid shrubland was lit up as a spectacular sea of green”

After being put at ease by an excellent English-speaking team and a mandatory safety briefing, we let the winds carry us over the villages surrounding Jaipur. Ballooning is much more graceful than I'd anticipated, so I was able to toss aside the concerns of a Delhi-belly and really enjoy the views.

And what views they were! It's not often I get to say “I'm so glad we came for the monsoon!” but this was one of those rare gems: the usually arid shrubland was lit up as a spectacular sea

of green, made all-the-plusher by the plentiful monsoon rains. A calm breeze cooled us as we gazed over rocky hills in the distance and vibrant Jaipur city with its quaint Amber Fort closer by.

Having been confined to seeing India from tuk-tuks for far too long, the bird's eye view was welcome and wonderful. The location is perfect for catching a mix of the bustling city and the calmer countryside, and against the emerald backdrop the roaming wildlife and glistening garments of village ladies looked stunning. I'm sure colour is what I'll miss the most about India, and from the sky you can really see it all.

Being the first balloon of the season, we attracted the attention of countless villagers as we passed overhead; when the pilot kindly dipped us closer to the ground hoards of children chased and waved at us with a morning “namaste!” It was also a great experience for us to catch a glimpse of their morning rituals without being overly invasive.

After we landed with a great thud villagers ran over to greet us, and took more photos of us than we did of them! Crew members spoke fluent English and Hindi so were able to mediate and make the meeting a little more engaging: getting to mingle with the people we'd just seen from the sky was an enjoyable ending to a great morning escapade. If you're going be sure to take plenty of pens, which are an invaluable resource to the children.

All in all, a fantastic and worthwhile way to catch Indian culture alongside a terrific backdrop of dusty buildings and plush trees, with the usual docile cows in view to keep you entertained if all else fails. I only wish that I could see more of this beautiful country from such great heights.



Kicking back with a chai while the Sky Waltz team get the show on the road



Waves and gazes of awe as the balloon soars over rural villages



On The Go Tours
A World of Discovery

This Jaipur balloon trip was organised by **On The Go Tours**, specialists in group tours and tailor-made holidays around the world. To find out more visit OnTheGoTours.com or contact the editor.

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Cycle? We need more stands and security

Matthew Colvin



Bikes are great, but getting your bike stolen isn't. Pretty simple stuff, but at Imperial an average of two bikes per day are stolen. Now I'm sure that some of them are down to the individual, but I think a big part is the facilities and security available at Imperial. That's why the Bike Users Group has started up a petition for an increased amount of stands and an overview of security for bike parking.

I'll get back to what college should do, but it's your bike, so let's do things sensibly. When you see bikes locked with a chain that a mouse could chew through, or maybe nothing locking the bike frame to something solid, you just have to wonder. I've been there, and the worst thing about getting your bike stolen, even if it's a rubbish bike, is the fact that you don't have that option anymore. I know it sounds obvious, but if you cycle a bit, not having your bike is a killer, now you have to go back to going slower, and paying for a smelly journey. So let's all promise to lock up our frames with a solid D-lock (Sherfield security sells them for under half price - £28) or a motorbike chain, then something piddly for the wheels etc.

Now, if this all magically happened, it would be great, but bikes would still be stolen. If you've ever used the faculty building bike park, you'll know that you can't have your bike upright in the stand and lock the frame (at least with one lock you can't). If I had my way, and money wasn't an issue, all of these stands would be replaced for ones that can be used securely. But it's not just that, the stands themselves are mostly unscrewed and wobbly, you could even slide locked bikes out of them as they are at the moment! Then when your bike does get stolen, we've been told that there wasn't a clear enough image on the CCTV to do anything with.

A couple of years ago, there were a lot more Sheffield stands. The way I hear it, the Rector at the time didn't like the look of bikes, so got rid of them. Well we've got a different Rector now anyway, so why don't we have more Sheffield stands outside buildings? Obviously they can't be in the way of vehicles, disabled access and fire congregation points, but there are plenty of spaces which would be perfect. South Kensington is one thing, but it is almost impossible to lock your bike up in some of the other campuses after 10, so we need more stands.

So this brings me to what we are doing. We have a petition for effectively changing or reviewing all of the above at tiny.cc/icbugpetition. Whilst you're there, you can also sign up to the Bike Users Group, either a discussion forum for bike users or an announcement list for all events like police marking, Dr. Bike sessions and auctions.

Stefan Piatek

Fellwanderers roam Peak District

Claire Roseren

5.30pm on Friday evening. The first fellwanderers made their way to the Union, eager to leave London after a hard week of work. We quickly gathered together, packing out two buses, and excitedly awaited our trip.

Leaving London proved rather challenging as cars seemed to be invading the roads, leading our driver, Sarah, to despair. However, the rest of the journey to Derbyshire went without a hitch and, after an epic race in the countryside, both teams (miraculously) reached our destination – the village of Edale – safe and sound. With everyone giving a hand to unload the minibuses, settling in the hut only took a few minutes. Following our captain Heather's orders, we all curled up in our sleeping bags, looking forward to our first day walking in the Peak District.

Awakening to the lovely sound of a familiar Disney song on Saturday morning all the fell wanderers started to bustle about, some having breakfast and others making sandwiches for lunch. At 8.30am we are all set to start hiking. The fresh air helped to rouse the last sleepy hikers of the group. Whilst the first part of the walk was largely uneventful, some of us soon got caught by the High Peak District wet and muddy areas; very happy memories indeed for two (unnamed) hikers who got bogged down in the marsh! Half a dozen fellow team members were needed to rescue them - no photos are available of this unfortunate experience though.

A subsequent lunch break enabled us to recover from our fight with the mud. We then set off up Rushup Edge and were amazed at the number of paragliders flying up there. Looking at them was always an astonishing sight; paragliding is something prob-

David Sutanto



Fellwanderers shamelessly hire a fleet of paragliders as part of their new and extreme measures to ensure the best possible photo opportunity

ably everyone would like to experience, if vertigo was not a worry. We stopped for a few minutes, staring at these 'flocks' invading the skies, before moving on to Mam Tor. We are lucky to have a sunny afternoon to admire the stunning views over Edale. The last part of the walk involved cutting across the fields, and we soon reached the pub to have one or two longed-for drinks. Back in the hut, we found James and his team of cooking volunteers preparing dinner. Today's menu consisted of pasta, the traditional meal for hungry fellwanderers. The evening was highly enjoyable as we got to know each other better. The vast majority of the group then opted for a few drinks at the pub to conclude the day.

It was not even that hard to wake up on Sunday morning! After a quick breakfast, we started packing our rucksacks and loaded them in the buses before setting off to the Ladybower Reservoir. There we began our

hike, slightly disappointed to see dark clouds looming in the skies. After a short walk in the forest, we soon started scrambling on the path leading to White Tor, which has some very impressive grit stone formations. From there we might have witnessed the breathtaking views of the Derwent Valley Reservoirs, however fate (or more precisely weather) decided otherwise. After a few hundred yards from the Wheel Stones we followed the path heading back down to the Derwent Reservoir where we stopped to have lunch. Everyone then agreed to have a look at Howden Dam before setting off again.

The afternoon walk along the Reservoir was enthralling. We stopped to see the ruins of Derwent village on our way back to Ashopton. Our hiking adventure in the Peak District came to an end on a pub's terrace, with everyone enjoying a well-earned drink as well as the beautiful Derbyshire landscapes, before heading back to London.

Get out there and volunteer!

Andy Yu

Welcome to Imperial: a place to get educated, entertained and inspired, a place to make new friends, discover new hobbies and build your skills for the future. One way of being inspired and discovering life outside of the College campus is to volunteer with **IntoUniversity**.

We met with Alex Ho who is a 4th Year Medical student and volunteered with **IntoUniversity** last year.

IntoUniversity is an organisation which supports children from disadvantaged backgrounds to discover their full potential. It offers innovative programmes to help pupils improve their academic performance, and to give them opportunities to make educated choices about their future. These activities are co-ordinated in partnership with the College Outreach Office.

Alex told us that she ended up volunteering as a mentor for over a year, though initially she was just looking to work with young

people as this was something she had not done previously.

"Volunteering at **IntoUniversity** allowed me to meet people I would never have crossed paths with otherwise and I really hope that my mentee and I stay in touch for a long time to come. I learnt that as a mentor you have to be a teacher, a role model and an advisor but most importantly a friend. This is because to be an effective mentor, it's really important that your mentee feels comfortable and enjoys working with you."

Volunteering with **IntoUniversity** did, however, present challenges to Alex who said that "the hardest part of the job was maintaining the right balance between being a friend and a mentor, with a young person who may be looking for you to support them in their school work, social life and future plans. It's important to gain their trust whilst also sometimes maintaining a respectful distance."

Although volunteering is a commitment and requires a lot of juggling between one's

studies and other life priorities, it is something Alex would definitely recommend to other students. "The need to set aside time to volunteer actually helps you to organise your schedule – **IntoUniversity** are also a really supportive charity who are doing some great work, so get involved while you can!"

She continued "working with my mentee was a great experience and made a pleasant change to my week. You forget how many unknowns there are at that age, sometimes with no one to ask, so hopefully with the support from **IntoUniversity** our mentees will feel in a better position to make the right decisions for themselves and their futures. Working at **IntoUniversity** also made me think about my own future... perhaps in paediatrics!"

IntoUniversity provides training to help volunteers to participate in an appropriate programme. The dates of those events can be found on Union's calendar as well as on the Imperial College Volunteering Website <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/volunteering/howtovolunteer/intouniversity>.

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Recognition for volunteering

Felix talks to a CV2012 Award volunteer to discover more about the scheme

Minna Ruohonen

Have you ever considered volunteering? Or do you already volunteer for example as an elected officer in one of the Clubs & Societies, or are involved in some other extra-curriculum activities within the local community?

During the last few years the College has rewarded those students who are doing extra activities on top of their busy study schedules. The CV2012 Award is something an increasing number of students are considering as it is an excellent addition to anyone's CV.

“the College aims to create the momentum around the Olympics in order to demonstrate that our students are doing so much more than just studying”

The Award is linked with the Olympics in the sense that the College aims to create momentum around the Olympics in order to demonstrate that our students are doing so much more than just studying, and also to show that the College is not just a place for

excellent teaching and research, but also a vibrant place full of different activities.

We met one of last year's CV2012 volunteers in order to find out what they thought about the scheme. Ada Onwubiko, who studies chemistry, told us that before she came to Imperial she spent time assisting GCSE maths students whilst still studying her A-levels.

As she thoroughly enjoyed this experience she decided to join the Pimlico Scheme but also Response Homework Club. Pimlico Connection places volunteers in local primary and secondary schools for one afternoon per week as support staff. Response Homework Club on the other hand offers community-based support for young people with their school work after the end of the school day.

Ada told us that she decided to participate in the CV2012 scheme as “it was a bonus to also be part of the CV2012 scheme because it meant I consciously had to develop professionally”.

Ada further described her role as a volunteer: “As a lead tutor responsibilities included liaising with the contact teacher and the rest of the tutors, giving an induction at the first session, and organising a rota to ensure the homework club was evenly supported by tutors throughout the week.”

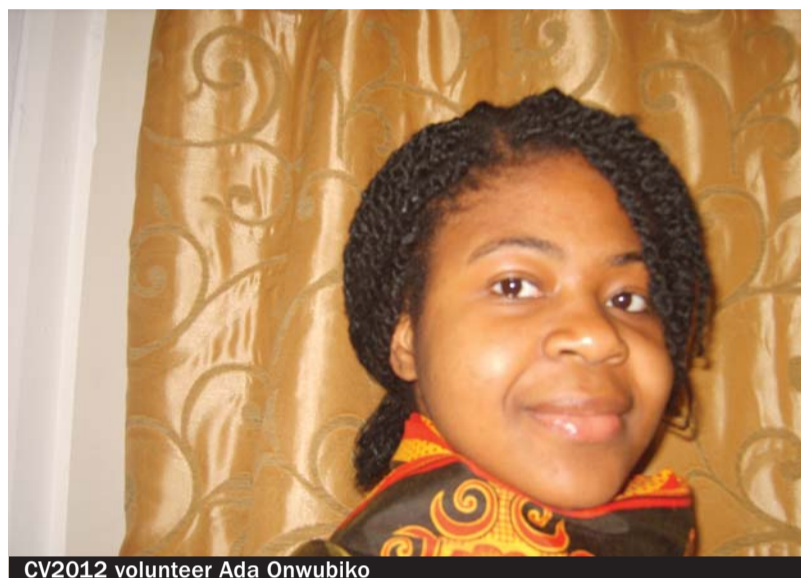
Ada continued: “I was able to help students to complete homework in a range of subjects, textiles, religious studies as well as the expected subjects. During the homework club there

were also opportunities to befriend students through playing educational games. Through my volunteering experience, I learnt a great deal about myself and how to relate better with younger children and other people.”

“I was able to add to my local community whilst gaining new skills and learning how to critically assess the skills I was gaining in order to make best use of them”

We asked Ada what her views were on completing CV2012 Award and she told us that “it has been a great experience. I was able to add to my local community whilst gaining new skills and learning how to critically assess the skills I was gaining in order to make the best use of them in the future.”

CV2012 Award Scheme is currently open for applications and info sessions are run until December 6. For further details, please visit: www.imperial.ac.uk/2012



CV2012 volunteer Ada Onwubiko



SCAN SOC RAID WEMBLEY

By Patrik Lei

Benjamin Nilsson



On Tuesday 15 November, a number of brave viking souls from the Scandinavian Society descended upon Wembley Stadium to witness a football game of epic proportions between the Kingdoms of England and Sweden. Although the raid ended with the first defeat for Sweden against England in 43 years, the vikings were deeply impressed by the performance of our very own Zlatan Ibrahimovic as well as the merry atmosphere with over 48,000 football fans in attendance.

HANGMAN



hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk

An apology from Hangman

Hangman would like to apologise to all the readers of Felix, and not just for that spelling error. Over the past few weeks, we have done, and said, some things that we are not proud of.

Hangman recently read a story in *The Daily Mail* about two LSE students who wrote a very offensive *Agony Uncle* column. They suggested that a student should rape and beat his girlfriend. It seemed to cause some outrage.

After reading this, we had an epiphany. We realised that what we had been doing was wrong. We would therefore like to apologise for not being offensive enough to provoke such a reaction. We hang our heads in shame and will, in future, aim to be as offensive and vulgar as possible, where applicable.

We have never aimed to not be offensive. It seems that, lately, like a plane piloted by a newly trained Muslim pilot, we have landed safely on the non-offensive runway with no fuss. I hope you racist shitbags didn't think that was going somewhere else? If you did, come write for us.

Being a dick in a café

Your guide to being a massive twat in the library café

Worried that you may be the sort of person that people see and think "hey, I wouldn't mind knowing that guy/girl"? Never fear, here is your guide to being a massive dick-head in the Library café:

1. Walk around in your school hoodie with a hilarious nickname like "THE MUFF-MEISTER". So people know you get all the bitches and are A FUCKING LAD. Not enough for you? Go to **2**

2. Don't have a hoodie like that as you weren't popular enough at school to get a nickname? Just wear one of those "comical" t-shirts, like the one pictured. I bet every time you wear that to the Union you have to just keep your head down as all the girls just swoon. Even though the joke was never funny in the first place, you will look like a true comedy genius.



3. Don't drink the coffee in the library. Only bring in Starbucks, or other branded, coffee. Loudly shout that you "cannot believe that people actually drink that shit they call coffee here".



4. For extra points, drink only coffee from independent coffee shops, telling everyone "Starbucks is soooooo generic".

5. When putting sugar and milk in your drink stand in front of the dispensers. Take as much time as possible. If someone tries to go around you to get sugar, slap their hands away and tell them to be polite. The rude fuckers.

6. Poison the sugar sachets with crystal meth. This doesn't make you look like a twat, it'll just make the library more fun. That's not sugar cane.



7. Sit in a booth on your



This isn't a picture of the library? You've tricked me with your picture. Why are you doing this to me. Stop making me read picture captions.

own and use the computer. Log into Facebook and go onto chat. Make sure to talk to someone and laugh when you send or receive a message. Then everyone will envy your amazing conversation.

8. Talk loudly about how much work you have. Make sure everyone knows it's more work than they have as your degree is better than theirs, and by extension you are a better specimen of human-

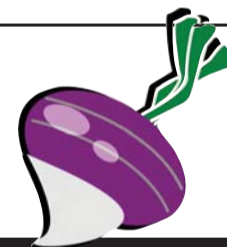


ity than they are. Or, you're just insecure about your degree.

9. Tell everyone about how you're hungover as you drink a lot, and that you're in the library as you never do work. Then people will know you are a true badman who has managed to get through an Imperial degree without doing any work. WOW. You must be a genius! Or a liar.

the turnip

Hangman's Finest College News Source



Researchers declare proverb 'misguiding statement'

Religious fanatics declare it to be true

Three PhD students in the Department of Physics recently undertook a project with two Biomedical Scientists to see whether the proverb 'People in Glass Houses shouldn't throw stones' was a well-founded piece of advice.

Building two rooms, one completely of glass, the other completely of concrete, a total of 200 participants were asked to throw 16 stones in any direction they pleased. CT scans were taken before and after the activity and compared using a new piece of modeling software.

"There were no significant differences between the participants in the glass house and the concrete house," Prof Languette, the lead researcher, declared. "One subject in the glass house did lose a finger,

however we deemed this an anomaly and as such can conclude this proverb is misleading."

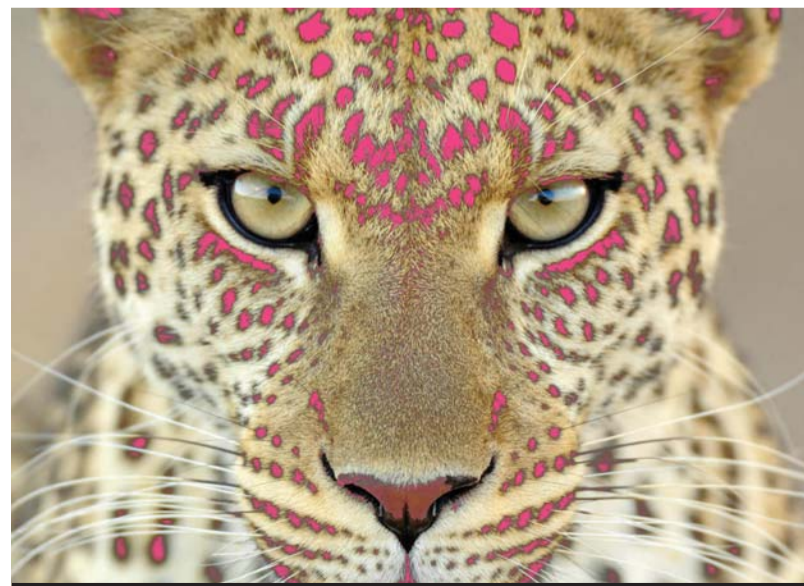
The experiment was largely successful, apart from one incident involving a pneumatic drill and frustration that the concrete house was invulnerable; measurements were terminated once participants in respective houses began talking to imaginary cameras voting to evict one another.

Many have criticised the decision to fund this research as unnecessary, but the study has been welcomed by the Asperger Syndrome Foundation, as the potential inaccuracy of such proverbs has allegedly been the source of chronic sleeplessness among the pedantic end of the autistic spectrum. However, critics have been quick to point out that these

cases of insomnia are, much like many cases of Asperger Syndrome, self-diagnosed.

The team are planning to proceed with more experiments in this field and are planning to genetically combine chameleon DNA with that of a leopard's to see whether the modification makes the creature change its spots.

Negotiation with the Biology department will be necessary: in exchange for genetic engineering, they are expected to ask for access to MAGPIE, which is capable of generating up to 26 million amps. In an interview with the head of Biology about his department's plans for the machine, he told the Turnip: "We're not actually going to use it for any research. We just have a score to settle against Chemistry."

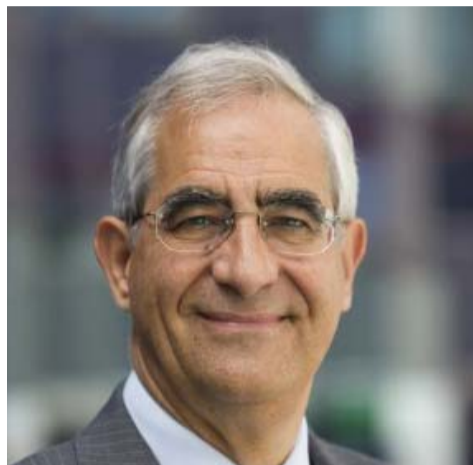


If the Biology department refuses to agree to engineer the leopard, researchers may need to resort to Photoshop.

HANGMAN

THE NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS

US Congress redefines Keith O'Nions as a vegetable



DRUNKEN MATE OF THE WEEK



See that lube? This guy got some. Unfortunately, not the some he wanted

The Books section is for you if you can read the words on the pages but not between the lines. You need everything spoon-fed to you like a kid in GCSE English who needs *Of Mice and Men* explained to him. The orangutan below could use a stick better than he can.

The Illiterate Book Club

Why Are Orangutans Orange?
Science puzzles in pictures – with fascinating answers
Edited by Mick O'Hare

This book answers one of life's most enduring questions: one that nobody has ever really cared about nor even asked that often, but it is as old as Indonesian proto-humans who were doing ayahuasca while watching some hairy ginger swinging through the trees. In a typical example of "can't see the forest for the trees", the writers of this book didn't even see how similar the two words are, and that maybe the word orange was derived from the word orangutan. Instead, this proves to baffle with scientific mumbo-jumbo that serves nothing more than to give the knuckle-dragging masses something to impress their 'mates' at the pub with, while keeping it simple enough for their under-developed brains to handle. It's about as informative as the ingredients list on a shampoo bottle: you don't know what any of those chemicals do, you're only reading it because there's nothing else and permanently associated with bowel motions.

Horoscopes*

*Living on borrowed time, a little like James Murdoch's humble acting skills

Aries

This week, when asked, you say: "I don't want the person driving the train I'm on to have just had a joint". You work with drug addicts and therefore have proof that something being illegal doesn't mean it can't be done. You still don't realise that your argument is fucking stupid.

Taurus

This week you take stuff that you find in a small baggie on the back seat of the N9 bus. As you haven't a clue what it is exactly, you rub some on your gums and snort the rest. Turns out it was cat nip, and now there are 7 cats pawing at your face constantly. Drugs are bad.

Gemini

This week you cut your finger while preparing some dinner. The surge of release when you see the blood flow makes you want to do it again. Rushing to the bathroom you start slicing away at the top of your thigh. You really will do anything to procrastinate.

Cancer

This week a helicopter lands in your back garden. Barack Obama steps out and cries "Sophie, I love you," and you start making wild love. You decide that this isn't reality as your name isn't Sophie. And anyway you hate black guys and would never sleep with one. Racist.

Leo

This week one of your friends is whinging to you about how a guy won't text her back even though your impression of the situation is that she's been a complete demanding bitch towards him. You try and think of the most sensitive way to put this to her. One black eye later, you decide you probably failed.

Virgo

This week you retire from your position of power and authority over the country and decide to say that cannabis should be legal. Everyone is incensed at your timing, because, if you'd decided to do something about it while you were in charge you could have achieved something...

Libra

This week week you're so broke the only thing you can afford to do is masturbate. Unfortunately after your 9th time you're so dry that you snap your banjo string. Upon presenting your predicament to the GP you get offered a grand to go on *Embarrassing Bodies*.

Scorpio

This week you get a pint at the union after a hard week of doing fuck all. Well at least it felt like you did fuck all, but you know when it comes to exam time you never know, all of a sudden it feels like the knowledge is there. This time round though it doesn't happen. Shit.

Sagittarius

This week you arrive at the set for *Embarrassing Bodies*. Dr Christian spends what feels like an age looking at your damaged instrument. Your dick still in his hands, you faint on live TV. You become a YouTube sensation. Score!

Capricorn

This week you decide to take a bold step and set up #occupyqueenstower as a protest movement at how shit the girl to boy ratio is at uni. To be honest, in the grand scheme of things it's barely Tahrir Square, more a lonely wanker in a tower. You wank, on your own.

Aquarius

This week you are beheaded. To be honest going to the Democratic Republic of Congo is never a good idea but you figured after playing 46 hours of *CoD: MW3* you might be quick enough with a gun to carve yourself a little empire. Long story short, you're not.

Pisces

This week you find yourself in a hurry while in the lab and forget if it's 'always add Acid to Water' or 'always add Water to Acid'. You get it wrong. The resulting foaming, caustic mess ruins your new trainers. Does wonders for your skin though.

Stuff Imperial students hate

Male



Female

Dancing in clubs(/Metric) when not drunk

Arms are okay. Vaguely fling them about and copy a guy that looks confident. But seriously, what the fuck are you supposed to do with your legs? Guess you can just do what you always do. Lift each one up in turn and just stamp on the spot. On second thoughts, waiting for 20 minutes at a bar is probably better than this. If you want to go super-incognito, just stand completely still and vaguely nod your head while clutching your drink for dear life. Don't drink it too quickly, though: it's all you're doing right now that doesn't look insanely stupid. You don't want people to realise you actually really hate clubs, do you?

Having 10 guys awkwardly standing in a circle on the dancefloor

A weekly experience throughout first year. Why are none of them dancing? If nobody else is dancing they'll realise that I'm awful as well. Why is that one guy just nodding his head? Oh shit, I'm trapped in this circle. Wait, what's that in the pocket of the guy who likes all of my holiday pictures from 3 months ago? Oh, it's only a gun. Oh god, get me out of here!*

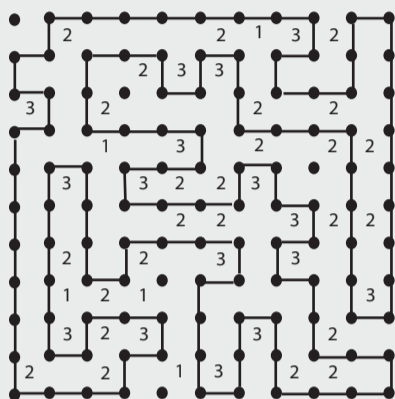
*And then you wake up. Later that night, you go to Metric and the same thing happens. Except that it isn't a gun but it's ready to go off... It goes off.

PUZZLES

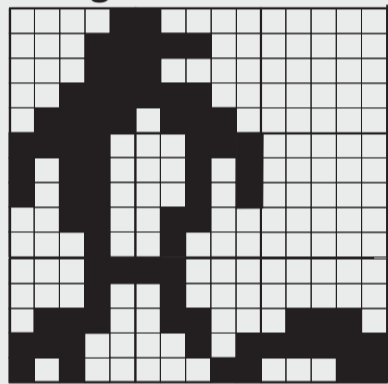
puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Last Week's Solutions

Slitherlink



Nonogram



Crosswords

QUICK(ish) - Across 1. Watch Your Step 9. Radar 10. Australia 11. Earthlight 12. Styx 14. Bandana 16. Perturb 17. Outlets 19. Detroit 20. Heed 21. D H Lawrence 24. Reach 25. Lap 26. Annie
Down 1. Warner Brothers 2. Tudor 3. Hardheaded 4. Ocarina 5. Rose hip 6. Term 7. Politburo 8. Saved by the Bell 13. Crater Lake 15. Notre Dame 18. Scholar 19. Deadpan 22. Nonet 23. Shiv

CRYPTIC - Across 1. Template 5. Astral 10. Retests 11. Lambast 12. Window 13. Monolith 15. Need 16. Ringmaster 18. Head Starts 20. Slab 22. Tap Dance 24. Brutal 26. Warfare 27. Leering 28. Lancet 29. Dead Heat Down 1. Throw In The Towel 2. Matinee 3. Lesson 4. Task 6. Sum Total 7. Realist 8. Let There Be Light 9. Floodgate 14. Financier 17. Escapade 19. Aspirin 21. Lattice 22. Friend 25. Blue

Chess

White forces zugzwang upon his opponent by playing 1. Bc5! after which black is forced to make the following (losing) series of moves: 1...Rc8 2. Bb6+ Ke8 3. Bc7 a5 4.Kd1 a4 5. Kc1 a3 6. Kb1 a2+ 7. Ka1! and the next move will lose a rook and thus the game

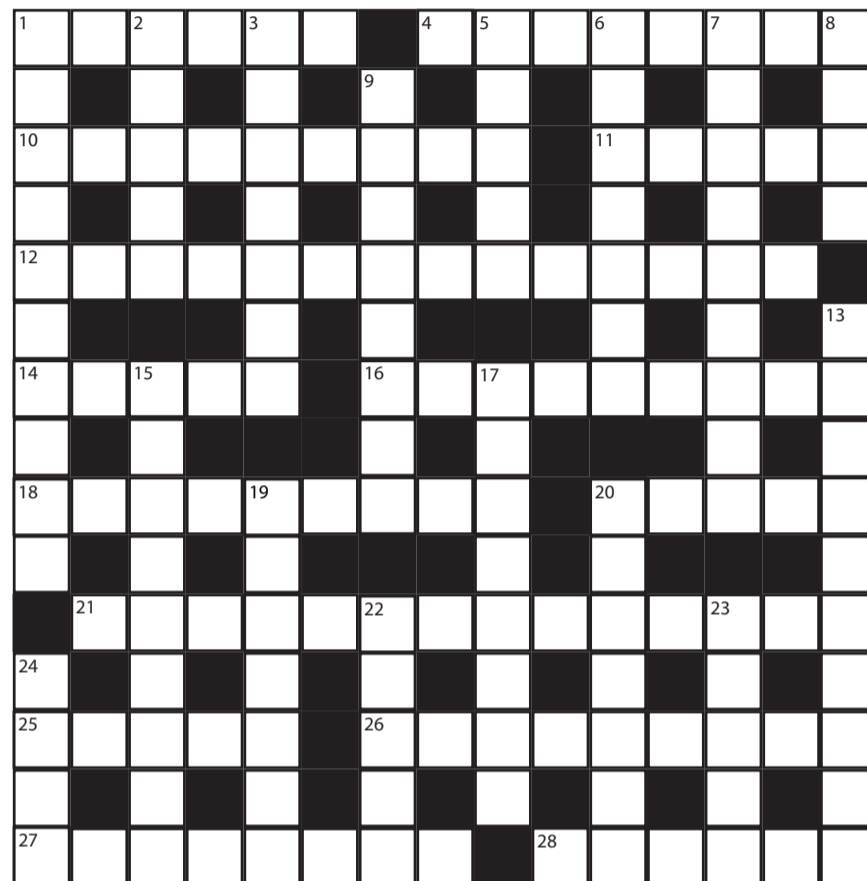
Crossword

Across

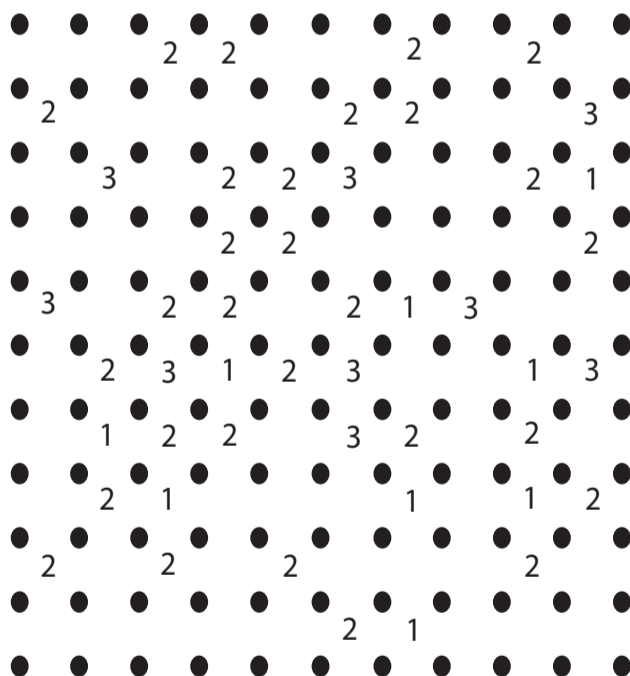
1. Emperor who oversaw conquest of Gaul and invasion of Britain (6)
 4. Trojan hero, central character of Homer's *Iliad* (8)
 10. Make a thorough or dramatic change (like Laplace!) (9)
 11. Follow as a consequence (5)
 12. One suspected of murdering Dr. Black (7,7)
 14. Shock with disgust (5)
 16. Plush toy (5,4)
 18. Listen (4,2,3)
 20. Punctuation mark to indicate pauses (5)
 21. Elected UK body to which the Prime Minister must answer questions (5,2,7)
 25. Previous (5)
 26. Save money (9)
 27. Fluctuated (8)
 28. Examples of this include White, Atacama, Gibson and Gobi (6)

Down

1. Child's game involving string around fingers (4,6)
 2. A way of communicating via the internet (1-4)
 3. Football team: "They just try and walk it in, don't they?" (7)
 5. Another name for Wales (5)
 6. In an incompetent manner (7)
 7. Concentrated pulse of light (5,4)
 8. Ovule of a flowering plant; tournament favourite (4)
 9. Gambling game (8)
 13. Newspaper (10)
 15. Dramatic entertainment traditionally with mute performers, now children's theatre (9)
 17. e.g. Frank Darabont, J. J. Abrams (8)
 19. Country whose president is Heinz Fischer (7)
 20. Fruit cooked in syrup (7)
 22. Grossly overweight (5)
 23. Grayish-green (5)
 24. Artistic composition (4)



SLITHERLINK



The aim with Slitherlink is to make one continuous closed loop by connecting the dots. The numbers in each square indicate how many edges of the square are part of the loop, so if it contains a "2", you know that two and only two out of

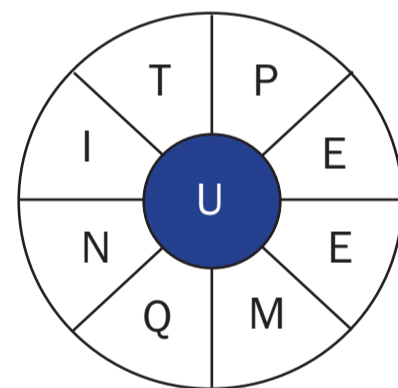
four edges have lines. That's all the info you need to get the one logical answer (though waiting a week to see the solution will also do). Answers to **puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk**, as the puzzles team receives one false promise per correct solution.

Contributions wanted!

If you'd like to contribute by sending in puzzles, comics or even some editing, e-mail puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk. Be they horrendously complicated things or funky picture puzzles you think readers would like, do get in touch. General suggestions are also welcome.

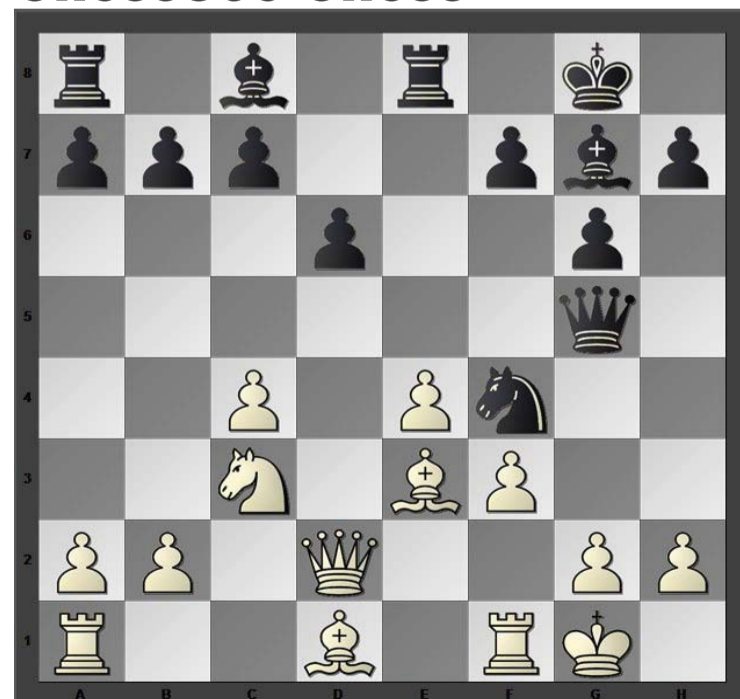
Word Wheel

TARGET: 18



Make as many words of at least 4 letters as you can, always using the central one. **NO** plurals, conjugated verbs, comparatives or superlatives, because I said so.. There is always at least one 9 letter word.

ChessSoc Chess



Black to play and Win

FELIX TIMES

Friday November 25 2011

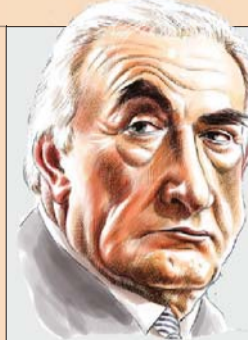
UK £0.00; Channel Islands £0.00; Greece €?



Let's just be friends
German Chancellor depressed at lack of improper conduct at eurozone crisis talks in Rome, **Page 5**



Time for a whip-round
Greek shame as Papandreou snubbed by ATM while attempting to withdraw 10 euros, **Page 8**



See you in my room
Dominique Strauss-Khan offers German morale boost in push for key euro funding, **Page 10**

Imperial Satirical Newpage

Appointments Brief

Reporters

Nosy? Busy-body? Cunning like a Dr Fox? The FT is always looking for budding hacks. Preferably not the Johann Hari sort though. Having to surrender his Orwell Prize. Really, George would compare him to one of those pigs in his book, only that his face would be turning more porky.

Page 3

Commentators

Opinionated? Irritating? Pompous? If the answer is yes to at least two of the above, please send in some blurb about religion or the Tories robbing poor people. As they say, "No FT No Comment".

Page 4

Copy editors

If you are as pedantic as Ben Bernanke and find yourself thrilled when you spot an errant comma in The Guardian, then you will be right at home obnoxiously sniggering at the mistakes of others. And like Hemingway and at the FT we like to use polysyndeton and replace all our commas with the word and and then our articles always lead up to something and are just one massive climax.

Page 16

Investors

If you have too much money from that UBS summer internship and have not splashed it all on coke and whores, then do send it in to Felix via cheque. We are rather like a corrupt Saudi Prince, nothing less than £100,000 please and we do not appreciate time-wasters. Despite appearances, business is sometimes black and white (and not salmon).

Page 18

Contribute now

In print and online

Think we're (Ed) Balls? Join us!
Email: felix@imperial.ac.uk

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Brought to you with dedication

Meat Free Monday causes malnutrition spike ● Cows in one day high

Intellectual onanism leads to eco madness

By Quentin Management, feeling slightly queasy in a slaughter house, and Lexington Lombard in a field somewhere near Yorkshire

Shares in UK farming saw a sharp fall as markets reacted to the ecomentalist fightback requiring food aficionados to not eat any meat between the working hours of 9am to 5pm on Monday.

As the nutritional sector saw a worrying decline, Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, issued a legal challenge to the move citing "the vile disregard for human rights being practiced in countries where senior management should simply know better".

Jeremy Clarkson, who has a 40 per cent share of the vegetarian-hating market, is seeking the suspension of all walking activities in protest and compensation for the lack of CO₂ emissions on Monday by increasing the national speed limit to 100 mph – a call that will still frustrate Bugatti Veyron drivers worldwide.

Cows, the first sector to publicly back the Meat Free campaign, is an important test case for the venture. While stocks in Bovinae saw an early surge as the Meat Free Monday event got underway, their market value plummeted late afternoon as traders caught on to news that slaughters would be doubled on Tuesday to address a surplus in supply.

Mr Moo and his associate Ms Daisy were last night locked in last minute

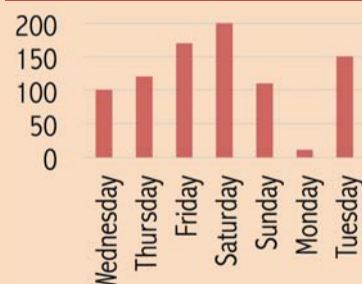


A pseudo-intellectual ambassador, speaking at PETA, observes 'all meat is red'

crunch time negotiations with David Cameron. Pamela Anderson, a leading PETA ambassador, was also at the table and called upon Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall to consider fronting a "Big Cow Fight" campaign. She failed to notice that he was holding a meat cleaver in his right hand.

Talks drew to a standstill when the chocolate digestives failed to materialise.

Nutritional sector growth (£ trillion)



We may not be broadsheet like the real FT.
But at least we've got a broad.

Sport Editors: **Indy Leclercq**
David Wilson

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

SPORT

Fencing: promising weekend



So, according to Bristol, 1+1=3. Or something (who cares, we won)

...Continued from back page

As before, the outcome of the match was to be decided in the epee; as before, it was a nerve-racking affair. The epeeists started out with an 11-point lead which they had to maintain to win the match. As it went on, though, Bristol asserted their dominance and the Imperial fencers saw their lead shrink. Once again it came down to Harry, anchoring epee, to win his match against Matt Billing, Bristol's best fencer, to be able to win the match overall. Both sides were feverishly tallying the scores to figure out when the match would be put beyond doubt. Unfortunately for Bristol, they were doing the sums a bit

too feverishly and got them wrong (or, according to them, 'misread the score sheet') - meaning that when the final three minutes were up, both sides started cheering, to mutual bewilderment. In the end, though a team with two physicists and a mathematician were always going to get it right and IC came off with a one point victory, 101-100.

The final match against Oxford was to prove a clash of titans, as both teams had won all their matches and had been on form all weekend. Having lost the toss, sabre went first, producing a comprehensive win to put Imperial almost thirty points ahead. The foilists then went ahead to try and put the match beyond reach; however what started off as

a closely-fought match crumbled into a ten-point win for Oxford. It was up to the epeeists to save the day. In the most nerve-racking moment of the weekend, they had to reach twenty-seven hits to be able to claim victory for the team...but it was not to be. The final score was an agonisingly close 45-26 to Oxford, meaning the two teams were perfectly tied, 98-98. The fact that Oxford won two weapons, though, meant that victory was theirs, and a dejected Imperial team made their way back down to London.

Overall, the weekend was a positive result, though, and the the motivation to win everything at the next premiership weekend is greater than ever.

Victory for Eagles

Stefan Bauer

Handball

Imperial Eagles	29
Newham Flames	16

On Saturday, the Imperial Eagles set out to play their first competitive match in the Development League. The planned opening game between By now, several changes to the league schedule were undertaken after Olympia II pulled out of the division, which meant that instead of facing the Ruislip Eagles II, Imperial had to face the Newham Flames, who were often praised for their extensive youth development and link to the GB U16 squad, where some of their players receive very extensive training - or so we thought.

During the warm up period, the lack of skill and variation in the admittedly very young teams game was becoming more and more obvious and they failed to surprise a well-trained Eagles side in decent form.

The Flames showed great spirit and never stopped fighting for what would have been their first ever competitive victory, but, despite catching the Eagles' defense off guard on several occasions, failed to match the scoring and goal-keeping abilities of their very handsome opponents.

Newham tried to move the ball fast in attack, but could not exert much pressure on IC team, unless their physically intimidating centre-back set out to storm towards the 6-metre line, with

which he was successful on a few occasions. Neither of their wingers was able to stretch the game and create space for an over-motivated pivot, which narrowed their attack down to their berserker and a marfanoid-looking left-back, who despite of his impressive height of over 2m, was unable to make a real impression on Imperials veteran goalkeeper, Stefan Bauer, who is slowly rediscovering his true form after a good pre-season and managed to save an impressive 3 penalties in a row.

In attack, the Imperial Eagles were lacking the patience to play well renowned schemes like "Wurst" and "Heidi", leading to some hasty and unsuccessful shots. However, superior counter-attacks and some individual skills meant that Newham would concede 29 goals by the end of the 60 minutes.

At this point, it is important to point out that our president, Kolja Ortmann, scored a counter attack, which should be an indicator of the level of resistance Imperial had to face.

All in all, this game was a good way to ease players back into the routine of the Development League before IC is set to face stronger opponents, such as Great Dane II, Ruislip Eagles II and arch enemies UCL, who have yet to beat Imperial in a league match.

However, considering that some of the Newham Flames' players are hailed as England's Handball hope, everyone would have hoped for a more challenging game.

Selected results

in association with
Sports Partnership



Wednesday 23rd November

BADMINTON	Men's 3rd Essex 1st	109 133	HOCKEY	Medicals Women's 2nd Reading 2nd	29 24
Men's 1st	2	Women's 1st	0	Medicals Women's 4th Kingston 3rd	32 16
UCL 1st	6	FOOTBALL	0	RUGBY UNION	
Medical Men's 1st Essex	7 Men's 1st 1 Greenwich 1st	2 Medical Women's 1st 2 Queen Mary's 1st	8 0	Men's 2nd Imperial 3rd	
Medical Women's 1st Royal Free and UCMS 1st	5 Men's 2nd 3 Kingston 3rd	2 Women's 2nd 1 Brunel 3rd	1 0	Men's 4th Kent 1st	
Medical Men's 2nd City 1st	1 Men's 3rd 7 Westminster 3rd	3 Men's 3rd 0 Sussex 2nd	2 1	Medicals Men's 1st Cardiff 1st	22 34
Men's 2nd Sussex 1st	2 Women's 1st 6 University of the Arts 1st	3 LACROSSE	10 13	Men's 1st Essex 1st	58
BASKETBALL		Men's 1st Reading 1st	13	Medicals Men's 2nd Roehampton 1st	23 24
Men's 1st City 1st	76 70	NETBALL		Women's 1st Hertfordshire 1st	12 0
FENCING	Mixed 1st Kingston 2nd	1.5 4.5	39 13	Men's 2nd Chichester 1st	8 4
Men's 2nd King's 1st	132 92	Women's 2nd Essex 2nd	19 42		

Sunday 20th November

INTER-HALL FOOTBALL

3	1 Garden & Weeks FC	1
1	Linstead FC	1
5	0 Wilson Hall FC	9
0	Clayponds FC	0
0	3 Beit Hall FC	4
0	Holbein & Willis Jackson FC	0
1	P'bridge and Parsons Falcons	1
3	Fisher Hall FC	3

TABLE TENNIS

5	12
0 Kings 1st	12
58	
TENNIS	
Women's 1st	12
5 Hertfordshire 1st	0
Men's 2nd	8
Chichester 1st	4

Interested in
sport?

We need
contributors!

Drop by the office
or email us:

sport.felix@ic.ac.uk

Sport Editors: **Indy Leclercq**
David Wilson

sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

SPORT

Felix Sports League

...where do you stand?



Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Index
1 Fencing W1	4	4	0	0	270	137	69	5.00
2 Hockey M2	3	3	0	0	21	2	69	5.00
3 ICSM Badminton M2	1	1	0	0	6	2	47	5.00
4 ICSM Football M2	3	3	0	0	11	6	24	5.00
5 ICSM Hockey W2	2	2	0	0	10	1	-2	5.00
6 Lacrosse W1	4	4	0	0	77	8	-3	5.00
7 Lacrosse W2	1	1	0	0	7	2	-52	5.00
8 Tennis M1	3	3	0	0	30	6	-18	5.00
9 Tennis W1	3	3	0	0	31	3	-16	5.00
10 Ultimate Frisbee 1st	3	3	0	0	45	9	-3	5.00
11 Hockey W1	5	4	1	0	11	3	2	4.40
12 Badminton W1	4	2	2	0	20	12	0	3.50
13 Rugby M1	6	5	0	1	183	124	7	3.50
14 Basketball M1	6	4	0	0	396	343	0	3.33
15 Fencing M1	4	3	0	1	448	379	4	2.75
16 Fencing W2	4	3	0	1	487	450	5	2.75
17 Badminton M1	5	3	1	1	27	13	0	2.60
18 Squash W1	5	3	1	1	11	9	-84	2.60
19 Tennis M2	5	3	1	1	34	26	-20	2.60
20 ICSM Hockey W1	4	2	1	1	23	9	0	2.00
21 Netball W1	6	4	0	2	205	158	-103	2.00
22 Badminton M2	5	3	0	2	13	19	0	1.40
23 Basketball W1	5	3	0	2	278	223	19	1.40
24 Fencing M2	5	3	0	2	595	556	5	1.40
25 Lacrosse M1	5	3	0	2	51	27	-14	1.40
26 Football M1	6	1	3	2	10	9	24	0.50
27 Football M3	6	3	0	3	13	14	36	0.50
28 Futsal M1	4	2	0	2	18	27	8	0.50
29 ICSM Badminton W1	2	1	0	1	8	8	-6	0.50
30 ICSM Football M1	2	1	0	1	4	6	39	0.50
31 ICSM Netball W1	2	1	0	1	82	72	2	0.50
32 ICSM Netball W2	2	1	0	1	52	50	-3	0.50
33 ICSM Netball W4	2	1	0	1	47	50	-2	0.50
34 ICSM Rugby M3	4	2	0	2	88	90	-38	0.50
35 Table Tennis M1	4	2	0	2	33	35	-35	0.50
36 Table Tennis M2	4	2	0	2	32	36	-8	0.50
37 Football M2	6	2	1	3	14	17	28	0.00
38 Hockey W2	6	2	1	3	5	26	8	0.00
39 Rugby M2	5	2	0	3	68	106	-14	-0.40
40 Squash M3	5	2	0	3	5	19	-160	-0.40
41 Golf Mixed 1st	3	1	0	2	7	10	9	-1.00
42 ICSM Rugby M1	3	1	0	2	52	104	-3	-1.00
43 ICSM Rugby M2	3	1	0	2	32	135	-21	-1.00
44 Rugby M3	6	2	0	4	100	100	-3	-1.00
45 Football W1	4	1	0	3	4	35	8	-1.75
46 Netball W3	4	1	0	3	74	67	-31	-1.75
47 Squash M1	4	1	0	3	3	17	-16	-1.75
48 Squash M2	4	1	0	3	8	11	-11	-1.75
49 Hockey M1	5	1	0	4	8	24	53	-2.20
50 Hockey M3	6	1	0	5	7	18	37	-2.50
51 ICSM Netball W5	4	0	1	3	25	185	-4	-2.50
52 Basketball M2	1	0	0	1	51	96	133	-4.00
53 Fencing M3	4	0	0	4	437	521	9	-4.00
54 Hockey M4	5	0	0	5	3	38	14	-4.00
55 ICSM Badminton M1	1	0	0	1	0	8	14	-4.00
56 ICSM Basketball M1	1	0	0	1	46	64	55	-4.00
57 ICSM Hockey M1	3	0	0	3	6	26	1	-4.00
58 ICSM Hockey M2	3	0	0	3	3	19	-1	-4.00
59 ICSM Hockey M3	1	0	0	1	0	3	-9	-4.00
60 ICSM Hockey W3	1	0	0	1	0	7	10	-4.00
61 ICSM Netball W3	3	0	0	3	26	106	-2	-4.00
62 Netball W2	4	0	0	4	64	138	0	-4.00
63 Squash M4	4	0	0	4	1	11	-45	-4.00

5 points for a win | 2 points for a draw | -4 points for a loss

IC & St Mary's Hurlers bring home Division 2 Trophy



Sure, he looks angry, but you didn't hear what the ball had said about his mum earlier

John McGuckin Hurling

In the early morning before the British University Hurling Championships a squad of 9 Imperial College and 5 St. Mary's hurlers dragged themselves out of bed and headed to the Union where a minibus was waiting. On the road to Birmingham, with no idea of what lay ahead, the lads discussed the best starting line-up for the team. Arriving at Páirc na hÉireann by the official starting time, a first for the IC lads, gave the team enough time for a warm up and some drills.

Along with ourselves, in Division 2 there were teams from Liverpool Hope, Liverpool John Moore's, Cambridge and Dundee universities competing in the 13-aside competition. A group stage was used to decide who progressed into the semi-finals and their seeding. In our group were Dundee and Liverpool John Moore's; two traditionally strong Hurling sides.

With a pep talk from our managers, Brendan Earley from St Gall's and John Harvey from Keady, before our first match against Dundee, the team were ready to step up to the challenge ahead of us. Starting with the wind at their back Dundee proved a strong opposition getting the first score despite a solid defence from Neil Clancy and Tadhg Carroll. With some solid plays from the mid field pairing of Finian McCann and James Shanahan the London side battled hard to take the lead by a point into the second half.

Not long into the second half it was clear that Imperial/St. Mary's had the edge. Despite his recent knee-capping, right up to the final whistle, Under-21 Tyrone Captain Ryan Jones made short work of ensuring any ball that ventured into the small rectangle was in the back

of the net. With a strong performance from the London side and a final score of 4-10 to 1-4, the boys in blue were quietly confident for the matches to come.

For the second of the two group stages an unchanged London side lined out against an overly confident Liverpool John Moore's. From the throw in it was clear that Imperial/St. Mary's had the upper hand. Half forwards Donal McCann (St. Mary's Captain) and Armagh goalkeeper Joby Burke continually knocked balls over the bar. Again the goal machine and future seminarian Jones kept the Liverpool goalie very busy with the help of the two corner forwards Paul McGovern and John McGuckin. Goalkeeper Benjamin Ryder made some great saves to keep John Moore's score line to a minimum. By the final whistle London had gathered a healthy 18 point lead on LJMU with the end score of 6-9 to 2-3.

As the two group matches were used to seed the semi-finals it was decided that the matches were to be Liverpool Hope vs. Dundee and Imperial/St. Mary's vs. Liverpool John Moore's. Due to the result of the previous match the London team thought they had this one in the bag, unfortunately the first half didn't go quite as planned despite defenders Padhraic Comerford and Jerome Scullin's best efforts. With only a single point lead the London managers gave the lads a severe talking to that brought everyone back to earth. Half-back Kevin Parke, straight from Mount Vernon, took the bull by the horns and made sure LJMU didn't steal the game from under our nose.

Sean Dunne made some great runs forward making sure the ball was always well into Liverpool's half. Burke once again made short work of the John Moore's defence and with a great ball to Jones the Londoners got a goal up despite the Liverpoolian umpire's protesta-

tions. With a score of 4-3 to 1-2, Imperial/St. Mary's made it to the final for the first time.

Filled with nerves and anticipation the London team knew they would have a hard battle ahead of them. Imperial/St. Mary's won the coin toss and Imperial Captain John McGuckin opted to play into the wind for the first half, just as every previous match had been played.

Liverpool Hope with the wind at their backs managed to get the first score of the match with a point from distance. A Trojan defending effort was given from the backs headed by Clancy, Parke and Carroll keeping Hope's score to just a single point for the first half. Just before half time Imperial/St. Mary's were frustrated with the referee's controversial decision to declare a brilliant goal from Jones as a square ball (similar to offside in soccer); London a point down going into the second half.

With an awe inspiring speech from managers Earley and Harvey at half time the London boys were ready to take on anything. Imperial/St. Mary's got straight into action with a short distance point from full forward Jones. Donal McCann got another point for the London side before Hope replied with a score; Imperial/St. Mary's now leading by a point. With an illegal tackle on half-forward Sean Dunne, London had a free from around the half way line. Burke didn't wait long to take the free and struck the ball beautifully into the back of the net, which may or may not have tipped off Jones's hurl.

The goal effectively ended the game, with some great defending from both sides before the final whistle (final score: 1-3 to 0-2) when Imperial/St. Mary's were crowned as the British Universities Division 2 Hurling Champions, a first for either club. The Londoners, filled with pride and trophy in hand, looked forward to the night of celebrations ahead of them.

SPORT

Captains' Interviews: Synchronised Swimming



Essential info:

Carla Canturri-Gispert, Club Treasurer
Aeronautical Engineering PhD
2 years' experience

Delphine Rolando, Club Secretary
Systems Biology PhD
7 years' experience

Zara Ganase, Club President
Chemical Engineering PhD
2 years' experience

Like: being able to breathe during a lift

Dislike: the lack of guys in Synchro

Indy Leclercq
Sport Editor

Another week, another interview for your intrepid Felix Sport editor. Today: Synchronised Swimming! Yep, I know you're excited about this one. I meet up with Carla, the treasurer, Delphine, the club secretary and Zara, the club president in 568 to talk swimming pools, holding your breath underwater, and fancy routines. Owing to the triple interview format, this week is presented as a Q&A session. Enjoy!

Felix Sport: So, to start off with, a couple of questions for you guys: how did you get into synchronised swimming? Did you do it before university?

Zara Ganase: I sort of got interested when I went to the US during the summer of 2008, and saw the blanket media coverage of the American Olympic team – including synchronised swimming. I thought it would be a cool thing to try, and found out that there was a club at Imperial...and here I am, three years later: Club President!

Carla Canturri-Gispert: I've always loved the water, but not competitive swimming which I find boring. Synchronised swimming seemed like a lot of fun, even though I had never done it before uni, and I signed up when I came to Imperial.

Delphine Rolando: I have actually been doing this since I was 11! I picked it up in France as a kid, but had a long break during my studies and didn't do any for five years. I picked it up again here, though, and am enjoying it as

much as ever.

FS: Okay, so two out of three committee members were complete beginners before coming to Imperial. How many members do you have? What proportion of that is made up of beginners?

DR: This year we had about ten people sign up at freshers' fair, and we're

“We're pretty much the only uni with a synchronised swimming club in the country”

almost hitting thirty members...

CC-G: Although one thing to know is that the club only started four years ago.

FS: So you're growing slowly but surely then?

ZG: I think that's kind of the objective. We've sort of got three level groups: the absolute beginners, the intermediate people such as Carla or myself who have done it for a couple of years, and then there is a group of swimmers who had started synchronised swimming before university and want to continue, such as Delphine.

FS: How does the competition struc-

ture work? I mean, do you have tournaments or things like that with other universities?

DR: Actually, when Carla said we formed four years ago she forgot to mention that we're pretty much the only university synchronised swimming club in the country. It really isn't a big thing here, and there is no such thing as a BUCS tournament or the equivalent for us. Having said that, we are trying to enter a team into the French university championships, to be able to compete in something!

CC-G: Even that competition is relatively new, it didn't exist two years ago.

FS: What does a typical training session consist of? Do you practice a particular routine?

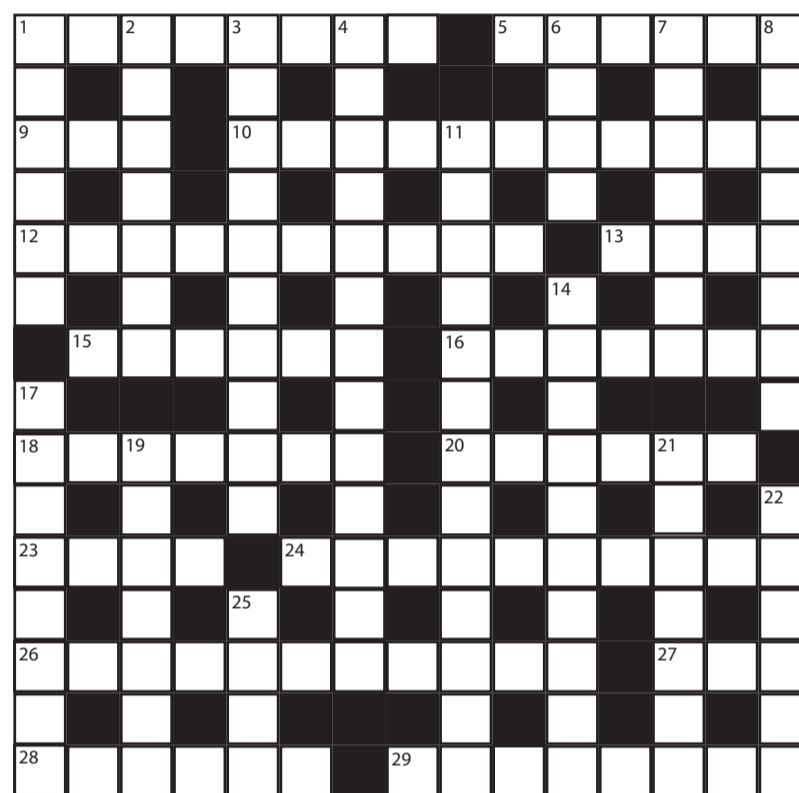
CC-G: It's generally 45 minutes of warmups and stretching outside the pool, followed by an hour and a quarter of practicing the different figures, lifts and positions you can do in the pool.

DR: We have one main coach and two assistant coaches, all of whom used to represent their countries at an international level. Our main coach Eugénie is especially good at teaching beginners the basics!

ZG: We actually have two sessions a week, on Mondays at Ethos and Thursdays at St. Mary's. We want to get as many people as possible to come along, so if you're interested, don't hesitate!

FS: A question about the sport itself, because I don't think that many people are familiar with it: what does a team consist of in synchronised swimming?

Cryptic Crossword 1,503



Across

1. Solo man in engine being flanked by 27 to go down (8)
5. Unveil classy prawn assortment (6)
9. Amateur plot (3)
10. Amputees are assembled by ruler (4,7)
12. Facing sex after golden self-regulating (10)
13. Hit hotel in cathedral city (4)
15. City web journal with contents swapped and flipped for world (6)
16. Prohibit following gloat about blunt weapon (7)
18. I am seed of spontaneity (7)
20. Out east, ran backwards likely to the limits, almost (6)
23. Electronic network animation (4)
24. Where one may reveal pair? (5,5)
26. Adverse prediction for password (11)
27. Frisbee has a sting in the tail! (3)
28. Delinquent mathematician has right head screwed on! (6)
29. Fashionable and well-spoken feeder (8)

Down

1. Dance party publicity for song (6)
2. Weeps with endless chatter, makes clear (7)
3. Lacking brains at first, stupidly about to phone whilst driving here? (10)
4. I may be loan shark? (7,6)
6. Elegant with no iciness (4)
7. Heads of rose hip unwittingly prickles on stalk (7)
8. Overflow of the polar cracks (8)
11. Imperial's improvement to perfection? (4,9)
14. One gaining energy to shoot up outside, left tribunal (5,5)
17. Criminal reclines, something required for stealth kill (8)
19. Kept animals, keeping gnu with head changed, may feed these to elephant (7)
21. Being good-natured, I'll bake assortment (7)
22. Burning more than one person is not about to be delightful initially (6)
25. Active volcano may raise the stakes! (4)

DR: A routine is usually done by eight swimmers, all performing the same thing, and can last up to about five minutes. In the Olympics, it is an all-female sport but outside of that more and more guys are taking it up, and competitions allow for mixed teams! We really want to get more guys in as this gives you more possibilities for lifts and other things during a routine, because guys just have more strength.

FS: What are the skills you need to be good at synchro? Is it easy to progress quickly if you start from scratch?

CC-G: It isn't too hard to learn the dif-

ferent moves and techniques involved in synchronised swimming, you can pick those up in a couple of weeks. However you do need a level of fitness and muscle strength to pull these off, and that's where it takes a lot of work.

DR: You need flexibility, core strength and you have to learn to hold your breath for long periods of time – these aren't things that come overnight. Having said that I still think synchro is a very accessible sport, and can be a lot of fun!

Fancy giving it a go?
email syncswimming@ic.ac.uk for info!

SPORT

Bittersweet results for IC Fencing Men's 1st

Weekend tournament culminates in nail-biting loss to Oxford on a single hit

Indy Leclercq Fencing

Men's 1st	135
ULU 1st	74
Men's 1st	114
Cambridge 1st	107
Men's 1st	101
Bristol 1st	100
Men's 1st	98
Oxford 1st	98*

*Oxford win the match on weapons

Last weekend saw the Imperial College Fencing Club Men's 1st team travel to Oxford for their first Southern Premiership weekend tournament. An early start (too early for some) meant leaving the

Union at a time when most people are still in bed. After picking up a couple of wayward sabreurs the minibus made its way up the M40 towards the inhospitable climes of the Oxford cricket school, where the matches were to be played.

The anticipation was tangible; the team are current defending champions of the BUCS competition and had a reputation to uphold. Unfortunately, the vagaries of graduation and years abroad had left them bereft of a couple of talented epeeists. The new epee team of Harry Gulliver, John Ashcroft and Chris Gilliam was as yet untested – how would they fare? The foil had seen some changes too, with fresher Glen Ostacchini making a place for himself and Indy Leclercq returning from a year abroad to join Ed Collier and Chris. Sabre remained unchanged, thankfully,

and the team knew they could count on captain Didier Nohlmans, Henry Gann and Maiyuran Ratneswaran to crush the opposing teams.

IC's first match was against ULU, who turned out to be a shadow of their former selves. Lacking some key fencers, their second place in the league last year seemed a long way away as first the sabreurs, then the foilists and finally the epeeists came away with comfortable victories. Final score: 135-74 to Imperial.

The fencers knew, however, that the real challenge was yet to come, with Cambridge, Bristol and Oxford all having turned up with strong teams. Cambridge were next, and having won the toss Imperial determined the order of fencing: sabre, foil and epee for last.

The sabre ended up being a relatively

comfortable victory, although lapses of concentration towards the end of the match cost them some silly points. Imperial went into the foil with an almost twenty point lead. Some strong opposition from Cambridge, along with some harsh refereeing by one of their fencers, meant Imperial lost the foil by a few points to go into the epee with a sixteen-point cushion. This meant that the epeeists had to score at least thirty points for IC to put the match away. Doing their best to hold things up, the boys in white nevertheless started dropping points here and there, and at one point came very close to losing the overall lead. Coming into the final bout, Harry was but two points ahead overall. He produced a blistering performance to hit the magic number of points and even won his match in the process, meaning

that Imperial came away with a seven-point victory, 114-107. As the team split up for the night, the designated BK MVP of the day was duly deemed to be Harry.

The following morning saw a 9am start versus Bristol in the cold cricket school. While there was reason to be cautious, as Bristol have always been a strong team (carried by their star foilist), the consensus was that they were beatable. Foil started the match, doing very well to come out with a slim deficit after the match – considering the strength of the Bristol foilists). The sabreurs then did their thing and re-established a strong lead, Henry in particular producing a strong performance to walk all over the Bristol fencers.

...Continued on Page 45



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