

Imperial researcher... and playwright

Doctor's new play explores the Arab Spring: **Page 18**



Hall senior prospects in doubt

Frustration about future of accommodation for seniors

Matthew Colvin

Hall seniors at Wilson House have been left questioning the future of their traditionally guaranteed accommodation.

As reported last week, it emerged that Wilson House had been removed from Imperial's accommodation website for prospective students ahead of a refurbishment next academic year, with new Waterloo-based hall 'Xenia' being posted in its stead. Hall Seniors hired by Wilson House last term have now been informed that they may not be guaranteed accommodation, even elsewhere.

Students at Wilson House have exhibited their frustration with the ongoing situation. One Wilson student involved closely in hall life, who wished to anonymous, commented on the lack of communication there has been from the College on the issue.

"There had been hints for a long time about Wilson's refurbishment, but the impression given [by College] was that any hired seniors while not being able to stay in Wilson next year, would definitely be required elsewhere."

"There has been no clear guidance

from College, and it has negatively impacted on the Seniors."

The capacity of accommodation for next year's intake across Imperial accommodation has also been taken into question. College are actively seeking 65 extra bed spaces externally in order to guarantee the required number of spaces for first year students, with wardens across Imperial being discouraged from recruiting more Hall Seniors until the situation is resolved.

The Wilson House-based student continued:

"Students shouldn't be the ones inconvenienced - especially if they have to unexpectedly search for accommodation during exam time. Some individuals have had to cancel their plans to live with groups of friends in private accommodation to take on this opportunity. It seems that the College is happy to leave people hanging."

The student was also keen to stress the fact that Hall Seniors now have to pay for their accommodation like any other hall-based resident, and so do not take on the role "for any financial gain."

Not only Wilson House has been re-

...Continued on Page 3

Neville Miles



Wilson House, Paddington

POLITICS



Obama and same-sex marriage
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TELEVISION



Join the *Band of Brothers*
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BOOKS



The ultimate antidote to *Twilight*
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Polish Club under threat

Exhibition Road-based venue under threat of closure. Petition online attracts support:
Page 5

HIGHLIGHTS

What's on

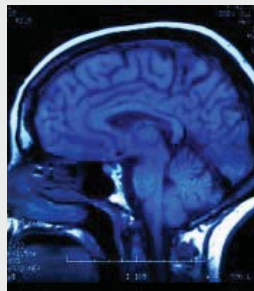
The cancer genome: an autobiography

Peter Campbell of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute: Hinxton, delivers a lecture on encoded DNA. Followed by a wine reception. Open to all, contact I.hollick@imperial.ac.uk for further information.

**A. de Rothschild LT, 2nd Floor
St Mary's Campus
22 May 17:00-18:00**

Brains, trains and automobiles

Professor Stephen Gentleman talks about the link between traumatic brain injury and neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's. Tea and coffee will be served from 16.45 in the Reynolds Building. Open to all. Registration required in advance. Contact k.weeks@imperial.ac.uk to register.



**Glenister Lecture Theatre
Charing Cross Campus
22 May 17:30-18:30**

Programmable light

Learn how the manipulation of light using computer programs is opening up a world of new optical techniques at Professor Mark Neil's inaugural.

**LT1, Blackett
South Kensington Campus
23 May 17:30-18:30**

We need Classifieds.

We know that it's Exam Season, but surely someone must need to sell something? Or need something in general?

The Classifieds Section is feeling a little lonely. If you can help, email felix@imperial.ac.uk.



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The Royal College of Radiologists – Free Public Lecture

Radiation & smart drugs: Homing in on cancer's Achilles' heel

Date: Monday 18 June 2012
Time: 6.30pm - 7.30pm
Location: The Wellcome Collection, Euston
For further venue information and location please [click here](#)

We warmly invite you to attend a **free public lecture** hosted by The Royal College of Radiologists on Monday 18 June 2012.

We are delighted to welcome **Dr Kevin Harrington** from **The Institute of Cancer Research**, who will give this lecture on 'Radiation & smart drugs: Homing in on cancer's Achilles' heel'.



"In the last two decades, we have begun to understand the importance of genes in preventing and causing cancer. As part of this process, we have identified specific abnormalities in cancer cells that make them very different from normal cells. Importantly, some of these changes (or mutations) in cancer cells make them resistant to the standard treatments, such as radiation and chemotherapy, that have been used for many years. However, because cancer cells come to rely on these mutations to allow them to survive, grow and spread, they represent a potential weak spot in a tumour's defences. Therefore, by developing new drugs that attack cancer cells through their Achilles' heel, we may be able to improve the effects of radiotherapy in treating a range of tumour types. In this lecture, I will discuss a number of examples that are already allowing us to achieve better treatment results and will introduce others that hold enormous promise for the future."

Dr Kevin Harrington, The Institute of Cancer Research

If you would like to join us for this lecture please **RSVP** to rcrlecture@rcr.ac.uk. For further information please call Joanna Humphries on 020 7299 1130.

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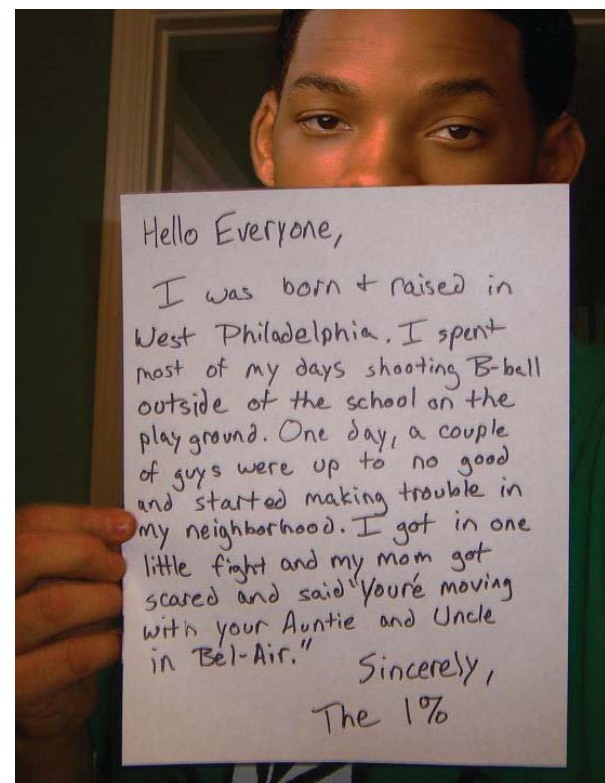
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Will of the week



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NEWS

Confusion reigns at Wilson House

...Continued from Front Page moved from the list available to prospective students on the Imperial website. Orient House, based in Fulham, has also been removed.

“There has been no clear guidance”

When speaking to Felix in February, Graduate Students' Association President Robert Tang said that ensuite rooms at Orient House would be offered to postgraduates for the next academic year “at around £199 [per week]” should postgraduate accommodation Clayponds Village close.

The accommodation website currently continues to list one of its ‘Hot Topics’ as ‘Current Clayponds Village Warden Vacancy’, however following this link only leads to the College’s main announcements page with the post relevant of the period August 2011.

This news arrives following several upheavals in Imperial student accommodation. Fisher Hall on Evelyn Gardens has also been earmarked for closure after a planning permission request late last year from College demonstrated the intent to shift the use of the building from student accommodation to elderly care.

Neville Miles



Seniors have found frustration from the ongoing situation

General Meeting date announced

Union President seeks discussion on future changes to the College environment

Aemun Reza

Following on from his comment article published on 2 March, Union President Scott Heath has confirmed a date for the General Meeting. The meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 June in SAF Lecture Theatre G34.

The General Meeting is an open forum that can be attended by any union member. With a usual attendance of 200 members, any person can add an item to the discussion agenda. The last General Meeting at Imperial was held five years ago.

Scott Heath said that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss alterations to the constitution. This constitution will be passed formally in the Union Council on Monday 11 June. The main aims of the meeting involve pre-

paring for the changing environment over the next five years at Imperial. Some of the points that will be discussed are the removal of universal

“The main aims of the meeting involves preparing for the changing environment at Imperial”

lunch times, the development of the co-curriculum and the implementation of £9k tuition fees.

Even though some of the changes

that are to be discussed are minor, the Sabbatical team decided that there should be a separate location to talk about the rationale behind any decisions. As well as ask questions and debate the implementations of these changes.

The Sabbatical team remits will be reviewed, where they were last changed since the split of the Education and Welfare roles. Also, the membership of the Trustee Board and other union committees will be assessed and how the union functions as a whole will be discussed.

The materials relating to the proposals and discussion of the General Meeting will be released in the week of 28 May to give members sufficient time to read it through before the actual meeting.

Sponsored Editorial

More student cuts

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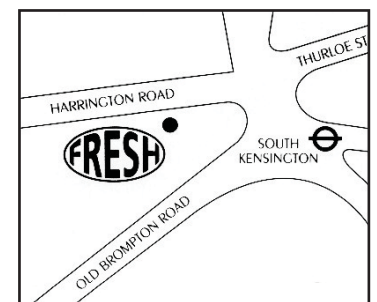
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SUN GLITTERS

"[Sun Glitters] pitch-shifted vocals and chopped-up melodies create a compellingly itchy, glitchy R&B"

- the Guardian

A L S O F R O M X V I R E C O R D S

HENRY WU & EVERMEAN

L O V E

4 X V I

T. Williams

"Really good vibe"

Mary Anne Hobbs

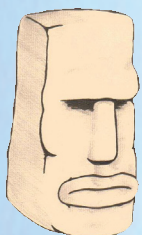
"Superb"

Alexander Nut

"Sounding large!"

L O V E

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News Editors: **Sophia David**
Alex Nowbar

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

NEWS

Polish Club at risk of being sold

Petition to protect popular cultural and social venue attracts support

Sophia David

A petition has been set up to save the Polish Club, Ognisko Polskie, based in Princes Gardens, which is at risk of being sold. The South Kensington club includes the Ognisko restaurant, popular with staff and students from Imperial.

Ognisko Polskie has existed for seventy-one years, promoting the Polish culture in London, and has held a range of cultural and social events including lectures, concerts and art exhibitions.

Jill Cook from Friends of Imperial College said, "The club is used by many Poles living in London as well as by other nationalities and by local residents in South Kensington, and it seems a pity that such a cultural and historical venue should no longer exist."

She added that, "It is the only pleasant venue for meals and drinks close to Imperial College."

The petition states that, "The proposed sale of the building will be an im-

mense loss and damaging to the Polish Community. We feel that the directors of Ognisko Limited have not explored the full range of business options to make Ognisko Polskie financially viable once more."

"It seems a pity that such a cultural and historical venue should no longer exist"

A decision will be taken at the AGM of the Polish club on 27 May which will seal the fate of the club.

The petition can be found online at: <https://www.change.org/petitions/ognisko-polskie-polish-hearth-club>.



Ognisko Polskie is situated opposite the main entrance of Imperial College

Now is the story all about how Will Smith was at Ethos

Hollywood superstar visits sports centre and trains with members of Team GB

Matthew Colvin

Hollywood big-hitter and modern day renaissance man Will Smith was to be found at Imperial's very own Ethos Sports Centre on Princes Gardens last Wednesday morning.

Smith was visiting the centre as part of a promotional tour for the upcoming film *Men in Black III*, but managed to eschew the usual promotional duties in favour of demonstrating his sporting prowess alongside some of Britain's Olympic hopefuls from Team GB.

"Smith entertained the assembled press"

Also taking to the gym hall were GB Basketball captain Drew Sullivan, triple jumper Yamile Aldama, super heavyweight boxer Anthony Joshua and hurdler Perri Shakes-Drayton.

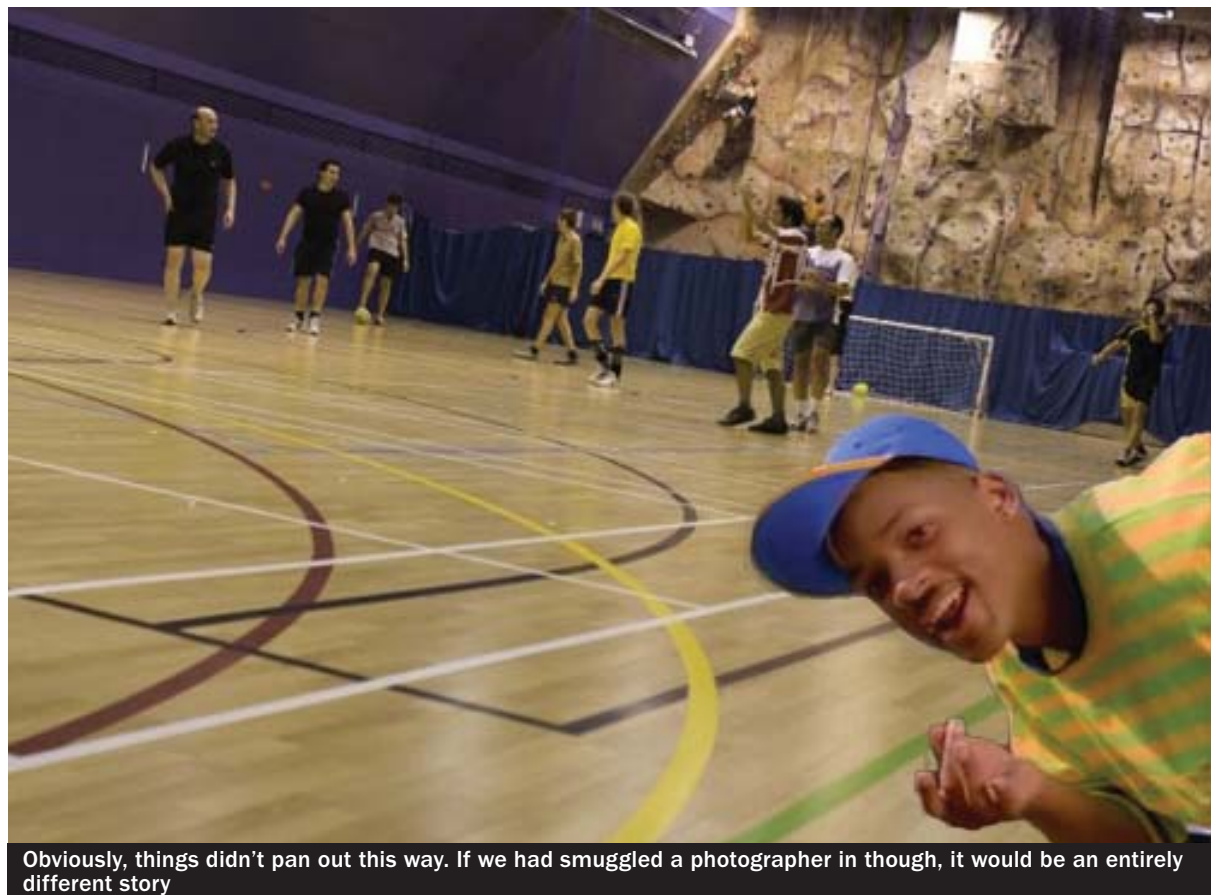
Engaging in a few shots of basketball, a leap over the hurdles and a

quick bout, Smith entertained the assembled press with his disarming and still resolutely fresh athleticism.

"A vast amount of secrecy surrounded the event"

A vast amount of secrecy surrounded the event, with knowledge of Smith's arrival privy to only a select few, including Union President Scott Heath. Few, including Felix itself, were aware of the presence of the Fresh Prince until the event had concluded.

The presence of Team GB marks the impending arrival of the Japanese Olympic Committee for the entirety of London 2012, who will be accommodated on the South Kensington Campus. The Switzerland Open Swimming and Triathlon team will also be staying at the South Kensington campus during the event and using the Ethos swimming pool for training purposes. Team GB will be also using the pool for training.



Obviously, things didn't pan out this way. If we had smuggled a photographer in though, it would be an entirely different story

News Editors: **Sophia David**
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NEWS

Cold Fusion@London: even

**Fallout as event
loses over
£15,000**

Tim Arbabzadah
Ravi Pall

The financial outcome of the charity event Fusion@London has finally become clear. As reported previously in Felix, there was initially a long, slow, and confusing period of uncertainty as to exactly what the situation was. Up until as recently as 1 May, there were still invoices that needed to be paid. However, the loss is now known and eActivities (the online record of transactions for clubs and societies) currently gives an accurate representation of the financial failure of the event. In total, the event lost £15,506.91.

Fusion@London, founded by Angela Udemba, who is a PhD student at Imperial, is not the first event under the Fusion name. The concept and first show was in York in 2005 and Angela Udemba became the creative director in 2008, when the show was still at York. The York events were successful and so she brought the idea to London. This year marked the first London based Fusion event, which were held at The Troxy in Limehouse on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 February. The website for the event states that: "At the heart of Fusion@London is an extravagant annual fashion music and dance fundraising event". The aim was to raise money for the charity Cancer Research UK. The fundraising target was stated on the website as being £50,000. A large amount of sponsorship from various different companies was acquired. The total amount from the plethora of sources was £8,400. The main sponsors were Ernst & Young, with the Gold sponsors being Deutsche

Bank, and smaller companies, retailers, and clubs being the Silver and Bronze sponsors.

The nature of the event itself has been described as a creative amalgamation of fashion, music, and dance. It is a show entirely organised and performed by students primarily from IC and involves a cast of at least 100 and a committee of 16-18. It had several musical headline acts and was supposed to be presented by three of the stars of *Made in Chelsea* – Spencer Matthews, Hugo Taylor and Binky Felstead.

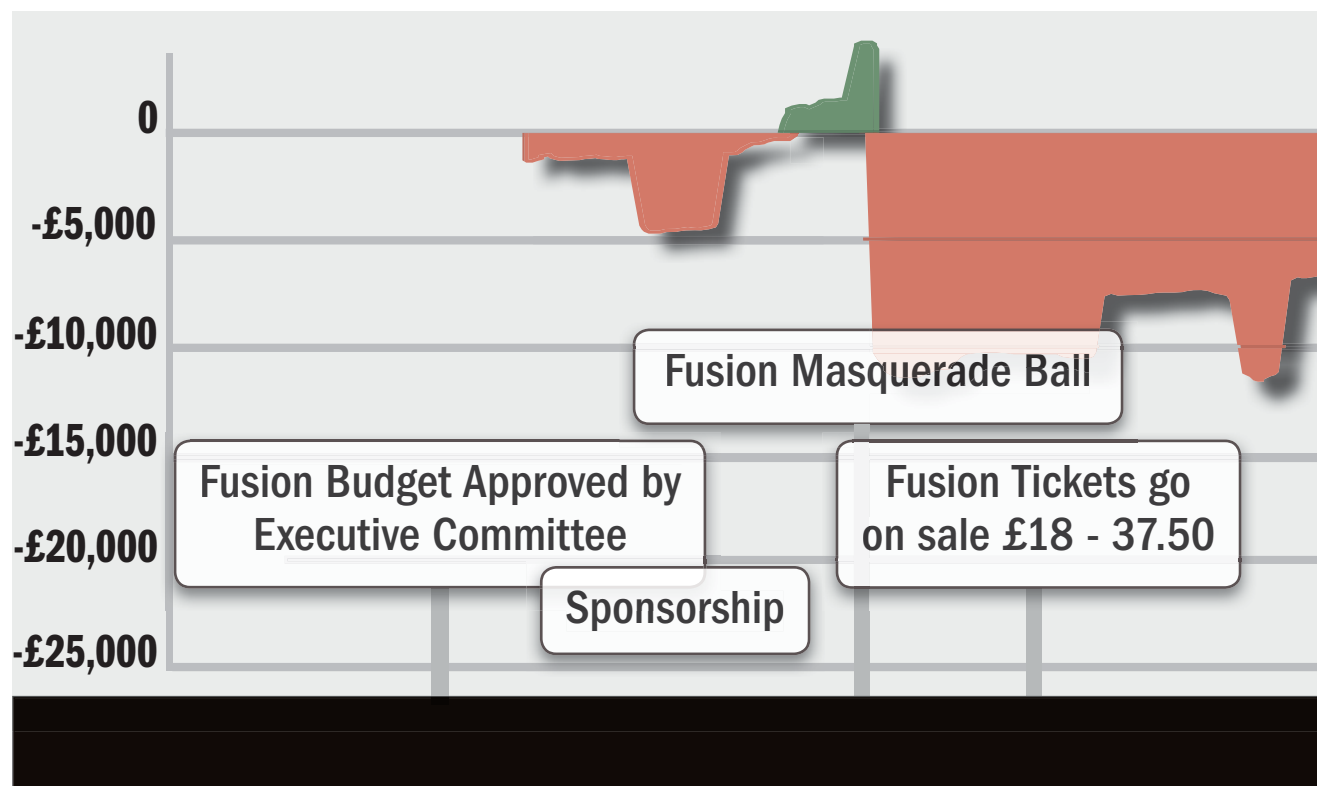
Much like the loss-making Summer Ball of 2011, Fusion was jointly held by institutions, in this case Imperial College London Union (the Union), University College London Union (UCLU), and King's College London Union (KCLSU). As stated in the original article, neither UCLU nor KCLSU were financially responsible in any way for the event. This meant that the only student union actually risking money was Imperial College London's Union, i.e. the Union. When asked why UCLU didn't put any money in for the event, the reply was that "[UCLU] don't believe they [Fusion] asked". Some societies from the other Universities were involved, although they carried none of the financial burden. UCLU said that some of their students were involved and that "Fusion were especially keen for the involvement of [the] Dance Society". However, they had other commitments and were therefore unable to commit much to the show, and the Dance Society didn't want to participate in Fusion as an official society activity.

Initially, everything was progressing

very well. The Halloween themed Masquerade Ball, which was held at Café de Paris and featured 2-4-1 cocktails, raffles, and prizes for best dressed, made nearly £5000. This was used as the launch party, and signified the only point when Fusion was in the black.

As the opening night for the event drew closer some problems were incurred. The *Made in Chelsea* stars could not all make both nights. On Saturday, all three dropped out due to filming

commitments. It was stated in their contracts that Fusion could not have them, or accept an alternative, if they had filming commitments. Therefore they were not paid and a replacement, the musician Sarvi, had to be arranged through Max Clifford. On Sunday night Hugo and Spencer turned up and were subsequently paid.



Event fails to reach critical mass

no list
 troxy back
 and way to make
 money back
 3. Stop over-estimating
 potential attendances

Various pieces of sound equipment at The Troxy were broken on one of the nights of the event, and the venue is charging £3,972 for it. Henry Whittaker, the Technical Director, said that the blame rested with either the sound engineer from Clement Marfo (who were one of the headliners of the night) for “incompetence and/or the venue, for not having a correctly configured system”. The Union were asked for assistance in recovering the loss of the PA breakage, however, at the time of writing, they haven’t responded to the request.

The ticket sales for the event, which were previously not known, have also been reported and the income generated has been added to the money to update the figure. The total capacity of the event was 2,045. Tickets were sold through the box office at The Troxy as well as via *Time Out*, KGB (an organisation that sells tickets, not the Russian secret service – unless they are moonlighting in a sushi restaurant, which they aren’t), in physical form to family and friends of the performers and organisers, and available for purchase on the door. The box office tickets were night specific; the other pre-event tickets were not. For the Saturday show, 362 tickets were sold with Sunday garnering 236 ticket sales by the box office. *Time Out* and KGB ticket sales were 38 and 95/96 (which of the numbers is still not known) respectively. Paper tickets are estimated to be roughly 80, but the income from them was intermittently streamed into other

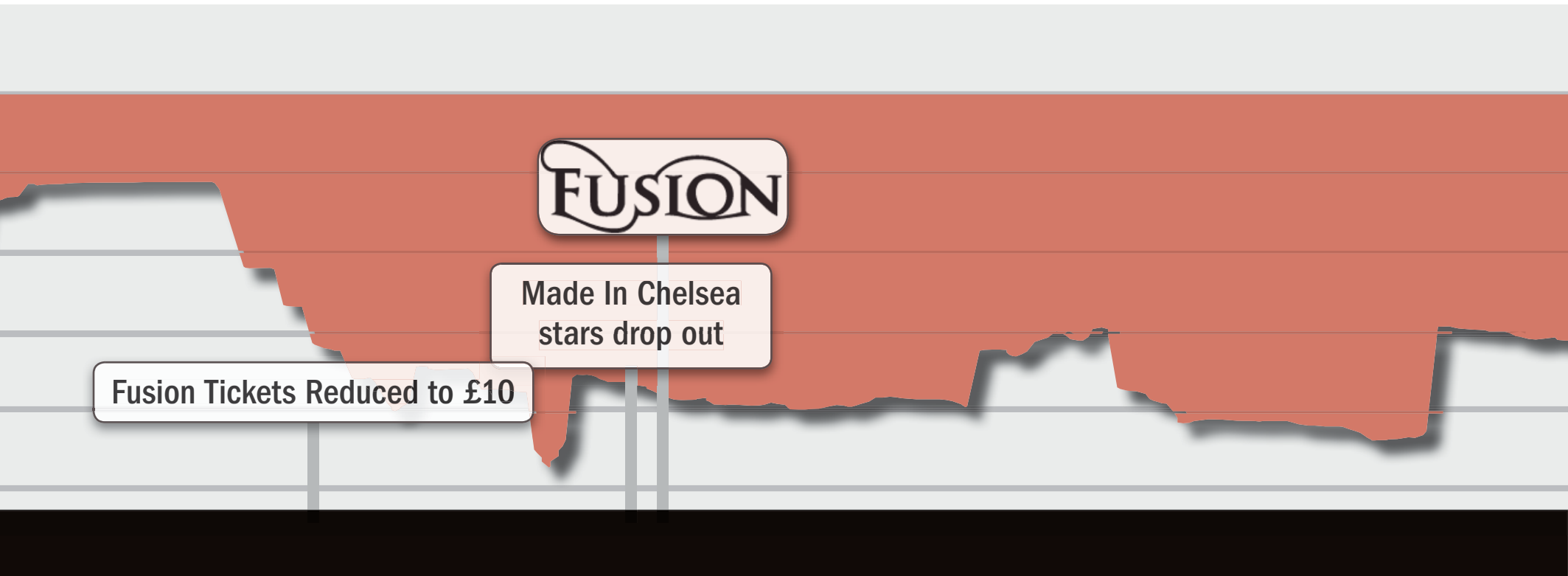
income, and so an exact figure is hard to say. Of the night specific tickets, 17 and 14 tickets were bought on the door on Saturday and Sunday respectively. Fusion has been planned since before the start of this academic year. Over the summer, the incoming Sabbatical officers were made aware of the event by the previous year’s officers and Monya Zard, Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) had regular meetings with Angela Udemba. Monya Zard said that Fusion had a “tremendous amount of support” from the Union, with her and Michael Foster, Deputy President (Finances & Services) having regular meetings with Fusion (namely Angela Udemba, Heather Jones and Chris Darby – the producer of the event, who eventually dropped out). Before Christmas, after the Masquerade Ball, Fusion and the Union had a meeting to discuss “mitigating risk and set up a timescale for how and when [they would] meet ticket sales targets”. The

targets were not met. When searching for reasons for the failure of the event and the low ticket sales, many different possible problems were given. Monya Zard said that it was “location, the fact that there’s so much to do in London, and that there were other shows going on at the same time”. The distance of the venue was dismissed, as The Troxy has worked well in the past. The price of the tickets (£18-40) was also blamed, as possibly putting students off buying a ticket. The fact that the main show took place at the same time as many of the other big societies were having their annual events (such as East Meets West, M Night, and I Night) was also pointed to as a contributing factor. Also, Monya Zard said that it may not have had “an established member base, but it did have 150 people who were trying to sell tickets” and so could have been as successful as M Night and other similar events, which have an almost guaranteed base attendance. She dismissed this possible factor as “not necessarily the reason why the ticket sales were low”. When asked why the event was successful in York and not successful in London, Monya Zard said that it was due to the difference in the entertainment scenes of the two cities, with there being much more variety in London.

The Masquerade Ball was described as a “massive party”, which a large amount of people enjoy. The main event was a show, which was suggested to the Union to be not as in tune with what manner of event students realistically like to attend. This sugges-



Graphic showing the filled seats (green) and empty seats (red)



FUSION

Made In Chelsea stars drop out

Fusion Tickets Reduced to £10

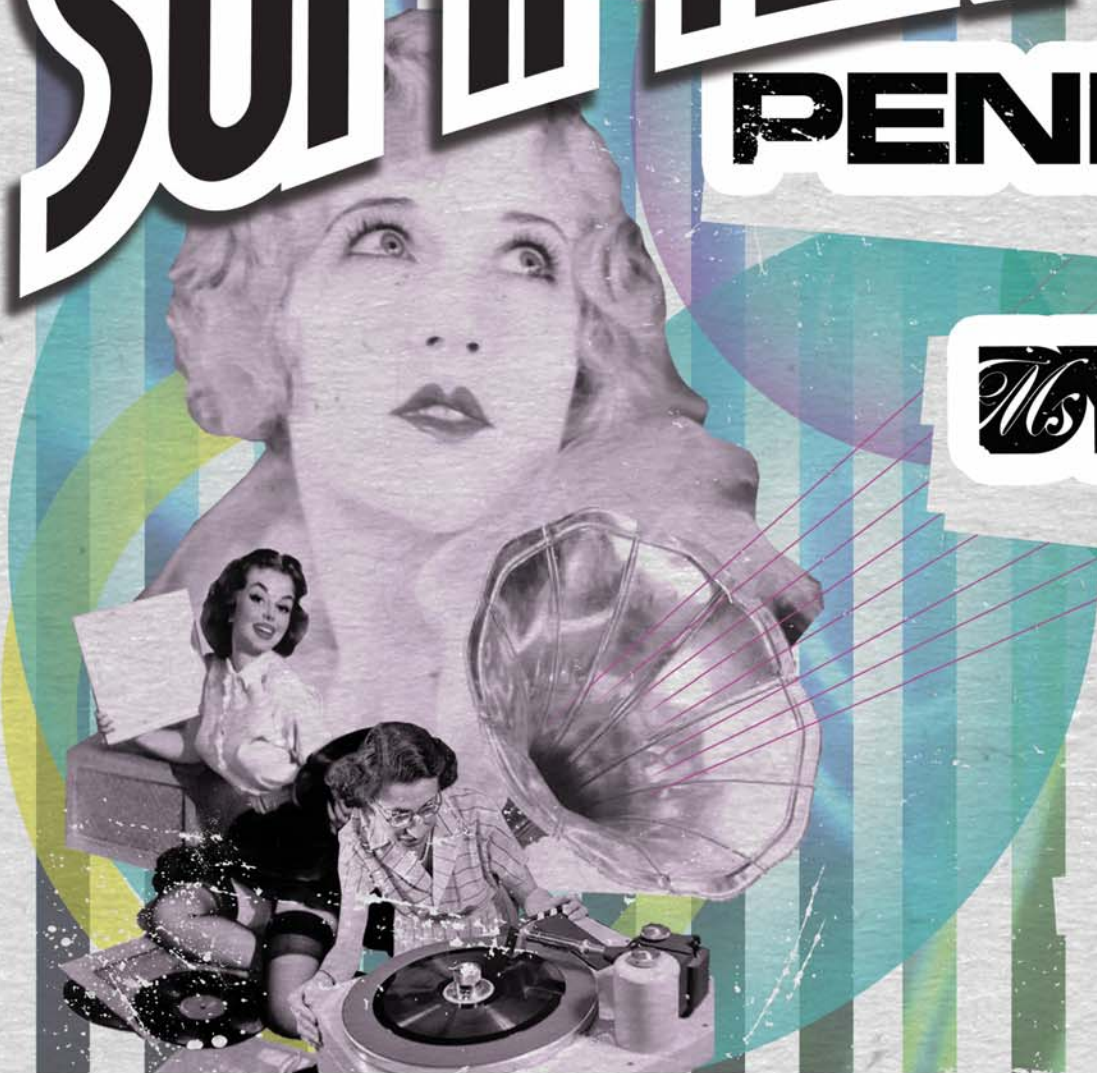
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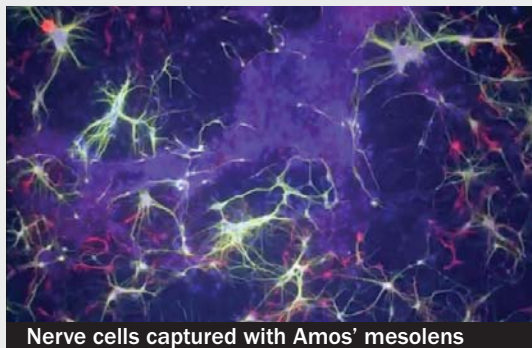


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In brief**Inventor of confocal microscope develops new giant lens**

Nerve cells captured with Amos' mesolens

Brad Amos, who contributed significantly to the development of the laser scanning confocal microscope while working at the Medical Research Council in Cambridge, has developed a new giant microscope, the 'Mesolens', that allows the imaging of an entire mouse embryo in subcellular detail.

Amos hopes that his new Mesolens could make imaging in developmental biology much simpler because the lens' huge field of view removes the need to stitch many small images together, reducing image acquisition times from a day to an hour.

The confocal microscope, the current gold standard in biomedical imaging, is successful because it allows biologists to obtain an image from inside a thick specimen, a technique known as optical sectioning. It does this in two steps: the sample is illuminated with a small focused laser spot; this spot is then focused onto a tiny hole placed in front of a camera. In this way, only light that has come from the focused laser spot contributes to the image. The laser spot is then scanned around to obtain a full image.

Traditional microscope objective lenses in confocal systems are small, which means that only small images can be obtained. To build an image of a 6mm object, hundreds of these small images would need to be stitched together. To get around this, Amos had to make his lens half a metre tall - ten or twenty times larger than a normal microscope objective. In addition, some of the elements inside the lens need to be positioned within micrometer-accuracy.

To manufacture something so large this accurately is clearly not going to be easy. Despite this, previous bad experiences with commercial organisations have led Amos to attempt to manufacture his giant lens in his own back garden. He hopes that the Mesolens will cost no more than a commercial confocal microscope.

The first confocal images from the prototype Mesolens were shown to the Royal Society in January this year.

James Clegg

Want to write for Felix Science?
Email us...
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Fashion to fight malaria**Zara Shubber**

A Kenyan scientist and a Gambian clothes designer have joined forces to fashion a garment that has the power to repel mosquitoes and beat malaria.

The one-piece multi-coloured bodysuit comes with an anti-mosquito mesh hood and a cape that contains mosquito repellent that has been bonded with the fabric's fibres at the molecular level.

Because the repellent is embedded in the garment's fabric using nanotechnology it does not dissipate like regular skin-based insecticides, according to the scientist and clothes designer from Cornell University in New York.

The 'binding technology' even allows up to three times more insecticide to be embedded within the fabric compared to normal sleeping nets, which are only dipped in solution and usually need to be replaced or re-dipped every six months.

Malaria, which is endemic in large parts of Africa, is a killer parasitic disease transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. It kills more than half a million people every year. In Africa, a child dies from malaria every minute.

The creators of the hooded bodysuit, Frederick Ochanda and Matilda Ceesay, have both witnessed family members fall ill with malaria. They hope that their innovative design will instigate further technological advances in the battle against Malaria.

Scientists are already working on a fabric that can potentially detect changes in temperature or light and so can secrete the amount of repellent needed accordingly. This would, for example, provide more protection at night when most mosquitoes prefer to feed.

At the very least, Ochanda and Ceesay hope that the technology can be used to craft stron-

Cornell University



Get cape. Wear cape. Beat malaria...?

ger, longer lasting and more effective insecticide-treated bed nets.

"Although there are already mosquito nets being used, the solution isn't foolproof," Ceesay said, speaking at Cornell University.

"People are still getting sick and dying. We can't get complacent. I hope my design can show what is possible when you bring together fashion and science and will inspire others to keep improving the technology."

A cheaper way to make hydrogen**Philip Kent**

A promising way to power vehicles and appliances in the future is through use of hydrogen fuel cells. These, however, require a source of hydrogen to work, and obtaining this hydrogen has typically been an expensive process.

The most common method to obtain the gas is to split water into oxygen and hydrogen. This is an operation that requires a catalyst, and the catalyst must be such that it reduces the energy necessary for the reaction to occur as much as possible. The lower the energy that is required, the more efficient the system, because it means there is more energy left over to actually power your system. Hence, platinum catalysts are often used due to their excellent catalytic ability.

A problem with platinum, however, is its ever-rising cost: something that has been seen with many rare metals as their availability becomes ever reduced. Hence, alternatives involving cheaper catalysts are needed, and re-



Hydrogen car being filled up

searchers at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York have developed a promising candidate.

One of the best features about platinum is its high electron density. A cheaper catalyst, nickel, does not have such a high density, though this can be alleviated somewhat using molybdenum. This alloy still, however, will not

produce the required level of catalytic ability. A proposed solution was to add nitrogen to alter the electronic state of the alloy, which has been proven to work in the macroscale. In the nanoscale, it was found that applying nitrogen via exposure to an ammonium environment caused 2D nanosheets to form. These sheets have a greater catalytic ability thanks to the increased surface area, and hence the mixture has a catalytic ability similar to that of platinum, but with a reduced cost.

As well as providing a cheaper yet effective method to produce hydrogen, this research is significant for seeing the production of nanosheets, when only nanoparticles were expected. As nanosheets have an increased surface area (and thus increased availability of reactive sites), this may lead to developing even faster catalysts using other materials. In the aim to produce synthetic catalysts as fast as natural enzymes, such improvements are always welcome.

DOI: 10.1002/anie.201200699

A recipe for disaster?

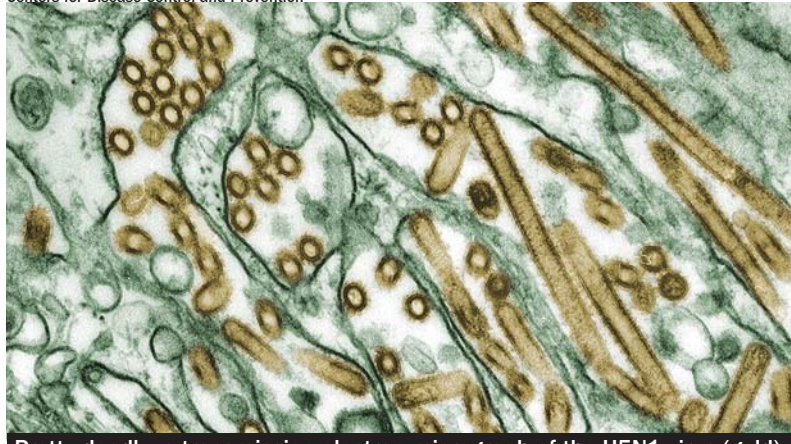
Philippa Skett weighs up the pros and cons of publishing research on H5N1

The online publication of a controversial article outlining potentially damaging data about the influenza virus finally went ahead recently, after a significant delay. *Nature*, after careful deliberation, published the paper much to the dismay of several official bodies, after the case was brought to a hearing in April by the US Senate. With scientific research being increasingly hindered by outside influences, is it time to make an absolute decision over what exactly can be published once and for all? Or would this be detrimental to scientific advances?

The paper, containing methodology and data covering artificial generation of a strain of H5N1 avian flu, that has the ability to transmit between mammals, was deemed initially unsuitable for publication unless highly censored by the US National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) last November. However, such recommendation was only advisory; *Nature* still went ahead with the publication in full, entitled "Experimental adaptation of an influenza H5 HA confers respiratory droplet transmission to a reassortant H5 HA/H1N1 virus in ferrets."

Nature, a highly influential journal,

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Pretty deadly: a transmission electron micrograph of the H5N1 virus (gold)

stated after that "A paper that omits key results or methods disables subsequent research and peer review" and as such, went ahead and published the paper as intended, with no censorship. The paper itself justifies the research in the abstract, by explaining that now the ability to create and recognise this transmissible strain has been exercised in full, possible pandemics can be dealt with as time effectively as possible.

Issues involved were whether those who repeat the investigation will be entirely safe in their attempts, and if

there is a possibility of it escaping a lab and infecting the public. The US Senate voiced its concerns over the extent to which the research could be used to aid bioterrorism should it get into the wrong hands. Both concerns are justified, but are the best solutions simply to keep such information under wraps?

The World Health Organisation has been encouraged to release guidelines about international standards for bio-safety in laboratories, which hopefully will minimise the risk of laboratory based strains becoming dangerous, al-

though no measures as of yet have been suggested to counter possible bioterrorist situations.

The same sort of dilemma came alongside stem cell research when it started to gain popularity. Eventual bans were placed in some countries such as Germany and Finland over embryonic stem cell use, despite results having long term potential to make a huge difference in medicine. Although the issues with stem cell research were ethical as opposed to safety-related, both situations highlight how the government can take control of scientific activities and even halt them altogether.

Legislation is made on a case by case basis, but is it time a more universal set of laws were put into place to protect both the ability to advance in science and the general public? Or is our scientific understanding expanding at such a rate that we can no longer predict what scenarios may arise in the future? At this point, research and its consequences are varied as different scientific discoveries spark different dilemmas, so perhaps a law that fits all is unrealistic. However, with clashes between law and science increasing in frequency, it seems that it may only be a matter of time before something has got to give.

Brainy gene

Fiona Hartley

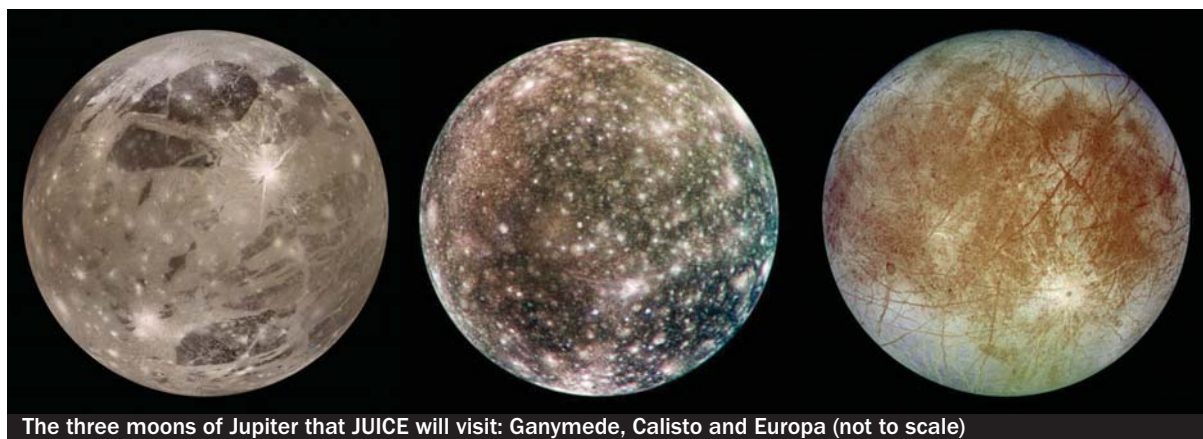
A recent study published in the journal *Cell* has identified a major genetic component of human brain development, with implications for research into autism and schizophrenia. Scientists at The Scripps Research Institute have found that the gene SRGAP2, the protein product of which is responsible for forming neuronal connections in neocortical development, has undergone two human-specific truncated duplications.

One of the duplicates has been named SRGAP2C, and appeared in the genome about 2.4 million years ago, during the time in which human lineage separated from nonhuman primates (a related paper published in the same issue of *Cell* covers the recent evolution of SRGAP2). SRGAP2C interacts with the original SRGAP2 to inhibit its functions, delaying the maturation of dendritic spines on pyramidal neurons. Dendritic spines are crucial for integrating synaptic signals from other neurons.

Far from having a negative effect on brain development, SRGAP2C ultimately results in a higher density of dendritic spines on the neurons when they mature – a human-specific trait. Conditions like schizophrenia and autism in humans feature atypical neuronal connectivity; studying human-specific gene duplications like SRGAP2C may allow such diseases to be effectively modelled in mice, and unravel some of the mysteries surrounding these and other neurodevelopmental conditions.

DOI: 10.1016/j.cell.2012.03.034

Green light for JUICE-y space mission



The three moons of Jupiter that JUICE will visit: Ganymede, Callisto and Europa (not to scale)

Sophia David

The European Space Agency (ESA) is to lead a billion-euro mission to Jupiter and its icy moons. The Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE) spacecraft is scheduled to launch in 2022, arriving in the Jupiter system in 2030.

A five-tonne satellite will be sent out to Jupiter in order to make a series of close measurements of the giant planet and three of its moons: Ganymede, Callisto and Europa. The satellite, packed

with instruments, will take eight years to reach Jupiter, spend another three years studying the system before crashing into the surface of Ganymede.

UK researchers including Professor Michele Dougherty of Imperial College, lead scientist of the JUICE mission, played a central role in gaining approval for the mission. The JUICE concept was chosen over two other ideas, NGO, which would place three high-precision satellites in space to detect gravitational waves, and Athena,

which would see the creation of the largest X-ray telescope ever built.

Ganymede, Callisto and Europa are all suspected to harbour deep oceans of water below their icy crusts which could be conducive to microbial life. To investigate whether Jupiter and its moons could provide habitable environments, JUICE will study the stormy atmosphere of Jupiter and its magnetic and charged particle environment.

However, the main focus will be on Ganymede, the solar system's larg-

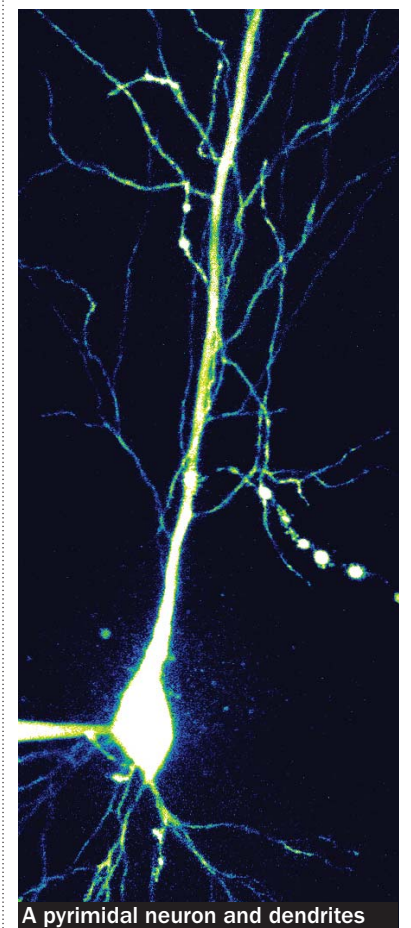
est moon which is 8% larger than the planet Mercury. JUICE will make close measurements of the surface, sub-surface, magnetic and plasma environment of the giant moon. Multiple flybys of Callisto and two flybys of Europa will also be performed.

Professor Dougherty said, "There are four conditions required for life to form. You need water; you need an energy source – so the ice can become liquid; you need the right chemistry – nitrogen, carbon, hydrogen; and the fourth thing you need is stability – a length of time that allows life to form."

"The great thing about the icy moons in the Jupiter system is that we think those four conditions might exist there, and JUICE will tell us if that is the case."

The final budget for JUICE is expected to be approximately 1.1bn euros. This includes the cost of manufacturing the spacecraft, launching the satellite and operating it until 2033 and JUICE's eleven instruments.

The ESA Science Study Team for JUICE includes researchers from Imperial, Oxford University, University of Leicester and UCL.



A pyramidal neuron and dendrites

Comment Editors: **Tim Arbabzadah**
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COMMENT

FELIX

Accommodation and Communication

Last week Felix commented that it could be worthwhile to focus on improving the 'student experience' from within rather than from focusing on comparison with other universities. If anything, it has emerged that focusing internally would indeed be beneficial regarding the current Wilson House hall senior situation.

With seniors originally under the impression that they would be guaranteed accommodation somewhere as Wilson undergoes refurbishment next year, those that have been recruited for the position have been told that this could be untenable, with the plans of many of these individuals thrown into turmoil, and rooms potentially being sought externally to reach the guaranteed amount of accommodation for next year's intake.

At the heart of the issue, it falls to College and what has been described as "a severe lack of communication" on their part with the Wardens of Imperial in order to keep those most at risk of losing out in the loop with ongoing developments. After all, miscommunication on this level cannot be, in any way, shape, or form, be beneficial for the 'student experience'.

Wardens and those holding senior positions in halls of accommodation should be the first to be made aware of events such as refurbishments rather than being the first to hear of "hints". After all, people have chosen to live in this fashion, providing help to those who need it, and being kept in the dark with respect to this is simply not beneficial for any kind of mutual relationship.

Students are the first to suffer from the lack of knowledge that their seniors and wardens can provide. The wardening system at Imperial is an important facet of the community, especially for Freshers and their adjustment to a new way of life and independence. Anything that could potentially damage the relationship between the wardening team and students goes to ultimately damage the 'student experience'. It is important that during the next stages of any potential hall closure and the Wilson House refurbishment that there is clear communication between the relevant parties, and that there is full and clear. Otherwise, dissatisfaction will be an easily apparent prospect.

The closure of various halls of accommodation that has been regularly touted as an option throughout the year begs the question as to why Imperial should be in this position in the first place. The circumstances that led to a shortfall in the required rooms for next year's intake must be heavily considered.

The great election farce



Jack Hewitt

Aside from enthusiastic voting, record turnouts, balloons and chicken suits (not the medics mascot, another one), this set of sabbatical elections has been about what's not gone according to plan. The results for two of the Sabbatical positions were delivered late – one because of disputes between candidates, one because of a technical fault and the subsequent actions to 'resolve' it. There is yet to be any formal communication from the Union over the former or latter – the nature of the complaints and disputes, or what exactly had gone wrong. When the brand sparkling new website, stick figures, and #voteicu are set aside, there's one blunt truth: the system wasn't checked before it went up, and nobody was on-hand to fix problems when they arose. The voting website did indeed work, you could put numbers in boxes, see people's names and photos, and, for the most part, manifestos (the 250-word 'vote for me' segment people write) would be 'in-line' with their names. But, unfortunately, in some cases you couldn't see their manifestos, and it instead said 'no manifesto submitted', which in some cases was incorrect, or mixed them up for people running for multiple positions. Not submitting a manifesto can be interpreted as not caring enough to write one, or standing as a joke, and candidates are given ample warning about by when it should be written. But, this wasn't for all the candidates; as has been done in the last years, when you had to go through the extra effort of clicking on their name to see them. One of those affected was running for a Sabbatical Role, and over 500 people had voted for the DPW position (nearly 1000 in total had voted for a variety of positions) before that problem was fixed, 11.6% of those cast in that election. That the Returning Officer was only made aware of the issue in the election he was supposedly running when told about it by that candidate as he was walking into the office that morning (the candidate was making preparations for the charity bike auction to be held that afternoon in Beit Quad), is far from ideal. That no impartial



Polling booth, or toilet stalls with low privacy - Caption, or satire... This shit just got meta

member of college staff was overseeing the election, as is demanded in the Constitution (the text by which the Union is run and managed), was also strange, and something that will, hopefully, be avoided in future.

It was agreed that this wasn't fair on that person, it's their employment next year that's at stake and this is an issue that does actually matter to some people, and it was decided that anyone who voted before when his manifesto went 'live' have their vote struck off (it was claimed that they wouldn't be able to vote again). This was pointed out to be (a) unfair on the people whose votes were discounted (and thereby ignored, and democracy isn't about that), and (b) unconstitutional, by a number of people. He agreed to it because he hadn't been told about any of the other options that had been considered, as did all the other candidates.

From here, the judicial body governing the Union (whose job is to uphold the Constitution of the body, which one of the Sabbatical Officers had gone against through that action) said that (a) you can't go against the Constitution like that, and (b) that the candidate was disadvantaged at no fault of his own. It was decided that a rerun of the election, which two of the four candidates had asked for (one was opposed due to having put too much work in to do it again, the other wasn't present and had given no reason for his absence) wasn't possible, and that nothing would be done about this farce aside from measures (which possibly should have already been in place) being prepared so it can't happen again.

The next day the results were released (so these decisions were come to before any results came out and were thus come to independent of any result). In the first round of voting, the

“That the Returning Officer was only made aware of the issue in the election he was supposedly running when told about it by that candidate... is far from ideal”

affected candidate was only 7 votes behind the eventual winner (out of over 4000 cast, or under 0.2%). That candidate ended up losing to the DPW elect by 61 votes (so if only 31 out of 4500-odd, or under 0.7% of votes cast had gone to the affected candidate, he would have been the winner), leaving it at a victory by a margin of 6% of the disputed votes.

When he requested an apology over the incident from the Returning Officer over (a) his manifesto not being on the website initially (this despite him jumping through all the hoops required), and (b) an admittance that it was unfair, he was refused on both counts.

That candidate, who lost an election that was deemed unfair on him, is me. Why have I written this? To get the truth about it across, given that it's not going to be done otherwise, and to give it from the perspective of someone on the receiving end of these unfortunate occurrences. It's not to spite or antagonise anyone, more just to say my piece about it all and move on.

COMMENT

Post exams party against austerity



Luke Sheldon

The first twelve months of austerity saw Tory HQ get smashed up and students taking to the streets in their thousands against rising tuition fees. Town halls were occupied as the budgets detailing the severity of the cuts were passed, half a million people marched in London and hundreds of tax dodging stores were occupied by the direct action group UK Uncut. But recently this anger has all died away and turned to disengagement as grown men dressed as penguins get higher votes than the Lib Dems in local elections which less than a third of the population even bothered to show up to (if we'd all rocked out maybe the penguin would have won).

Maybe this is because we've realised "there is no alternative" and decided to stand down and bear the government austerity. However with the Institute of Fiscal Studies reporting that only 25% of cuts have actually happened yet, and with the professed economic growth not wanting to appear, the pain has barely begun. On top of this, over the last 3 years the wealth of the 1000 richest people increased by £155bn, greater than the deficit over this time. This is a mocking fact destroying any possible perception that in any way we could even slightly be "all in it together" as the wealthiest amass pointless fortunes whilst the services for the poorest are ruthlessly closed.

Next Saturday (the 26th) the anger that begun the anti-austerity movement will mature into the need to celebrate the future we could have had. UK Uncut has promised a summer of anti-cuts street parties kicking off next weekend

in 10 different cities from Central London to Middlesbrough. With the Jubilee and Olympics fast approaching, and the prediction that we should all be told to hold good old community street parties like we were for the royal wedding last year, UK Uncut want us to show there are more important things to come together for as central roads will be closed by thousands of people.

The last time the deficit was as high was post war, a time also of street parties. But it was also a time of progress as the NHS was formed, welfare support began and truly affordable housing was actually being built. With this came a rapidly shrinking inequality gap between the richest and poorest and with that a closing difference in education and health. Now health inequalities are at a level not seen since the 1920s with men in Glasgow living on average 13 years less than those of our surrounding Kensington and Chelsea.

The central London street party will be leaving at 11am on Saturday the 26th from four different locations, highlighting four different areas that are being decimated by the government unnecessarily, to then convene on a secret location (see the UK uncut website for details). There will be a bloc representing the NHS, which is being turned into a machine for corporate profit by the NHS reforms whilst having cuts equivalent to the budgets of 40 large NHS hospitals. There is one for women, to highlight how the cuts are falling hardest on women, through higher unemployment, the closure of children's services and crisis centres as well as benefit cuts.

The welfare group will leave from



Skrillex won't be there, but if there is a YouTube video of the party there's sure to be a comment about how he "sucks major donkey dick"

Waterloo to make a stand against the unprecedented welfare cuts. This is timely, with it leaking last week that Cameron is planning to magic an extra £25 billion pounds out of the already bare budget. The idea of attacking the welfare budget when there's such high unemployment defies logic. How can people relinquish their "dependency" on welfare when there are simply no jobs to do so? People don't seem to understand the alternative to welfare is mass starvation.

And finally the real democracy bloc will meet at parliament. The Tories promised during the election they would look after the NHS to then promptly start the process of ripping it apart days later; whilst not even allowing us to see the risk register detailing the travesty they will leave behind. Combined with this their unwillingness to engage

in criticism through withdrawing legal aid and their avoidance of Freedom of Information requests whilst they take payments off big business and maintain cosy relationships with the corporate media mafia has lead to the true deficit being one in democracy.

This may not seem much to party about, but then that's all the more reason to carnival with the idea of the society that we want. Poverty and inequality are not facts of society to which there is no alternative, but something people have changed before and will change again! And so I invite you to one of the four starting locations to join in standing up to the cuts. People will descend on the final secret location with games, comedy, food to share, a vision of the future not dependent on kicking the poorest the hardest, music and most importantly... bunting.

Poverty and inequality are not facts of society... but something people have changed before and will change again

Give Boris bikes a chance



Stephanie Walton

I should be on Transport for London's pay roll. Why? Because the times that I have helped people release bikes from Boris' blue stands are innumerable. The people requiring assistance are mostly tourists, whom I often have little patience with. So what is it that makes their plight so important to me?

I love Boris bikes, but I'm the first to admit that there is nothing user friendly about them; I can't stand the sight of people excitedly parting with their money only to get stuck trying to release a bike. The first stumbling block, of course, is conveying your credit or debit card details. This acts as a sort of deposit. If you're American and don't own a card with a chip in it, you're stuck immediately. Even if you do have a chip in your card, the machine can take a dis-

liking to it – my debit card falls into this category. If you're lucky though, you'll be issued with a bicycle release and then have a limited amount of time to grab a bike. Sounds easy doesn't it? Well, the problem is that if a bike has a red light illuminated by it, it will NEVER be released, no matter how many times you correctly type in the code. Pushing in a pound coin where the membership key is supposed to go doesn't help either. Since no one ever seems to grasp these things first time, this results in many an unaided tourist's downfall.

If TfL were ever to recognise my services to Boris bikes, I would use it as an opportunity to air my views about buses. If I get on one of these splendid vehicles and it says it's going to Battersea Bridge South Side, only to tell me two stops later that it's changed its final destination

to somewhere I could have easily walked to in half the amount of time, I get angry. This happens to me too frequently and I know the drill. You end up paying twice. There surely is an easy way around this, for instance they could issue you with a slip allowing you to get on the next bus for free. And provide free coffee for those poor people who tried the bus only after the bikes failed them...

So, should we bother dwindling our money on buses and bikes? In this ever-persistent rain, buses' benefits surely outweigh their short fallings. But come the summer, whenever that may be, do try to get a Boris bike. If you're successful: cycle through the park along the south of the Serpentine, west to east. Yes it is like the M25 at rush hour, but at other times it is one of the most scenic and best experiences TfL has to offer.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I would like to nominate Professor Chris Toumazou FRS FREng for the vacant position of President of Imperial College and Professor Donnal Bradley CBE FRS for Provost. Chris is a front man with great people skills and would be ideal for the external affairs role. Donnal has the right blend of academic and managerial experience for the internal affairs portfolio.

Yours faithfully,
Mark Lee
Materials (1986-1989)

Send your pieces in to:
comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Comment Editors: **Tim Arbabzadah**
Sam Horti

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COMMENT

Think about it: are you nomophobic?



Elen Newcombe

Has it ever occurred to you just how much of our modern lives are lived via screens? I am sitting here writing this on my laptop, which has been switched on ever since I decided to watch a cheeky episode of *Green Wing* over breakfast. My mobile phone has been within a two metre radius of my person all day. My housemates and I are considering popping to the cinema later. No doubt the lectures I will attend this week will be conducted via a projector screen. Even if I wanted to escape, I would no doubt be bombarded with screens and monitors in supermarkets, tube stations, and even just walking innocently down the street.

My question is whether this is a bad thing? Should we be worried about our ever-increasing reliance on this virtual world? When a seven-year old has a tantrum on the tube because she has been forced to wait three seconds too long for her top-of-the-range mp3 player, I think there may be something wrong.

Don't get me wrong, modern technology has the potential to enrich our lives in countless ways. Google Earth is about to launch a street view type simulation of the Great Barrier Reef, allowing you to dive down and 'virtually' explore to depths of up to a hundred metres, all from the comfort of your own home. The wealth of scientific knowledge on the internet is endless, meaning that most of us at Imperial probably use the library about 10% as often as we access online resources. Restaurants are replacing waitresses with iPads. You can shop online, deliver flowers to relatives

in Australia, stay connected with childhood friends who would otherwise be complete strangers... it's actually hard to think of any aspect of life that some sort of screen can't help you with.

But are we becoming too reliant on this kind of thing? Perhaps even to the extent that we are actually afraid if we are out of contact with our virtual lives. A recent article published in the *Telegraph* (who am I kidding, I read the *Evening Standard* version) states that two thirds of the UK population suffer from this fear, one aspect of which has been catchily termed nomophobia (no mobile phobia, officially defined as fear of losing or being without your mobile phone). If you delve further into the results, 77% of 18-24 year olds (that's us) are nomophobic; and women are a little more afraid than men, however this is reportedly only because men tend to have a second spare phone knocking about. The problem has become so terribly grave that an advice website has been launched to help people cope with the extreme stress and anxiety caused by this condition. Even though the site is extremely basic and low-budget, I'm almost entirely sure that it's not in fact a piss-take. Instead of giving pointers on getting these people some seriously needed perspective into their lives, the 'Top Tips' section on nomophobia.com offers "some immediate protection from nomophobia by [avoiding] a range of the most common reasons why people lose mobile phone contact".

I was in fact recently in the unfortunate situation of being without a phone for a few weeks. My poor faithful brick of a phone, so sturdy and reliable up un-



Good news: we got a great picture.
Bad news: someone in the Felix office needs a new phone. Sorry...

til that point, lost a fight with a pint of Fosters and never recovered. Now for the first few days I was indeed in a mild state of shock and feeling horrendously disconnected from the world, but after a while my sense of panic began to diminish. I started arranging to meet people at specific times and places, instead of the usual "call me when you get there". I spent more time on Facebook, as a result, sure, but once I was out and about I did feel a certain sense of the liberation that technophobes and hippies are always banging on about. Instead of thinking about my phone all the time, whether I had a message or a notification, I was actually listening to the people I was with. Instead of burying my nose in my mobile while on the bus,

I would read a book on the way home, or just take time to look around or out of the window. It was on one of these occasions that I realised that a total of five people out of the nine in the back seat of the bus were glued to iPhones, even a pensioner who looked like she could barely see. And I wondered: are these people actually doing something meaningful on those phones? Or are they just filling time by browsing pointless websites or messaging people unnecessarily? Because now that I have finally got round to replacing my phone, those are the things I've gone back to doing on my boring bus rides home. And although I'm feeling better connected, I kind of hope that I will never become a nomophobic.

I was recently without a phone... once I was out and about I did feel a certain sense of liberation that technophobes and hippies are always banging on about

The puzzling problem with ponderings



Rhys Davies

I'm in the grips of a dilemma. Oh dear.

But yet I'm strangely glad: I like being in trouble; I like having a problem to solve. This may sound odd. After all, if I'm content with my situation, is there even a problem at all? Technically, no. But I'm not content with my situation, that's why there's a problem – what I'm glad of is having the problem. Confused yet? So am I. Is your left arm tingling and do you feel a bit nauseous too? No? Oh, must be just me then.

There are a few reasons why I enjoy a good dilemma. For one thing, it keeps me busy. They say idle hands are the devil's playthings and this is true. But hands can only do so many things. They're practical, yes, but they lack imagination. But the mind is limitless in its possibility and an idle mind is ca-

pable of no end of trouble. If idle hands are the devil's playthings, they must be like Hotwheels. An idle mind then is like handing the devil the keys to his dad's Ferrari.

But it's more than that. If I were without a problem to mull over, a mental crumb stuck between the teeth of my consciousness to tongue relentlessly, I'm quite sure I would get bored very quickly. And as a good medic, I know that the brain is a muscle – I didn't say I was a smart medic – and like any muscle, if you don't use it, you lose it. Like a large proportion of Imperial College, I have vested interest in keeping my mind in peak mental condition and nothing keeps it in shape like a tough, tricky teaser. It's like a good round on the bench-press, except without the sweating, straining and short, short shorts in public.

And then there's the perfect joy that comes when the veil of fog lifts, the fish scales fall away and at once, with the utmost clarity, you can see the solution before your eyes. It's all so simple – how you didn't see before is a mystery, but that becomes irrelevant when you marvel at the beauty of it. The giddy euphoria you feel is twofold; not only have you done away that pesky thorn in your paw but because you worked it through all by yourself, it feels doubly good. In that strange microcosm of life that is the morning commute on the Piccadilly line, completing the sudoku is as the sweetest ambrosia. We haven't created the drugs – or the words – yet to properly describe the high that comes with the mythical feat of cracking the cryptic crossword.

A problem is also a reminder that things can be better. In this sense, pre-

dicaments show there is still room for improvement, which is great! No matter how good today is, knowing that tomorrow can be better still is something worth getting out of bed for. Arguably, if life were perfect, without even the smallest of problems, then things could only go downhill – which itself is quite the conundrum! Society only moves forward to get past its successive problems. Stone tablets were great but a bit heavy so we invented paper. Handwritten books were OK but mass dissemination was a bit tricky so we created the printing press. Sexy women are sexy but they don't like talking to us much in bars so the chat-up line was born.

And the dilemma that spurred all of this? Should I really write an article about dilemmas? On reflection, I don't think so.

Politics Editors: **Joseph Letts**
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One small step for POTUS

Obama's evolution of thought on same-sex marriage

REUTERS / Joshua Roberts



Joseph Letts

Last week was unusual in politics, with a politician making a clear statement about their position on what to some is considered a controversial topic. Barack 'Big O' Obama clarified what he had previously described as his evolving attitudes to same-sex marriage, finally saying in an interview on US channel ABC,

"It is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same sex couples should be able to get married."

With this action Obama has become the first sitting US president to support gay marriage and has received a large amount of praise from America's gay community. While Obama has historically been reticent on his opinion on gay marriage, some thought that the potential political fallout might have caused him to stay his hand. However with his work on repealing the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy in 2011 he has been seen by many as friendly to the notion of gay marriage, if not an open supporter. However Obama has always expressed that his Christian belief has made him difficult to instantly accept the concept of gay marriage, although he revealed last week that his wife had a hand in his final acceptance. The President has clarified that this is his personal view, not a federal position and he will not interfere with how the states choose to form their legislation.

Unlike the assumed impulsive leap, this viewpoint seems to have developed slowly,

with his first step being removing the HIV travel ban, a move that had been initiated by the outgoing George W. Bush. Then as well as repealing the DADT Act, he and several senior officials declared that the Defense of Marriage Act (which defines marriage as the union between one man and one woman) was unconstitutional and pressured the Justice Department to stop defending said law.

However, some people believe that Obama's decision to publicly show his support for same-sex marriage was purely a calculated political move. Since his Vice President Joe Biden has announced his own support for same-sex marriages earlier in the week, so a few people have suggested that Obama was forced to come up with a public response, lest he lose favour in the upcoming elections. Others have remarked that the Obama 2012 Presidential campaign is running with less energy than the 2008 campaign due what may seem as a disappointing track record as President compared to the hopes stirred by his previous image as a fresh-faced senator and bringer of change. It is implied that by supporting gay marriage the Obama campaign might attract more of the youth vote which gave it the momentum that carried it to the White House, especially since it is a subject, which is supported much more by the younger generations than the more politically static older generations.

The Obama campaign denies all accusations of political manoeuvring, insisting that

the President had in fact made his decision some time ago and had planned to express his views to the public closer to the election, however they admitted that they felt the episode with Joe Biden and the resulting media pressure had forced their hand.

While Obama's thoughts on same-sex marriage are personal, as the President of the United States his opinions do carry serious weight both domestically and internationally. In the United States gay marriage laws are decided on a state-by-state basis, with 6 states along with the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.) currently have laws which allow same-sex marriage while other state laws range from accepting civil unions to a complete. Most recently the state of North Carolina approved an amendment to their constitution (by a majority of 22% of votes) that banned same-sex marriages and other unions, adding to their statutory ban.

As one politician steps forward, it seems another steps back. Disappointment struck the UK's gay community when in the Queen's Speech in the House of Lords there was no mention of the expected bill on same-sex marriage. It seems while David Cameron is in favour of legalising gay-marriage, after a beating in local elections a fortnight ago and firm dissent from the Tory grassroots, his government has decided to put the issue on the backburner along with the House of Lords reform, preferring to focus on less controversial topics.

Same-sex marriage in the US of A

Legal – New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire, District of Columbia, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Suquamish tribe

Civil Partnerships and similar unions – California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Illinois, Washington and New Jersey

Banned/ Not Legal – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

European Troubles

Not so cozy anymore?

Rory Fenton



Last week **French** citizens in South Kensington, France and the rest of the world voted eagerly to bring the reign of Nicolas Sarkozy to an end, replacing him with new French President **François Hollande** in what to some may seem as a vote of no confidence for Europe's austerity plans. Hollande, leader of the Socialist Party has immediately begun to make waves in what is an already turbulent time in European politics. As well as seeking to renege on Sarkozy's agreement with the rest of Europe tying France into a path of austerity, he also has not let go of plans to tax high earners with a €1m pay packet by 75%. As well as piddling over Chancellor Merkel and former President Sarkozy's method for recovering Europe's debt and saving the Euro he has also criticized the UK for placing too much hope on our financial services industry, signalling support for an EU-wide tax on financial transactions and a push for tax harmonisation.

Greek Tragedy

After an attempt by the temporary technocratic Greek government to reduce government spending and follow the terms of their bailout loans, the Greek people showed their displeasure by an uneven spread of votes in the recent elections. With no party receiving a majority and talks between parties



looking to form a coalition government falling flat, a new election is set to be called sometime in the near future. Keep an eye out for the New Democracy party (Greece's major conservative party) who won the most votes in the last election, as well as Syriza (the Radical Coalition of the Left) who came second in the elections, but are adamant to reject the bailout.

Joseph Letts

Got something to say? Send your articles to:

politics.felix@ic.ac.uk

Jason's Donation Guide

- 1) Stop Facebook stalking for 3 minutes.
- 2) Open a new tab in Chrome (because all other browsers are inferior).
- 3) Go to <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ JasonParmar>
- 4) Hit **Donate Now** and donate as much as you want to.
- 5) Depending on the amount of your charitable donation, either write a message with your name to show off how charitable you are OR click anonymous and/or hide your sponsorship amount.
- 6) Feel good and smug for about 30 minutes* to enjoy my gratitude (*time of feeling good and smug is variable).
- 7) Add/Tell other people to do the same (not the Facebook stalking, they do that anyway) – yes, I unashamedly stole that from Tim, the Felix Editor Elect – and what?

Jason is skydiving for RAG



Got Facebook? Join the event at <http://on.fb.me/J2UHWQ>

Individuals and groups needed for Centrefolds!

centre folds@imperial.ac.uk

ARTS

Arts Editors: **Will Prince**
Eva Rosenthal

arts.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Competition Winners

Having waded through the tens of entries and after several heated debates late into the night over who should win, the Editor selected the winner of our π -curious competition. So we'd like to congratulate Georgie Graham on her winning entry, for which she receives tickets for herself and a friend to see π -curious herself at **The Bloomsbury Theatre** on 21 May.

Special commendation must also go to Jane Langdon-Davies, Achuthan Balasingam and William Smith, samples of whose work below, along with Georgie's winning haiku.

The winner is...

Sex life is constant.
Study at Imperial:
Differentiate.

...and some of the best:

Open interval
Impulse expensive ice-cream
Without its endpoints

A Mobius strip
Is not orientable.
Idea for a boob tube.

Real analysis
Is a really hard subject.
I'm doomed for exams.

Tax on my pasty.
David Cameron is a git.
Pie remains constant.

A Pretty Titty
Like Poisson Distribution
Imagination

Homeomorphism.
Mum said I should've done French.
Wish I had listened.

Big up Team GB.
But wait! in cinemas now,
my film, *Men in Black*.

Ready for exams,
I have bossed the problem sheets:
Go hard or go home.

Prophet and Loss

Taiba Suddek talks to Hassan Abdulrazzak, one of IC's own, about his new play exploring the Arab Spring

Throughout history a number of great artists have also been scientists. "Anton Tchekhov himself was a practicing physician" Hassan Abdulrazzak, researcher at **Imperial College** and playwright tells me in the Junior Common Room at Imperial where we met for the interview. He continues to say that scientists make good playwrights due to the huge analytical skills needed to write a good script. This may go against the stereotype that scientists are rigorous, working only from hard facts while artists are eccentric, run by their emotions and impulses, however as many before him Hassan has disproven this stereotype by remaining a successful scientist whilst producing award winning work. His first play "Bagdad Wedding" was wildly praised, premiering at London's Soho theatre, and also reproduced by BBC Radio 3, as well as in theatres in Sydney and New York. Bagdad Wedding focuses on the lives of three professional Iraqis. The play moves between London and Bagdad where the wedding of the main character, Salim, a doctor and writer of adult fiction is taking place. On the way to the wedding Salim's cousins fire gunshots up into the sky (a traditional occurrence at Iraqi weddings), attracting the attention of American soldiers. Believed to be a terrorist, Salim is captured and tortured. The play starts with Salim's death; his friend, Marwan, looks back at their relationship and how they met at **Imperial College** as students. Hassan tells me that one of the scenes in the play takes place at the base of Queen's Tower where Marwan and his love interest Luma, an outgoing, energetic Iraqi medical student, are talking about the tower and admiring it. Luma returns to Iraq after her father's death to practice medicine in an under-equipped hospital. One of the themes in the play is her adjusting to her new job which requires her doing things such as putting on a hijab in order to fit in.

"Hassan's characters drink work, fall in love and have insecurities."

The main concern of the play, and possibly of Hassan's upcoming work in the depiction of his characters, which shows ordinary Iraqi people educated, interested in art and leading seemingly normal lives, contradicts common beliefs and images from the media that only show the disaster, tragedy and religious fanaticism. Hassan's characters drink, work, fall in love and have insecurities. They are seemingly alive and human in every possible manner. The ability to capture the multiple layers of humanity combined with telling history by depicting everyday life may be



Dr. Hassan Abdulrazzak

one of the main reasons for his success as a playwright.

Growing up in a family of academics and intellectuals Hassan thought his uncle, a novelist, to have the most interesting job of all. As a child he had seen the uncle work on old typewriters, manuscripts being almost holy mystified objects, out of reach and touch for his young hands. As a boy he had written stories in Arabic, his mother tongue, and had considered pursuing writing as a career. However, upon leaving Iraq and arriving to the UK at the age of thirteen he was led into the path of science because his English was not developed enough and he was unable to take courses such as English literature at GCSE. Throughout the years, and as his English improved, he took up writing again. At first, it was short stories he would show to no one, except maybe a trusted friend. In the meantime he received a PhD from UCL and proceeded to work at Imperial as a postdoc in stem cell research. He went to Harvard for a short while on a one-year contract, but his stay there was cut short after 9/11 because he no longer felt safe staying in the country.

When asked about where he gets his inspiration from, he mentioned names such as Arthur Miller, Kafka and British playwright Anthony Neilson, who according to Hassan writes "dark twisted funny plays, that are almost like fairy tales for adults". Hassan, being a humble person, proceeded to tell me about how he had chosen to write a letter to Harold Pinter in the '90s after reading his book opposing the first Iraq invasion in '91; "I have to write him a letter I thought, it doesn't matter if he doesn't answer, so I wrote a letter to the publisher and would you

believe it I received a handwritten letter with his home address printed on it!" Hassan tells me with excitement. Having also included a sample of his writing in it, Hassan mentions that Pinter's letter had been encouraging. He also declares that he would like to write in a more abstract manner, although his two upcoming plays are both realistic and political.

The first one he mentions is *A Fire Blazing Brightly*, a bigger, more "epic" play, once more set between London and Iraq, that he hopes will be bought by one of London's larger theatre companies. The second play, titled *The Prophet*, and premiering on the 14th of June at London's **Gate Theatre** came about differently: artistic director, Christopher Haydon commissioned Hassan to write a play about the "Arab Spring" with Egypt as its focus. The international reputation of **The Gate** is one of the main reasons for Haydon's choice of Hassan, as instead of bringing in and translating European plays, he had found an international writer in the UK: "I was born in Prague, I grew up a little bit in Bagdad, I grew up a little bit in Egypt, Nigeria... and then I came here. Because of my background, I 'qualify' for a theatre like **The Gate**", Hassan explains.

"He continues to say that scientists make good playwrights"

Hassan continues by describing the plot of *The Prophet* and how he and Hayden had bounced ideas off one another until coming up with the concept of using the metaphor of a couple – Leila and Hisham – trapped in their marriage, to describe the situation in Egypt, a country trapped by Mubarak's rule and unable to move forward. The play follows a day in the life of this couple: that day is the 28th of January 2011, the start of the Egyptian revolution. According to Hassan; "Most people say the revolution started on January 25th, but the 25th was a small demonstration; on Friday 28th over one million people came out on the street, and that's really when the revolution properly began."

Who could have guessed that in the labs of Imperial such a theatre talent was hidden? Hassan is not only ambitious and hard-working, he is also down to earth. As a treat for the theatre enthusiasts at Imperial Hassan has arranged discounted tickets; all you need to do is call up **The Gate** and say the word 'Iraq' to get a discounted ticket of £10 until the 28 June!

The Prophet runs at the **Gate Theatre**, Notting Hill, from 14 June to 21 July. See www.gatetheatre.co.uk for more details.

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with Belle and Sebastian (DJ set) / Zero 7 (DJ set) / Howie B
'Myths, Monsters and Legends' by Rankin and Damien Hirst / Doug
Fishbone's Adventureland Golf with Jake Chapman and David Shrigley**

MUSIC

Valley stage Jessie Ware, Ghostpoet, Norman Jay, Fink, Speech DeBelle, Crazy P, tUnE-YaRdS, The Dø, Jono McCleery, Fionn Regan, Kinny, Reeps One, We Were Evergreen, The Staves, Phenomenal Handclap Band, Mother Feather, Chris Coco, The Roundhouse Choir, Stumblin' Slims and The Black Kat Boppers, Late Night Tales with Belle and Sebastian (dj set), Zero 7 (dj set)

Super Nova Cocktail Bar Krystal Klear, Psychemagik, Duffstep, The Good Times Bus, Soul Jazz Sound System, DJ Food, Hexstatic, Cheeba, JFB, KeepUp, DJ Shep Dog, Toby Fluffy Logic, Tim Love Lee, Pathaan, Leggo Beast,

Nova Arms Pub Aidan Larkin's Big Ten Inch and late night chilled sets from Mixmaster Morris and Pete Lawrence

Sofar Sessions Anna Phoebe, Indigo Earth, The Midnight Barbers, Joker And The Thief, Bird Radio plus surprise guests live and unplugged

Nest Collective Campfire Sessions Carrie Tree, Vic and Tina Smith, Tim Cumming, Ballina Whalers, Sam Brookes, Magic Lantern, James Morgan, City Shanty Band, Mick Sands

ART

'Myths, Monsters and Legends' by Rankin and Damien Hirst (featuring Dani Smith), The Hunger, Doug Fishbone and Friends' Adventureland Golf with Jake Chapman, Brian Griffiths, Gary Webb, Zatorski & Zatorski, Pete Fowler and David Shrigley, Jem Finer's 'Still', David and Peter Adjaye, Andrew Logan, Dynamic Junk, 12 Months of Neon Love by Lucas & Wheeler... plus late night illuminated art in the woods

THEATRE & COMEDY SIDESHOWS

The Pick of the Pleasance: Late Night Gimp Fight, Abandoman, Doc Browns, Pappy's Max & Ivan, The Beta Males, Ginger & Black, Delete The Banjax, Sheeps, Battersea Arts Centre: Nurse Knows Best, Home Correspondence, And The Birds Falls From The Sky, Gooseparty, Pop Up Casino, Green and Pleasant Land, Red Sarah, John Hegley, Teatro-Saurus, Kubla Khan Coffee House, stalking poets, prowling postmen and more surprises in the woods!

WORDS

Charley Boorman, Rankin, Paul Trynka (David Bowie biographer), Clive Arrowsmith, Tony Grisoni, Ben Rivers, Andrew Kötting, Gustav Temple (founder editor of The Chap zine), Neil Palmer ('Rockhunter'), Peter Hancock (aka comedian Jinx Jones), Katy Darby ('The Whores' Asylum'), Neil Ansell ('Deep Country'), Michael Smith ('The Giro Playboy'), Joe Dunthorne (Submarine) and Rachel Lichtenstein

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LateNightTales

MUSIC

Music Editors: **Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto** **Alex Ramadan**
Ross Gray **Mark England** **Simon Hunter**

music.felix@gmail.com

5/4 Respect: A Tribute to Math Rock

Pt. III - Don Caballero



Don Caballero have adopted a wide range of sounds (and line-ups) over the years, but arguably it was their early albums that were the most influential. They are one of many math bands, and most certainly the best, to have come from Pittsburgh.

The band first formed in 1991 with Damon Che on drums, Mike Banfield on guitar and Pat Morris on bass. Ian Williams joined the band a year later. A highly revered drummer, affectionately known as 'the octopus', Che was a large reason for the band's success. It was his use of unusual time signatures, switching between them at a split second's notice that allowed them to adopt the math rock sound and produce some of its best work. It is only fitting perhaps that Che is the only constant member. They released their debut album, *For Respect*, the next year. The band, who had initially planned to hire a singer, remained instrumental due to their success without one. The album was characterised by a beefy crunch of guitars and big riffs with occasional more relaxing moments. For any other band, this would be their opus, but with subsequent releases, *Don Caballero 2* and *What Burns Never Returns*, they expanded their sound, adding more melodic touches, but maintaining the experimental time signatures and even making them more technically challenging.

Despite their immense talent as a creative unit, their work was made with a seemingly revolving door of bassists and eventually, in 1998, Mike Banfield left the band. Instead of replacing him, Don Cab took the bold move of remaining as a trio and using Akai headrush loop stations to compensate for Banfield's absence. Thus, *American Don* was made, an album that continues their previous direction, with some very catchy riffs and meandering soundscapes. This album reminds me a lot of the work Williams would go on to do with **Battles**. However, as with every other Don Cab line up, it came to an end, when Williams and Che fell out.

The band was finished until 2003, when Che assembled an all new line up. Normally a recipe for disaster, this actually led to an album of just as much quality as their previous efforts, *World Class Listening Problem*. Che's impressive fills remained, along with a very talented band playing around them, formed from fellow Pittsburghers, **Creta Bourzias**. Finally, they released another album in 2008, *Punkgasm*, everybody's least favourite Don Cab album, featuring unpopular attempts at vocals. However, mini epic, 'Loudest Shop Vac in the World' is worth admission alone.

In short, if you like your music intelligent, catchy and technically proficient or are just curious to hear the band that spawned Ian Williams, you can get a serious kick out of Don Caballero.

Riaz Agahi

R.I.P. Adam Yauch

Ross Gray remembers the legendary MCA of Beastie Boy fame

First off, I apologise for the lateness of this article. I felt that the eulogy of such an important figure wasn't a writing to be rushed. Adam Yauch, better known as MCA, passed away on the 4th May, aged 47. His death immediately sent ripples through the world; statuses and tweets lamenting the loss of such a talent, along with simple R.I.P.s, abounded as soon as the news hit. If you want to read a eulogy that mine could never live up to, check <http://beastieboys.com/>. A New York native, MCA's music career really started when he founded a hardcore punk group known as **Beastie Boys**.

It's not hard to see the influence that their years as a hardcore group had on the Beastie Boys sound. Their debut album, *Licensed To Ill* (1986), was perhaps the first example of "rap-rock" in history. Breaking through as the first white rap group of any note, *Licensed To Ill* went platinum – the first ever rap album to do so – and then some, although it was attacked by some critics and die-hard hip-hop fans as being culture pirating; the Beastie Boys viewed as Frat-boy and macho. This album, and many (if not all) of their later releases would become staples in every suburban white kid's musical life story.

Constantly penetrating into my and, I assume, your lives, Beastie Boys produced some of the

most ubiquitous riffs, samples and rhymes in history, including the hilarious 'Fight For Your Right': a parody on the moronic hard rock being churned out at the time, meatheads still turned up their gigs and went mental, not realising they were being lampooned. Perhaps even more famous, what party is complete without surfaces and bottles being smashed in a ruckus incited by 'No Sleep Till Brooklyn'? Or, in the case of my social circle, five of us drunkenly shouting the lyrics and kicking things while everyone else at the wine tasting looked on in disgust. Perhaps it's solely due to the release date but I found *To The 5 Boroughs* (2004) to be particularly prominent throughout my early teenage years, especially the nerdy rhymes laid down within 'Ch-Check it Out'. The explosive opening rhymes of 'Intergalactic' (Hello Nasty, 1998) are also permanently burned into my memory from Beastie Boys' brief appearance (actually not featuring Yauch, sadly) on Futurama.

Many of their most successful singles were accompanied by phenomenal videos. Above mentioned 'Intergalactic' features a giant robot destroying a city by popping while the boys rap, and was directed, along with other greats such as 'Body Movin'', 'So Watcha Want', and 'Ch-Check it Out' by MCA under his pseudonym **Nathaniel Hörnblowér**. MCA was heavily involved in film, running a New York



Adam Yauch (8.5.1964 – 5.4.2012)

City independent distribution company, Oscilloscope Laboratories. As if this still wasn't enough contribution to the world, he was also an active Buddhist, and campaigned heavily to free Tibet. Instead of focusing on the negatives of losing a great artist, rapper, and all-round person, I propose that we all take an hour out of revision season to stick on our favourite (if you don't have one, now seems like an ideal time to get one) Beastie Boys album and pay homage to the one and only MCA.

Howler rip up The Garage

Simon Clark

With the NME/Q provided hype train fully derailed circa February, exactly how much 'howl' do the Minneapolitans still have? To my surprise on a tepid Tuesday night in Highbury, 'the pseudo-strokes' still have some fire left in their collective belly.

Support was offered by four piece Canadian indie rock outfit **Hooded Fang** who were by all accounts, rather good. Dynamic from the start and easily catching the slowly building crowd's attention (and keeping it) as they blitzed through some powerful up tempo poppy-rock numbers. An act to look out for down the bill in the festival circuit over the summer.

As **Howler** come on to the stage (uncharacteristically on time) it is not hard to see why so many comparisons have been drawn with the NYC post-punk indie godfathers I alluded to at the beginning of the article. From the wayfarers lazily drooped over lead singer Jordan Gatesmith's doe eyes to the seemingly multiplying bottles of San Miguel lazily drooped over the stage, the aesthetic parallels with Julian and co. are patent. At the risk of annoying Howler, you and myself anymore, I will no longer refer to The Strokes in the article.

Despite the ominous signs of inebriation, they open the set with a spotless rendition of 'Wailing (Making Out)' which immediately works the crowd into fervour. Beads



Check out Howler at some festivals this year including Benicassim and Latitude

of sweat are easily visible amongst the audience by the time the count in for the second track 'America' has begun. The tracks from their debut, *America Give Up*, which has been on the shelves for five months now, lack the freshness that endeared them to critics and record label executives alike last summer but due to the catchy nature of the drawn out guitar melody's and relentless enthusiasm shown by the band itself (despite the lead guitarist admittedly recovering from a nasty bout of shingles) the entire room is very much engaged. Particular highlights of the set are the crescendo building 'Beach Sluts', alt-rock ballad 'Too Much Blood' and Mustang-riding 'Pythagorean Fearem'. Jordan keeps a good rapport with the crowd, even at liberty to discuss where he acquired his burgundy chinos to the more inquisitive members of the audi-

ence.

The set flies by and I found myself checking the watch in disbelief as they announced set closer and single 'Back Of Your Neck', but thanks to some timely stage invading and a little help from Hooded Fang guitarist, they manage to muster up an eventful encore with a new unnamed track. By the time they have exhausted every last bit of material and on-stage booze they have, the band look almost as disappointed as the crowd as they vacate the stage.

Although the potential of Howler is hardly bursting at the seams anymore they still have a lot to offer in terms of a good old fashioned rock n' roll live experience. With eyes firmly fixed ahead and talk of a new album already rippling amongst the remaining faithful, the boys from Minnesota aren't done yet.

Breaking the frame

Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto dissects Surgeon's latest album ahead of his appearance at Bloc

Surgeon has been a staple of the warehouse scene since his early involvement in the depths of techno at the turn of the 90s. His sound, and that of those he has influenced, is what you might imagine tearing through the night deep in between the concrete walls of some disused building. While the musical influences cited include industrial and krautrock pioneers such as **Faust** and **Whitehouse**, inspiration from the visual and literary works of David Lynch and William S. Burroughs are immediately apparent in the obsessive monotony and enveloping psychoacoustics of his records.

This is endurance techno. The very essence that defined the dance music underground. A blurry soundtrack for questionable encounters on dark, smokey dance floors. No sun glasses, no glow sticks, just the throbbing undertones of a stubborn kick drum and gargantuan bass. This is transcendental dance music for introverts. A dose for zealous party-goers who would rather stare at the bright light and let the sound consume them.

Yet with his Nth release and already 6th full-length album, Surgeon has done exactly what he says on the tin, *Breaking the Frame*. More than just a techno record, this is a document of transcendence. The attested mold of heavy 4/4 is buried beneath an archaic craft of electro-acoustic magnificence. The kick drums sound like smashing concrete blocks with your head. The harmonics, when they appear, are a tear through the heavens, somewhere between a burning sitar and a crying machine. It is the sound of industrial music post-Blade Runner. If Gaspar Noé's psychotropic epic *Enter the Void* were set in Mordor, you might have found the Uruk-Hai pulling shapes to this.

The ominous atmosphere that permeates the hour is apparent from the start. After the generous introductory swathes of 'Dark Matter', track two sets off with a bassline that bubbles like an octopus throwing a tantrum. This weight which has become such a signature of Surgeon's productions is also painfully apparent in the sparse tribal drum which runs throughout 'The Power of Doubt' and in the cascading frenzy of 'Radiance'. However, his inner ear for complex yet subtle rhythms has really expanded on this record, as he delves in the space between the numerous polyrhythms which rear themselves the length of



Surgeon's year 6 art project, aged 11

a single track. Their juxtaposition with the pummeling 4/4 gives these instances room to breathe and melt into one another. This is best characterised by the first track on side C, 'Presence', which opens with a stuporous breath of a kick, before the tantric cycles of an Oriental string instrument wraps around the listener like an enchanted snake disappearing in fog.

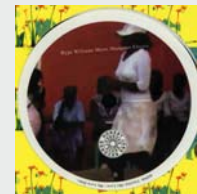
Whether he has sampled an Indian hurdy-gurdy or a Balinese gamelan or simply mirrored them in his own studio remains a mystery. The sheer presence of these sounds is overwhelming. They seem to envelop you and take hold, removing you from your physical environment and elevating you to some other space. After the mesmerising cycles

of 'Presence' disappear in a sudden drop, the 6 minute interlude 'We Are Already Here' disperses the air in an unfamiliar cacophony of infinite bells and stained glass.

The closing track 'Not-Two' is something of an opus. As if walking back into the piercing light after an out of body trip, field recordings of bumper cars and arcade games in a carnival give you a somewhat drunken feeling before they suddenly disappear again under a blanket of drawn-out choirs and eternal ringing. Scenes from the movie *Enter the Void* come back to mind. An inebriated introduction to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, in a room decorated by abstracted streaks of paint, just before another hit and a trip down the rabbit-hole.

Reviewed in 60 seconds

Demdike Stare/Hype Williams
Meet Shangaan Electro 2012



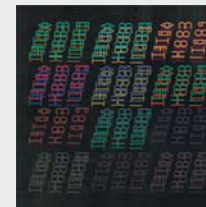
Honest Jon's Records have recently released this EP and all the others from the Meet Shangaan Electro series on CD. Also featuring contributions from the likes of Actress and Oni Ayhun, these tracks lend a new light to the spirit of Shangaan, a ridiculously upbeat style of tribal dance music from Southern Africa.

Demdike Stare deliver perhaps their most sober bass line to date, while the drums haunt like a paranoia, reminding of midnight rituals involving the skulls of ancestors and very heavy liquids. The second take, or 'Version' in dub talk, loses the drums in favour of more vexing atmosphere, set by obsessive chants and distant birds.

Hype Williams's offering opens with a hypnotic reggae jerk under dropping drums. Not long after the first cries of Muscovite Inga Copeland, the sleepy bassline falls and lulls the remainder of the track, amidst confessions of "Never felt a day when I don't look back..."

Íñigo Martínez de Rituerto

Portico Quartet
Portico Quartet 2012



In this, their third album, the Hackney based boys move in a slightly different direction. Many of Portico Quartet's trademark sounds are used more sparingly; searing soprano saxophone lines riding over the blissful hang melodies are less prevalent than in *Knee Deep in the North Sea* or *Isla*, replaced instead by various synthesised efforts.

I think it was right for the band to move in this direction as there was little room to manoeuvre with the sound that they had forged on their first two albums. However the final product isn't quite accomplished to the level with which artists like Bonobo fuse the organic with the electronic.

Don't get me wrong, this is a good album, but I'm left wondering how good this could have been had they really nailed the fusion of their amazing musicianship with the extra dimension electronic noises can bring.

Simon Hunter

Be sure not to miss...

Mark England

Two gigs battle for your attention on **Tuesday 22nd May**

White Denim

HMV Forum

White Denim are one of the best live bands around at the minute; the combination of their raucous garage rock and their Texan charm will definitely win you over. Their music flows from dirty, scuzzy rock to (dare say it) free jazz. Recent album *D* has been a hit with the critics and they will want to give it the send off it deserves.

Micachu

The Shacklewell Arms

Watch **Micachu's** debut DJ set (her of **Micachu and the Shapes** fame) as she supports Emika at this trendy East London venue. She is a classically trained musician but is known best for her wonky electronic pop performed with crazy instruments made from vacuums and broken bottles.

Bloc Competition

Well done to the winner of the Bloc Weekender tickets: **Jesse Felix**

We will email you soon to confirm details. Commiserations to all those of you who entered. If it makes you feel any better, everyone got the correct answer.

Depp & Burton: a match made in heaven

Dark Shadows, currently out in cinemas, marks the eighth collaborative effort between one of Hollywood's most versatile, talented leading men – Johnny Depp – with his boss/friend/director – Tim Burton. And in honouring their batch of wonderfully weird, eerily eccentric movies, **Felix Film** takes a look at their lengthy filmography



1. Edward Scissorhands (1990)

It started back here with Depp and Burton, with Depp being cast in his debut Burton role after Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, Robert Downey Jr., and William Hurt were all considered for the role. The transformation Depp undergoes may frighten some, but there is a much richer, incredibly touching love story that runs under the tale of an artificial creation with scissors for its hands. Burton was initially unfamiliar with Depp's previous roles but thank heavens the quiet yet sympathy-arousing Depp was chosen for the role. Because without this feature, there might not have been the 7 more films from this unique pairing.



2. Ed Wood (1994)

Often dubbed "the worst director of all time," Ed Wood (Depp) was known for his low-budget genre films and failed to win over the respect of the industry, but following the release of a biography that shed new light on his life, career, and love for cinema, he was given new-found appreciation. Filmed in black-and-white, dealing with a long-forgotten story must have contributed to why this barely made its mark at the box-office despite its strong critical acclaim. Still, Martin Landau deservedly won his Best Supporting Actor Oscar in his role as Bela Lugosi, a frequent collaborator of Wood later in his acting career.

3. Sleepy Hollow (1999)

Severed heads, witchcraft, humour, this combination can only be the work of Burton and Depp. After a vengeful headless warrior arises to brutally decapitate individuals in a small village, an off-beat forensic investigator (Depp) is sent to the town of Sleepy Hollow to track down this haunting creature. What he digs up is a community full of disputes, family troubles, backstabbing and even more decapitation than he'd anticipated. Burton's gothic crime thriller has its moments of gore, shock value and paying homage to the traditional films of the Hammer Films Productions, his visuals also received a lot of praise.

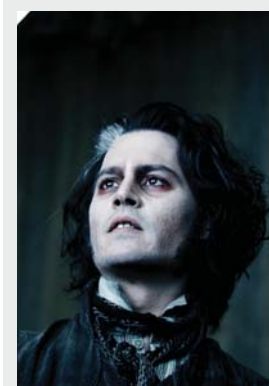
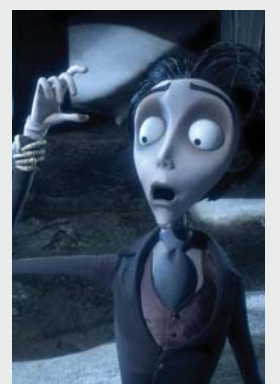


4. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005)

Leave it to Burton to turn a beloved childhood bedtime story into a visually dazzling, somewhat creepy adaptation. Aside from the fact that Depp looks like a disturbing man-child luring children into his enormous factory, Burton's family-friendly outing is a vibrant, colourful and energetic piece of work that works despite the lead actor's distracting performance. One of the main strengths here is the young Freddie Highmore, who was picked after Depp's recommendation (the two had previously worked together in *Finding Neverland*), in the role of Charlie, providing the effective, sweet, central emotional core.

5. Corpse Bride (2005)

Burton had always been interested in the animation genre, given his involvement in various projects such as *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *Mars Attacks!* but his first full-length, stop-motion film came with this one. After a wedding proposal practice in the woods goes wrong, an unlucky groom-to-be (Depp) unwittingly gets himself engaged to a corpse bride (Helena Bonham Carter). He's not so sure about this sudden development, but she appears to be hopelessly devoted to him. There are bizarre yet charming moments as the unlikely couple start sharing a genuine connection.



6. Sweeney Todd (2007)

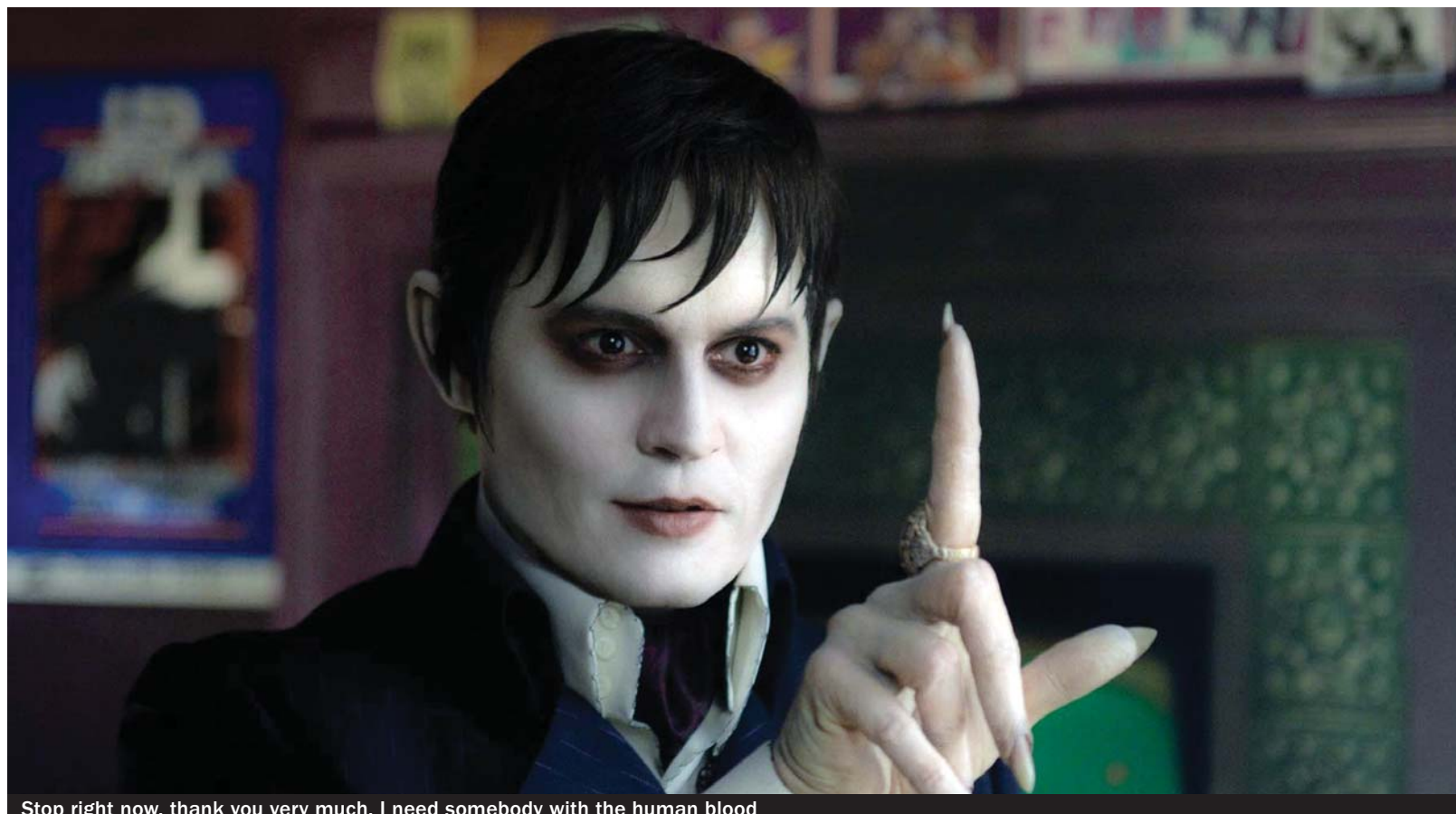
The current outstanding production playing at West End might somewhat diminish the efforts from Burton's first and only musical but his stylishly bloody and darkly witty adaptation that frankly lacks a single memorable tune is still an impressive one, making singers out of actors. Depp, filled with anger and vengeance, slashes the throats of anyone who gets in his way, whereas Helena Bonham Carter completes the perfect crime by making pies out of the bodies. Sounds horrific, and it is, which is exactly what you would expect from Burton.

7. Alice in Wonderland (2010)

Arguably the weakest offering from the Depp/Burton team, while you cannot deny the oddly brilliant portrayal of The Mad Hatter from the consistently reliable Depp (but the less that is said of that silly little dance at the end, the better), Burton's portrayal of Wonderland, and Alice's (a blank Mia Wasikowska) pointless adventures feel strangely detached, owing to the plodding pace and repetitive plot strands. The wonky 3D conversion, combined with the uninspired script and a disappointing final showdown, make for an uninvolved fantasy outing.



Soapy, sappy, sleepy shadow



Stop right now, thank you very much, I need somebody with the human blood

Dark Shadows

Directors Tim Burton
Screenwriters Seth Grahame-Smith, John August, Dan Curtis
Cast Johnny Depp, Eva Green, Michelle Pfeiffer, Helena Bonham Carter, Jackie Earle Haley, Jonny Lee Miller, Chloë Grace Moretz, Gulliver McGrath

John Park

For a vampire who was cursed and buried alive in the late 1760s, the year 1972 is understandably a strange and mysterious world. This is the challenge that Barnabas Collins (Depp) is faced with. Born to rich parents who own a large fishing business as well as their own Collinswood Manor, Collins in his youth makes the mistake of having a short fling with the dangerous and jealous witch Angelique (Green). Failing to return her love, he irks the talented sorceress and finds out there is nothing scarier than a woman scorned. First manipulating his true love to fall off a cliff, she transforms him into a vampire, forcing him to suffer the loss of his loved one forever. Turning the torch and pitchfork-wielding villagers against him, she succeeds in burying him alive.

His freedom comes nearly 200 years later when a group of construction workers accidentally break him out of his coffin, and incidentally all get sucked dry by the thirsty vampire. After a few comical confrontations he shares with modern developments he

is not at all familiar with, such as the big letter M signalling a McDonald's restaurant, and his careful mistrust of the newly laid-down concrete road, he makes his way back to Collinswood, only to discover his beloved mansion almost in ruins. The residents include his four descendants, Elizabeth (Pfeiffer), her brother Roger (Miller), Elizabeth's daughter Caroline (Moretz) and Roger's son David (McGrath), their butler Willie (Haley), family psychiatrist Dr. Julia Hoffman (Carter), a very old nanny (Ray Shirley) whose purpose throughout the film isn't entirely clear, and finally the new family governess Victoria (Bella Heathcote).

Despite her reserved feelings for inviting a vampire into her home, the family matriarch Elizabeth welcomes the return of her ancestor, and fills him in on what he's missed over the past two centuries. Basically, the fishing business Barnabas' parents worked so hard to build is no more, ever since Angelique the cursing witch took over almost everything, exacting vengeance on a family she despises. Always putting his bloodline first, Barnabas swears to restore their business to its former glory, and so begins the Collins family's extreme makeover backed by the 70s megahit, *The Carpenters'* 'Top of the World.'

So far, *Dark Shadows* looks and sounds like an offbeat comedy in which the goofy and stiff Depp does and says the oddest things. There are priceless moments that Depp takes full

advantage of, as Barnabas learns that it is possible for women to become doctors, and 15-year-olds do not generally get married and become pregnant despite the fullness of their childbearing womb. He also insists The Carpenters are not singers but individuals dealing with woods. In the gothic setting of its run-down mansion, impossibly white-powdered stars, and constant shots of the death-inviting cliff and the waves crashing into sharp rocks to remind us of a foreboding future, Burton finds time for humour, mostly centred around the shock Barnabas encounters as he starts experiencing a completely different world.

But there is a drastic shift in tone as Angelique enters the picture. The comedy is tragically cut short, and we enter an even weirder femme-fatale, *Fatal Attraction*-esque love-hate interaction between the vampire and the witch. The icy Depp and fiery Green make an interesting pair at first, but once it becomes clear that there is really nothing further to develop between the two characters, even the wild "sex" scene in which the two of them fly and crash around Angelique's office for some passionate hugging (that's all they do) to a classic **Barry White** song, feels stale.

Although Green looks the part of an unforgiving wench, her powerful witch doesn't have much to do. She acts as the tough CEO of her company, but she never makes the adequate villain, and it's a wonder why anyone needs to be afraid of her. Given the large cast full of

familiar names, hardly anyone is given proper attention to, and among the most wasted of the ensemble is Carter, who is barely seen, does hardly anything memorable, and is tossed aside, never to be seen again. Miller is also given virtually no time to shine, and he too, is gone in a rushed subplot. The two children remain insignificant throughout, whether it's the rebellious Caroline or the innocent David.

Making something out of her supporting role is the divine Pfeiffer who, as the strong head of household, adds a touch of class and glamour to the cast, and as the only character who has any substantial relationship with Collins, Pfeiffer strongly holds her own, and she also doesn't look too shabby confidently protecting her home and family from invaders with a shotgun.

Burton tries to manage a lot of genres here, but whilst doing so, he cannot quite grasp a single one correctly. Is this a comedy? A gothic horror? Supernatural fantasy? He dabbles with far more than he can handle, which can also be said for the underused cast he has assembled. *Dark Shadows* remains faithful to Burton's well-known and praised visual flair, but the content never stays strong throughout, and the overblown ending with its sudden necessity to produce some kind of a happy ending is a bit of a letdown. Still, Depp is as impressive as ever, proving there is no contemporary actor who can come close to skillfully tackling the roles he does on a regular basis.

Top 10 Box Office films in the UK this week



1) Avengers Assemble - 12A - Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Jeremy Renner, Chris Hemsworth

2) American Pie: Reunion - 15 - Jason Biggs, Seann William Scott, Alyson Hannigan

3) Dark Shadows - 12A - Johnny Depp, Eva Green, Michelle Pfeiffer

4) The Lucky One - 12A - Zac Efron, Taylor Schilling, Blythe Danner

5) Beauty and the Beast 3D - U - Paige O'Hara, Robby Benson, Angela Lansbury

6) Safe - 15 - Jason Statham, Catherine Chan, Chris Sarandon

7) Salmon Fishing in the Yemen - 12A - Ewan McGregor, Emily Blunt, Kristin Scott Thomas

8) Piranha 3DD - 18 - Danielle Panabaker, Ving Rhames, David Hasselhoff

9) How I Spent My Summer Vacation - 15 - Mel Gibson, Peter Stormare

10) The Hunger Games - 12A - Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson

Television Editors: **George Barnett**
James Simpson

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TELEVISION

This week on YouTube

Not strictly television...but worth a watch anyway

Cameron Sent 'Lots Of Love' Texts To Brooks

David Cameron reveals that he really doesn't have a clue what's going on. LOL, oh well.



It's a witch! No wait...it's Rebekah Brooks

Henri 2, Paw de Deux

Henri the existentialist cat considers life, relationships, freedom and whipped cream amongst other topics. French with English subtitles.

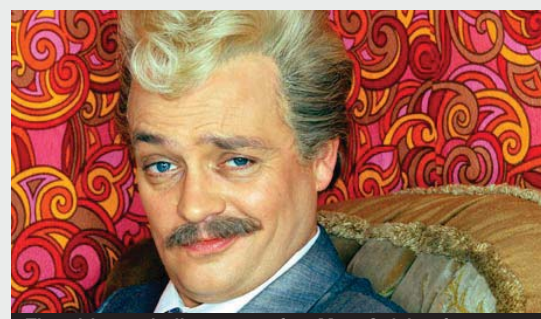


I am free to go. Yet I remain.

Henri le chat

The Fast Show - Best of Swiss Toni

Swiss Toni gives his classic advice on women. Pay attention and work your charm when you're next in Metric. Like a boss, naturally.



The ultimate ladies man, after Matt Colvin of course

Band of Brothers will blow you away

George Barnett reviews HBO's epic mini-series

Despite being released over ten years ago, *Band of Brothers* holds it own in the TV hall of fame. Beautifully filmed and exquisitely produced – as you'd well hope with an estimated budget of \$125m – it's an absolute tour de force.

Labelled as a TV mini-series, it consists of ten episodes, each about an hour and quarter in length, following the journey of Easy Company of the US Army 101st Airborne division during WWII. *Band of Brothers* was inspired by a book of the same title by Stephen Ambrose, which documents the actual journey of Easy company through the war.

The plight of Easy Company begins with basic training in Georgia where they are trained to be the best under the ferociously harsh Captain Sobel who forces them to run up the infamous 'Currahee' mountain many-a-time. We follow Easy Company to England for their final preparation before they land frantically strewn over Normandy as part of Operation Overlord. Following this we see them losing men in a heavy battle whilst liberating the French town of Carentan.

Easy Company are then dropped into the Netherlands as part of Operation Market Garden where they are tasked with liberating Eindhoven. Later the company is called to Bastogne to fight in the Battle of the Bulge and have to survive the treacheries of a harsh winter and low supply levels. Having endured the winter in Bastogne Easy Company carries out a dangerous mission in Haguenau. In the penultimate episode, aptly named 'Why We Fight', we see the troops enter Germany and discover something unimaginable; the Landsberg Concentration Camp, containing over 5,000 prisoners suffering from famine, disease and exhaustion. Finally the company captures the Eagle's Nest and discovers the house of Herman Goering. They later move to Austria where V-E day (Victory in Europe day) is announced. Some troops are sent home whilst others begin training to go to war in the Pacific.

There are many great films about WWII that are somewhat humbling including my favourites *Saving Private Ryan*, *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*. None of them immerse you in the

same way as *Band of Brothers*. They don't even come close. Having a total run-time of nearly twelve hours is probably partly to thank for this. But, perhaps of greater importance is the connection between the real veterans (who introduce each episode) and their characters. It gives the series meaning and a certain feeling of actuality. You imagine these people, nigh on seventy year ago in the very same situation - if not worse – living the horrors of war that you watch from the comfort of your living room.

Being devoid of any sort of subplot – no romances left at home, no ongoing friction between soldiers – we see a deeper side of war; how it changes people, relationships, mental states. Soldiers form bonds greater than that between brothers. They suffer from shell shock, losing limbs, losing friends and towards the end of the war; alcoholism.

"There are many great films about WWII...none of them immerse you in the same way as Band of Brothers"

We see the progression of soldiers being scared of, to accepting death and its inevitable place in war. Captain Speirs memorably tells a comrade that "the only hope you have is to accept the fact that you're already dead. The sooner you accept that, the sooner you'll be able to function as a soldier is supposed to function: without mercy, without compassion, without remorse. All war depends upon it."

Particular scenes of note include the aforementioned discovery of the Landsberg Concentration Camp, stumbled upon during a patrol of a newly captured German

town. The shock to the American's when liberating the barely living detainees combined with the backdrop of the camp, scores of bodies and the shells of people who managed to survive certainly act as a striking and stark reminder of what so many gave their lives for.

During the final five minutes of the mini-series Major Winters sheds light into the strikingly different post-war lives of the soldiers and their attempts to fit back into society, into a world so completely different. After announcing the war officially over to the company, the screen darkens and the surviving veterans are finally named. In a manner which evokes so many emotions they give their final narration and thoughts on the war, with Carwood Lipton notably recalling the famous Saint Crispin's day speech; "From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered, we lucky few, we band of brothers. For he who today sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."

I know no other television series in the same league as *Band of Brothers*. It stands head and shoulders above anything else. I implore you to buy the DVD and watch it, if not only for the quality of the series but also to keep alive the memories of those that sacrificed so much.

Oh, so where can I watch this fantastic sounding series?

Well as you asked so politely; get it from **www.play.com**, it's only £13.99 – bargain of the century!

Whilst you're at it get *The Pacific* boxset as well.



TELEVISION

Better than *Friends*?Lucia Podhorska recalls just *How I Met Your Mother*

Created by Craig Thomas and Carter Bays, this hit US sitcom has been on the air since 2005 so it might seem a bit strange to be reviewing it so far into the story. Truth be told, I'm a bit of a late-comer to *How I Met Your Mother* – I only started watching it in January, when exam revision should have come first – oops. I have managed to catch up with the rest of the world and happily sat down to watch the season seven finale yesterday – but more on that later.

To those unfamiliar with this show, it centres on the character of Ted Mosby (Josh Radnor), an architect living in New York. At the start of the show, he is living with his room-mate from college Marshall Eriksen (Jason Segel) and Marshall's girlfriend of nine years, Lily Aldrin (Alyson Hannigan). Together with Barney Stinson (Neil Patrick Harris), Ted's "best friend", they can frequently be found in the local bar MacLaren's where Barney comes up with outrageous ways to pick up women. The pilot episode also introduces a new love interest for Ted in the form of aspiring Canadian reporter Robin Scherbatsky (Cobie Smulders).

Each episode is actually a flashback, as future Ted tells his teenage son and daughter the story of how he met their mother.

On the surface this may sound like a *Friends* rip-off and in some ways perhaps it is: Ted is a hopeless romantic in search of The One and Robin is the Rachel to his Ross, only smarter. Lily and Marshall resemble the Chandler and Monica from later seasons, while Barney is similar to womanizing Joey. The only character missing is Phoebe. MacLaren's is quite clearly a replacement for Central Perk. The show even debuted very shortly after *Friends* finished its run. The success of *Friends* clearly proved that friends living together and supporting each other through the ups and downs of adulthood is a popular formula and it managed to work out quite well for *HIMYM*, which is still one of the most popular TV shows even after seven years. Personally, I think it's better than *Friends*.

As is the case with many shows, the first couple of episodes don't do the series justice. I tried watching it when it first came out, but didn't find any of the characters particularly engaging or interesting, so gave up. Recommendations from numerous friends made me change my mind and give it a second chance and I'm glad I did. I guess the writers and cast simply needed some time to find a rhythm that works for everyone and the writing has been solid ever since. The writers have given us some truly memorable moments and catch-phrases, whilst also making sure that the characters develop over the years as they pass from their late twenties to early thirties.

The thing that actually got me hooked on *HIMYM* is an element that I haven't often found in this genre, namely cliffhangers. It's true that they are nowhere near as gripping as those from, for example *Lost*, but they have kept me on the edge of my seat nonetheless throughout the 159 episodes that have aired so far. The biggest cliffhanger and mystery is, of course, the identity of the mother. It's been seven years and we still don't know who she is and based on the last episode of the season, we won't be finding out for a while. Teasing the audience like this is common, *Frasier* managed to talk about but never show the character of Maris for eleven years while we are also yet to meet Howard's mom on *Big Bang Theory*. It keeps viewers coming back, although I wonder how much longer they can keep it up.

It's impossible to review any show without commenting on the actors that bring the characters to life. Although he's not the main character, the star that really shines is Neil Patrick Harris as Barney. His escapades are out of this world but he manages to deliver every line with a straight face and provides us with most of the laugh-out-loud moments. That being said, the

rest of the cast is also great. Jason Segel is charming as an aspiring environmental lawyer that believes in the supernatural and together with Alyson Hannigan they are the most solid on-screen couple I have seen in a while. Fans of the *American Pie* movies will get to see the actress behind band geek Michelle show off her comedy skills. Cobie Smulders I wasn't too sure about for a long time, but she's grown on me and I applaud the writers for taking her character down a more serious path this season, thus allowing the audience to appreciate her acting even more. Josh Radnor as Ted is a great fit, although he's my least favourite character – but this has nothing to do with the actor portraying him.

As I mentioned at

the beginning of this article, the last episode of the season aired this week and brought with it a revelation that audiences have been waiting for since this time last year. With an ending like that, I can't wait for season eight this September. All this being said, if you haven't yet watched this series, the end of exams and the beginning of summer is a great opportunity to do so. I guarantee it will be legen – wait for it – dary!

Exams, what exams? Go on, write us a review, you know you want to. Drop us an email at tv.felix@imperial.ac.uk

GAMES

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Starcraft: the Revolution of eSports

Carol Yang discusses why *Starcraft* has become such a phenomenal success

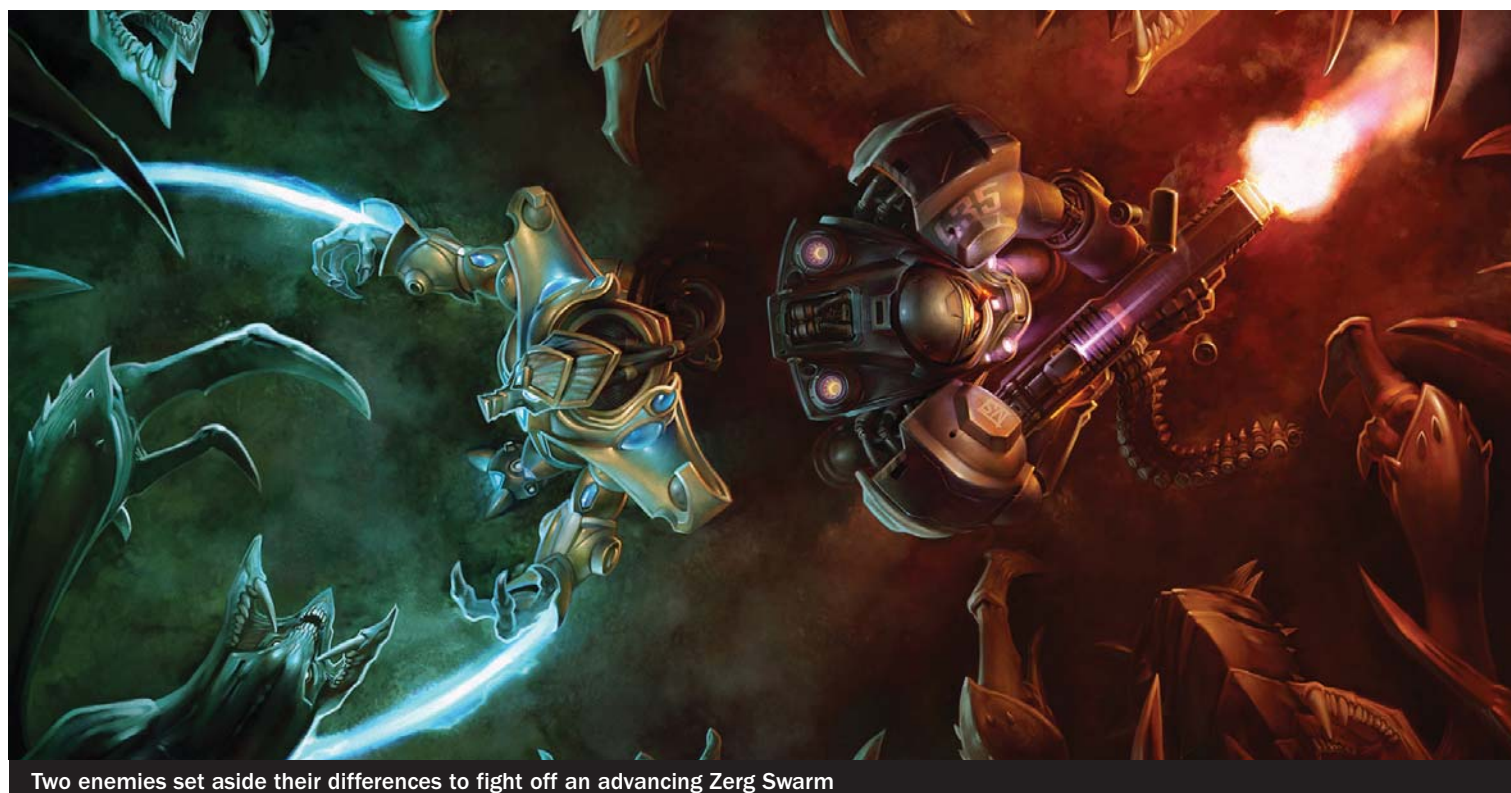
The lights of the metropolis shine brightly on the clear summer night. Down on the bay, a crowd gathers around a giant outdoor screen. Spotlights flood the area as the audience, now exceeding 50,000 people, work themselves into a fever pitch. The two teams come out on stage to deafening cheers. Teenage girls scream as one idol from each team is chosen for the first round of combat. They each enter a booth. The music swells, and the video game begins.

“It sounds like a science fiction story from the future. But this event actually happened in the past, in a place where such things have been commonplace for over ten years. This was the 2006 Proleague finals held in Seoul, South Korea. The game being played was *StarCraft*.” — *The Dawn of Starcraft, eSports comes to the world stage*, by Jeremy Reimer, arstechnica.

Starcraft was released in March 1998, closely followed by several expansions with the third and final release in November 1998. Together, they would become an all-time best-selling game for the PC, with 11 million copies sold worldwide. The game is a sci-fi real-time strategy game, with three distinct races that can be played. It is said to have revolutionized the standards for RTS games, perhaps due to the insane skills required to compete at the top level. It triggered the creation of the world’s first major eSports (electronic-sports) tournaments starting in 2002 in South Korea, and spreading throughout the world today.

Starcraft II: Wings of Liberty is the long-awaited sequel, released on July 10th 2010. It follows the same lore as its predecessor, seeing major changes in only the outdated graphics and speed. Certain units were removed, added, or altered drastically, but the mechanics of the game remain untouched.

There are several elements of the game to master; conceptually simple, but extraordinarily difficult to do all at once. Like most RTS games, players build armies and fight to kill their opponent — but the resources the players are required to gather are spread about the map, and you can’t see what your opponent is doing unless you scout them out.



Two enemies set aside their differences to fight off an advancing Zerg Swarm

Economic balance is vital. You need enough workers to maintain a high income, and the gathered resources must all be intelligently spent. Decision-making is the most crucial part of the game — choose what buildings to invest in to produce the right army composition to engage at the best time in the most advantageous way.

All the above is referred to as “macro” — anything that involves considering the overall game and maintaining a good play. Its counterpart is “micro”, which focuses on the intense second-by-second unfurling of game-changing battles. There is a lot to do in any one battle: certain units have abilities toggled by hotkey and must be cast in the right place at the right time, target-firing powerful units to minimize damage taken, and splitting groups of units to avoid splash attack damage.

So far, you might be asking the question, why is it different to any other RTS? Well, there are three main elements to this. The first is its fully integrated multiplayer ladder system. All players are given a rank in a league, and winning games in multiplayer allows you to climb the ladder and eventually be promoted. There are seven leagues from bronze to Grand Masters — GM being the top 200 in a region.

“There are over 30 tournaments a year; the largest ones offer a prize pot of up to \$120,000.”

The second is the game’s ongoing development. *Starcraft* is constantly being tested and developed, with changes made following the evolution of the metagame. Patches are brought in to maintain the “balance”, making sure no single strategy is too “overpowered”.

The third is the satisfaction received from *Starcraft 2* as a spectator sport. At eSports tournaments, hundreds of professional players pit themselves against each other in a thrilling battle of wits, pushing their skills to the limit. The matches are shown live, with audiences hundreds of thousands strong, all over the world, watching the game unfold. Accompanying this is play-by-play commentary by knowledgeable and entertaining casters, who expertly blend enthusiasm and comedy into every event. There are over 30 tournaments a year; the largest ones offer a prize pot of up to \$120,000.

In the games, there are countless preparations a player can make in order to surprise their opponent. Usually, this makes the player more vulnerable to attack. There is a high-pressure excitement

generated from knowing something the players don’t — in your head, you scream “Attack NOW, before his advantage kicks in, now is your ONLY opportunity!” Every moment is packed with dramatic tension, because any moment could decide the game.

The other factor is the strategic brilliance of the players. In the game, intelligence and preparation are by far the most important attributes of the players. High-level play is full of mind games. Professional competitors will study their rivals’ play styles months in advance in order to find and exploit the smallest of weaknesses. The “wow” factor is in the stunning decision-making and outsmarting of your opponent, with each player having a unique approach to the game.

To celebrate this wonderful world of *Starcraft*, Imperial’s own *Starcraft* Society was formed earlier this year as a sub-society of Gaming. We have held six tournament and screening events so far, each incredibly entertaining and successful. The most fantastic aspect is just having a community, being able to discuss and participate in a game you love, with others who share that feeling. Furthermore, there exists a Collegiate Star League where universities all over Europe compete on *Starcraft*. An Imperial team was formed at the start of this academic year, by Ben Thomas, a first-year Physicist. We placed third this season, out of 22 teams including Oxbridge and University of London.

So, if you feel you wanna get involved in an awesome game with an awesome society, join our Facebook group “Imperial *Starcraft* Society”, and come along to our next event, a live screening of a pro-tournament, MLG Spring Arena 2! Hosted by ICU Cinema Society, we will be in the Union Concert Hall this weekend from 5.00pm Saturday and 5.30pm Sunday. The tournament is hosted in America, so they will go on until the early hours of morning, pop by whenever to catch a glimpse of the eSports phenomenon!

Fighterforum



The audience of the *Starcraft: Brood War* Proleague finals in Seoul, South Korea, 2006

Books Editor: **Maciej Matuszewski**

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BOOKS

Werewolves, vampires and lots of guns

Ivan Ho reviews *Monster Hunter International* – the ultimate antidote to *Twilight*

It's not everyday that you get to throw your boss out of a 14th-story window, but that's exactly how this story kicks off, and from the start till finish, it's one heck of a thrilling roller coaster ride. No, it's not a story about an insane, stressed accountant finally breaking down and deciding to test out Newton's law of gravitation on his boss. In fact, given all the crazy stuff that goes down in the book, the protagonist, Owen Zastava Pitt is actually quite a sane guy.

“like watching a blockbuster movie”

You see, the boss in question had very recently morphed into a werewolf and was actively trying to rip Owen's guts out, so it wasn't exactly an over-reaction to decide that he really needed some fresh city air. I know. Werewolves sound awfully familiar. In fact, they were featured quite prominently in a series that I have never read, and probably won't be reading anytime soon – *Twilight*. Heck, there are even vampires in *Monster Hunter International*, loads of them, but that's where the similarities end.

There's nothing remotely sexy about vampires found in the world of *Monster Hunter International*. Their skin doesn't glow and shine, and they certainly don't try to seduce teenage girls. What they do try to do however is rip your heads off, all the while taking a lot of hurt in

the form of bullets, flamethrowers, and even grenades without even batting an eyelid. Which brings me to my next point. There is a lot of gun talk in the book, and I mean a lot. Larry Correia clearly knows his guns, and it shows. While it's true that I've seen people complain about how he goes overboard with his gun descriptions, I can honestly say that, even though I'm not a gun person, I thoroughly enjoyed the book. And if any of you actually like guns, then all the better!

With this book, Larry Correia has created a dark urban fantasy world that doesn't cease to amaze. Combining Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos with zombies, werewolves, vampires, a secret government bureau, a monster hunting company, a tough as nails protagonist and lots of firepower, the author paints such an action packed scenario that reading the book is literally like watching a blockbuster movie, except it's all packed into the 700 odd pages of this immensely entertaining novel.

Finally, I would like to point out that this book is not a thought provoking, deep piece of literature. And it doesn't pretend to be one. This is one of those books that you actually read just for entertainment, and that feeling of 'wow, that was awesome', followed by a strong urge to buy the sequel. So if you're even mildly interested in urban fantasy settings, monsters, guns, or maybe all of the above, this is the book for you. Heck, I'll even recommend this book to anyone who just wants a good fun read filled with jaw dropping action!



Monster Hunter International – looks like a friendly bunch

A heartwrenching and powerful read

Emma Donoghue's *Room* – an exploration of the psychology of isolation and abduction**Maciej Matuszewski**

I don't usually read a lot of contemporary literary fiction but I'm always looking to broaden my horizons and so I happily picked up Emma Donoghue's *Room* when it was selected by the Imperial Book Club as our latest read.

The novel is narrated in first person by Jack, a five-year-old born after his mother was abducted and abused by a man who he calls Old Nick. The two are kept confined in the titular room, actually a converted shed in the man's garden, with Jack's mother letting the boy believe that this is the entire extent of the world in order to help him deal with the difficult situation.

While certainly very absorbing and

not short of moments of tension, this is, for the main part, a subtle and introspective look at how being trapped and isolated from society for over half a decade can affect a person. The sub-

“A subtle look at how being trapped and isolated from society can affect a person.”

ject matter is dealt with both realistically and sensitively. You really get a real feel for the emotions of the protagon-

ists and only the most heartless of readers could not strongly empathise with them by the end of the novel.

What really positively surprised me about the *Room* is that it continues for almost two hundred pages after what in many other books would be considered the climax. Donoghue shows herself to be a truly superior writer by going on to consider the consequences of her resolution to the problems set up in the first part of the novel while at the same time providing a whole different viewpoint on the established characters. There is a clear divide between the two halves of the book, but Donoghue's skill shows through in that they flow together – with the second part feeling

like a natural progression of the first.

The major criticism of those who did not like this book has been Jack's narration, with some calling it distracting and annoying while others saying that the vocabulary and sen-

“You get a real feel for the emotions of the protagonists.”

tence structure is not really believable for a five year old. I can only say that I found the book perfectly readable and convincing. Sure, the

grammar is somewhat nonstandard, adding to the feel that this is really the internal monologue of a small child, but I got used to very quickly.

In fact, for me, the narration is one of the main selling points of the book. It provides a viewpoint that interesting and rarely seen in fiction. Jack is free of many of the preconceptions and prejudices held by adults and so looks at the world in a more innocent and much clearer way.

Room is an intelligent and powerful book. It is no surprise that it has won numerous awards and received widespread praise. If you are looking for a serious read be sure to pick up this book – you're sure to find it a deeply rewarding experience.

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HANGMAN 2.0

WORLD EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH WILL SMITH



So Felix might not have known about Will Smith's surprise visit to Ethos on Wednesday, but that didn't stop Hangman from having a few select words with the man himself:

Hangman: Hi Will.

Will: Hi there.

H: So are you a big sports fan?

W: Sure. Don't forget to come and see my latest film, *Men in Black III*, when it opens next **Friday 25 May!**

H: Always a pleasure, Will.

NEXT WEEK...

ROBERT DE NIRO VISITS THE LIBRARY CAFÉ

SPORT

Bank Holiday Boat BUCS

Elizabeth Richards

Boat Club

The annual three day BUCS regatta at Nottingham's Holme Pierrepont is usually a test of endurance, both physical and mental, and this year was no exception. With competitors entered in multiple events on a single day and with weather ranging from pouring rain to brilliant sunshine, ICBC was put through its paces from start to finish. By the end of the weekend, 126 BUCS points had been accumulated as well as an array of medals, many coming from the lightweight men.

Saturday seemed quiet due to the absence of all novice competitors. The organising committee had decided that, after the multiple sinkings of last year and the horrendous weather forecast, they would chancel beginners' racing. In the end, the conditions were rowable with a solid tail wind leading to rapid times. Never fear, though, there was plenty of racing to be had, especially for the women's squad. The championship quad (str: Louise Connell/Klara Weaver/Harriet Cross/Hannah Patterson) brought home the first piece of silverware, taking second place in a straight final behind Reading (7:02.3). Another medal followed quickly from the Intermediate pair (str: Cat Buizza/Harriet Cross). After a convincing win in their heat, the girls continued to dominate the field as they won the first gold of the weekend after a storming second half of the final (8:02.8) – a feat replicated by many Imperial women's crews over the weekend.

For the testosterone-filled side of the club, the Championship Lwt four (str: Wilf Kimberley/Tim Richards/Tom Pearson/Gareth Brown) proved their might as they won their heat by more than 10s and progressed into the final, where they met rivals University of London. The boys in purple gave Impe-

rial a run for their money and clung on – ICBC took the gold medal by a mere 0.48s (6:28.3). As the lightweights came into the landing stage, Kimberley and Richards continued the BUCS tradition of jumping out of one boat into another. The Championship eight (cox: Libby Richards/Johnny Rankin/T Richards/Ben Spencer Jones/Ali Hudson/Matt Pointing/Henry Goodier/Kimberley/Rory Sullivan) were waiting ready to head onto the waves for the last final of the day. After a tight race with UL in the heat, the guys were hunting for blood. Unfortunately, the might of Newcastle, Durham and UL just squeezed the guys out of the medals, despite a storming row (5:52.2).

Thankfully the weather had decided

“Our fortunate escape sparked a remarkable comeback”

to turn to bright sunshine with a slight tail wind by Sunday. The lightweight men were with the eight (cox: Jess Johnson/Kimberley/T Richards/Tom Pearson/Brown/Myles Holbrough/Paul Jones/Elliot Jennings/Martin Ebner) easily winning their heat. There was stiff competition come the final, as three well drilled lightweight crews from UL, Cambridge and Nottingham fought it out for the medals. Imperial's scratch crew, containing two novices, performed admirably taking fourth place (6:16.8). The lightweight quad (str: Kimberley/T Richards/Holbrough/Jones) demolished the competition winning their heat by nearly 10s and the final by another 6s (6:30.2).

The heavier side of Imperial were in slightly smaller boats as the Championship coxed four (str: Rankin/Sullivan/

Spencer Jones/Goodier/cox: Johnson) took centre stage. Frustration reigned over the crew as they were squeezed out of the direct final place by the University of East London. After the heat, Spencer Jones could be found hovering around the bushes as a week of exams and illness mixed with two days of intense racing had pushed him beyond the limit. The difficult decision to scratch the boat before the impending repechage was met with disappointment, frustration and understanding in equal measure.

For the fairer half of the squad, it was time for the Championship eight (cox: L Richards/Weaver/Connell/Lily Beadle/Patterson/Cat Buizza/Cross/Siân Morgan/Maddy Whybrow), the first time ICBC has had a senior women's eight at the regatta since 2009. They did not have the easiest of routes to the final. In the repechage, they learnt their most useful skill – rowing through crews. Having left the blocks slowest, the eight crept through the field, breaking Bristol and Glasgow, one at a time and just inching ahead of Edinburgh in the crucial final 150m. A similar story unfolded in the final as they gradually rowed through Exeter and had Durham in their sights but the finish line came too soon and Imperial took fifth place (7:01.0).

By Bank Holiday Monday when most people are nursing a hangover, Imperial were beginning to feel the strain. The weather had turned, the sun disappeared, and fog, wind and pelting rain arrived in the miserable Midlands. Racing was postponed and, in another BUCS tradition, racing format was rejigged to 1500m time trials with the fastest six crews going through to six lane finals. The wind caused only the occasional problem in the time trials pushing crews out of their lanes. The remaining men of ICBC were few and far between as many had returned to

IC Boat Club



Tim Richards and Wilf Kimberley bask in the glory of BUCS

London, generally to prepare for those little annoyances called exams. The numbers dwindled even more once Sullivan was hit by the same bout of sickness that had struck Spencer Jones the day before and so the lightweights were left to hold the honour of the club. The gangsta lightweight double (T Richards/Kimberley) and pair (Kimberley/T Richards) won both time trials and got lucky lane one for the finals. The pair went without a hitch as they led from start to finish, adding another bit of gold bling to their ever glittering collection (7:14.1). The double was running the same course until the final moments when Loughborough decided to shoot them down, beating the guys to the gold by just 0.8s. Consolation can be taken from the fact that Kimberley and Richards took home more gold medals each than several universities.

Continuing miserable conditions hit the women's doubles (Championship – Weaver/Patterson, Intermediate – Connell/Cross) during their time trials as the heavens opened with a spectacular deluge, just as they were racing. Both

made it to their finals to take fourth place and bring another silver medal home to ICBC, respectively. The two doubles then combined to make the Championship coxed four (str: Weaver/Connell/Cross/Patterson/cox: L Richards). They qualified third for the final and, although the final standing start probably wasn't in their best interest, they showed the same resolve as the women's 8 the previous day. They steadily walked through crews from the back of the field. In the final 400m, they overtook Cambridge to earn the bronze (7:42.4).

Despite injuries, sickness, a dwindled squad size thanks to exams and field trips, multiple entries per athlete, and the dismal conditions, Imperial soldiered on to take four gold, three silver and one bronze over the weekend. ICBC was fourth in the Victor Ludorum, fifth in the medal table, and have racked up a total of 250 BUCS points in the 2011-12 season. Now all eyes move to the rest of regatta season and the relative comfort of Dorney Lake, and the pinnacle of the summer, Henley, in less than 50 days' time.

Tri-ing for Imperial at BUCS championship

Stephen Cooper
Triathlon

A 6-strong team from TriIC donned their lycra (or to be precise a pleasant Nylon-Spandex mix) to compete in the 340-strong field of May's BUCS sprint triathlon championship. Arriving at the sunny Wiltshire in the morning, avoiding the wealth of carbon time trial bikes in the car park, the task of 750m of swimming, 25km of cycling and 5km of running lay ahead.

Swimming in a heady mix of chlorine and sweat from the 300 previous competitors is unenviable stuff but Andrew Gordon, in particular, made it look very comfortable, covering the distance in an impressive 11:31. Three other team members (the Captain Stephen Cooper, new-comer Luke Johnston and Will Palmer) were coincidentally placed in the same lane, allowing for the convivial competition over the next 85 minutes or so. The next discipline saw Andrew again set the quickest time

amongst the Imperial team, averaging 33km per hour over a windy and hilly course.

The final element, a 5km undulated run saw three of the team run under 19 minutes placing them in the top 50 for that discipline: Rueben Bogg (18:12), Andrew Gordon (18:54), Sam O'Neill (18:55). And it was these three who led home the TriIC team overall.

At the top of the leaderboard, some high-jinx (in the form of cycling in a group which is not permitted) from six

of the top ten competitors meant that the BUCS champion was only determined once those involved in the shenanigans were handed time penalties. Naughty boys! For the team event, with 60 university teams qualifying, Imperial 'A' finished 25th and the 'B' team 52nd.

TriIC have a number of informal and formal training sessions for all beginners to experts. Any men and women out there who would like to join in then please see www.union.ic.ac.uk/acc/triathlon/.



SPORT

Hat-trick heroes



Left to right: Nitesh Mehta, Elwin Carlos, Lawrence Wild, Hari Arora (C), Bogdan Cozmaciuc (Second team: Jonathan Hoong (C), Stanley Cheng, Julius Guth, Rex Tan, Grace Yip)

Elwin Carlos Snooker

Imperial College 1s came back from the brink in a pulsating final against Warwick 2s to triumph in the 2012 BUCS Snooker Team Trophy competition, becoming only the third university in recent history to win three titles on the trot.

Victory also provided the perfect ending to a glorious career for first team captain, Hari Arora, who has potted the winning ball in each of the last three seasons and is now the club's second most decorated player behind semi-pro, Jonathan Fulcher.

After a strong showing at the Midlands Cup in February, hopes of success for the two Imperial teams at this year's Championships were high as 36 teams from 20 universities arrived in Leeds for the season finale.

Such hopes were raised further by a string of solid performances in the Individual Trophy by the second team. Most notably, Stanley Cheng was in top form during his run to the quarter-finals while old-timer Grace Yip did well to reach the last 16.

That was in contrast to members of the first team, the majority of who were knocked out in the first round of the Individual Championship thanks to some tough draws and a somewhat contentious decision for Nitesh Mehta to have a frame docked for arriving "late" to his match. Only Lawrence Wild progressed to the second round before losing a very close deciding frame on the final black.

Fortunes improved for Imperial 1s in the team event, where the format consisted of two teams of five pairing off to play 2-frame rubbers in what was

effectively a best of 10 frames match.

We lost 6-4 to Warwick 1s but responded with a 5-5 draw against a very strong Southampton 1s followed by a 9-1 trouncing of Cardiff 2s.

The defeat to Warwick 1s resulted in them pipping us to second spot in the group and a Championship quarter final place, leaving us to once more contest for the Team Trophy – a tournament we had won for the previous two years.

Meanwhile Imperial 2s, carried by captain and frame-winning machine, Jonathan Hoong, progressed all the way to the semi-finals of the Team Plate, where we were unfortunately overcome by Kent 2s.

"Our fortunate escape sparked a remarkable comeback"

The second team's exit meant it was down to Imperial 1s to bring home some silverware.

A comfortable 6-1 victory over Birmingham 1s in the Team Trophy quarter-finals set up a last four clash with Nottingham 1s, who took us to 5-5 and a one frame shootout to decide who would continue on to the final.

Step up former U-19 Romanian Champion, Bogdan Cozmaciuc, who played a near-flawless frame, including a ridiculous run from yellow to blue, to steer Imperial into yet another Trophy final.

And so to the final itself, where Warwick 2s stood between Imperial and snooker immortality.

Even with a different format for the

final – a race to 3 rubbers in which each team member contested a best-of-3 frames rubber against an opposing team player – we were unfazed and confident of securing that historic hat-trick.

However, having lost the first two rubbers, Imperial 1s then came within a millimetre of defeat when Warwick's Matt Ansell attempted an audacious double on the black, which ricocheted off the cushions four times and looked to be heading for the middle pocket.

Yet the snooker gods were on our side and the black stopped just short of the pocket, allowing Bogdan Cozmaciuc to reduce the deficit to 2-1.

Our fortunate escape then sparked a remarkable comeback as Elwin Carlos came from behind to beat Chee Han Tan, leaving Captain "Super" Hari-o to fight it out with his Warwick counterpart, Mike Williams, for the team gold.

Hari "Potter" easily claimed the first frame of the rubber before a tense black ball finish ensued at the end of the second.

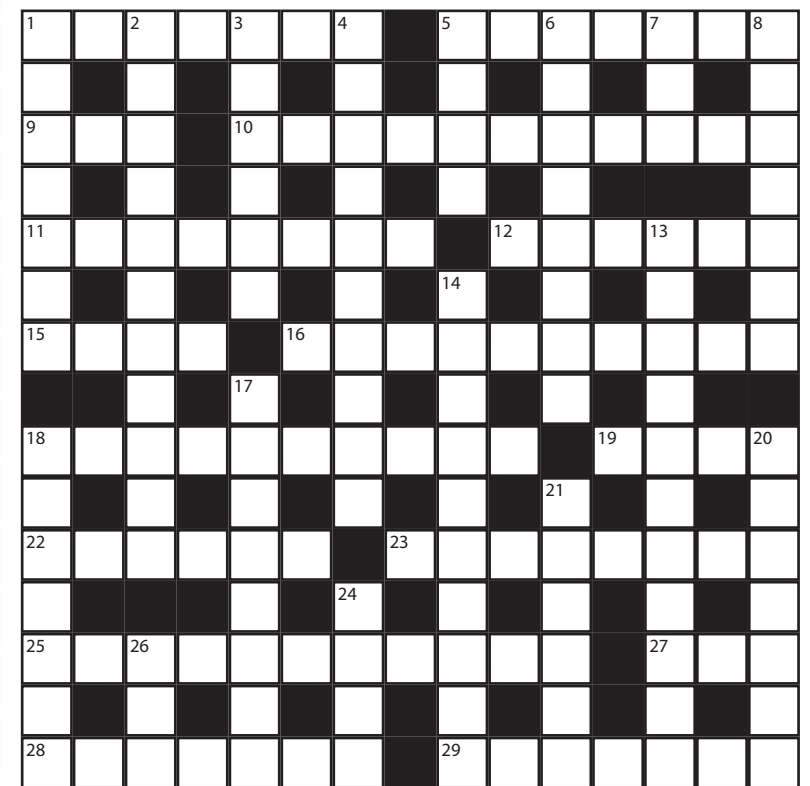
With a combination of near misses, terrific safety shots and high drama that was reminiscent of the 1985 World Snooker Championship final, breaths were baited as Hari was eventually presented with a quarter-ball cut to the middle with the cue ball just an inch off the top cushion.

Displaying all the composure that epitomises his game, Hari coolly rolled the black in to prompt celebrations of a truly memorable hat-trick!

Ironically, with that 3-2 victory, Imperial join Warwick 2s on the all-time list of Team Trophy winners with three titles each, behind only QUB, who have eight.

Something for us to aim for, surely?!

Cryptic Crossword 1,518



Across

1. Imaginary number, perhaps? (7)
5. Molko fooling around with Catholic, one of Wells' worst people (7)
9. *Synthesis* director starts to rehearse next act (1,1,1)
10. Public love group is not working (3,2,6)
11. Size up and eat value meal (8)
12. Bum wipe (6)
15. Thank you, thank you, and goodbye! (2-2)
16. How the hare and the tortoise got on? Yes and no! (10)
18. Kids' TV character confused with stamp on tap (7,3)
19. Probe drain (4)
22. Where *Central Station* is bracketed by Depardieu stonkers (6)
23. Inclined to put oneself down (8)
25. Like diarrhoea, for instance, might this be irregular? (11)
27. Bar man (3)
28. Characters playing thereat? (7)
29. Hanging cloth cut short with final alteration (7)

Down

1. Tense model (7)
2. Immersing themselves later, these people spat at basin originally (11)
3. Leaving book (8)
4. Stretches out dated pieces of music (10)
5. Poor player needs something to keep hands warm (4)
6. Gollum's "nice and cool" items found in natural aquarium (4,4)
7. University unit makes agreement for French (3)
8. Former Lib Dem leader is victim of assassination (7)
13. *Insomnia* theme tune? (6,5)
14. Scuba amateur initially quit, flailing underwater (10)
17. I'm spanking but unable to come (8)
18. Current grant (7)
20. Knight errant quietly beheaded Crusaders' chief opponent (7)
21. Climber, we hear, is sizeable but directionless (6)
24. A fair lot, reportedly (4)
26. Prompt's line heard (3)

SB Imperial hit Victoria and Clapham Common

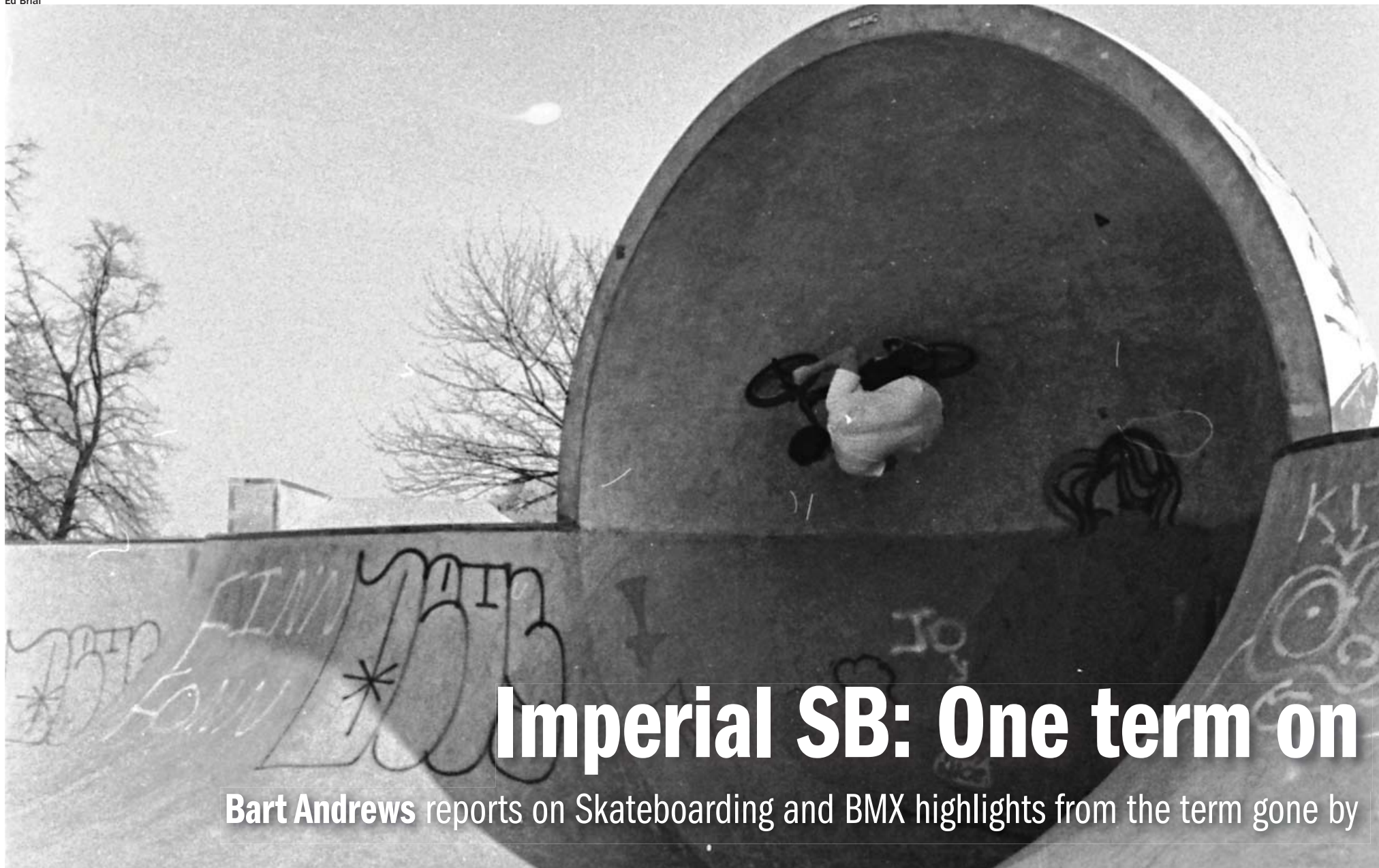
...Continued from Back Page find that off-putting or inspiring is up to you.

Now with exam season upon us, it's easy to let skating peter out into a distant memory. However, I can only urge you to try and keep it up. Spring offers (or should be offering...) perfect

weather for skating. Not too hot, not too cold and with the prospect of a long vacation just around the corner. So if ever feel like skating/BMXing post on our Facebook group 'SB Imperial' and check out our new blog at imperialsb.tumblr.com. Don't forget to keep riding.

SPORT

Ed Brial



Imperial SB: One term on

Bart Andrews reports on Skateboarding and BMX highlights from the term gone by

A whole term has now passed with Imperial having its very own Skateboard/BMX society so here are all the gory details as to what's been going on. Last term, we managed to skate/BMX a good chunk of the skate-parks that London has to offer. These

included concrete classics such as Meanwhile and Stockwell as well as new offerings such as Victoria and Clapham Common.

Victoria skatepark (see crazy up-side-down BMX photo) was really a lot of fun to ride. Although it suffers from a severe infestation of little kids at peak times, it's a brilliant experi-

ence once you're able to hit all the lines. The huge cradle (London's first) is a great addition if you can pluck up the courage to ride it – same goes for the absolutely ridiculous deep-end of the bowl (upwards of 10ft). With the Olympics just around the corner, a skatepark like this is exactly what the East End needs. It definitely has a lot

of support.

Also new in London last term – Clapham Common skatepark. This skatepark has had a complete overhaul recently and it's definitely for the better. This isn't your typical skatepark though. With funky new additions like the pole jam and the huge concrete bump, it's a pretty unique ride. Sure, it

still has a mini-ramp if you want it, but the layout of the whole park is really fun to try and string into a line. Apart from the dubious decision to leave half the surface as tarmac and the lack of flood lights, Clapham Common is always a good skate. Note, however, the standard here is high. Whether you

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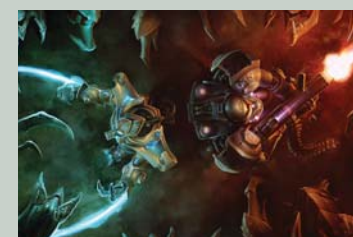
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