

## You voted him in... what has he done?

Manifesto review by Union  
President Paul Beaumont  
Page 8



## International students want clearer information on fees and fee rises

**Eoghan J Totten** Reporter

Imperial College fails to provide sufficient clarity on international student tariffs, as perceived by students. Imperial College Union intends to lobby the University amidst growing apprehension among overseas students.

Imperial College Union will lobby College to say how much the entire degree will cost when students are applying, and give current students information on the cost of the rest of their degree. As currently students are sometimes in the dark about how much they will have to pay as tuition fees for the next year.

The current average annual cost

incurred by an overseas student of £25,000, a mere £47 short of equivalent rate in place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (\$40,372/ £25,047). The latest fee rises come as no surprise, being synonymous with the trend of previous academic years, with year-on-year increases. The objection is also to students not having clear information on how their fees will rise while still doing their degree. This came to light in a paper at Union Council by Wasim Khouri. He said to Felix: "Overseas tuition fees have risen to an average of £24,000 after another unexpected increase this year. With a struggling economy, more and more students are facing problems with payments and budgeting. We are now working very >>>3



She's in charge of your education.  
Felix interviews the new Pro Rector (Education) Debra Humphris. Page 12

## Business school set exams in breach of College rules

**Niall Jeffrey** Reporter

Imperial College Business School has recently been conducting their examinations in a manner that has been deemed unfair by students and is potentially a violation of the College's own policy. The breach of the regulations has been revealed by a student who wished to remain anonymous.

On Thursday 10 January, final year students on the management course were required to sit a two hour exam in the evening and then, seemingly against College rules, another the next morning. The first exam in itself may also not have meet the required standards and expectations.

A student has also told us that

there were no sample/specimen questions and no past papers given to the students, all of whom were left in as state of uncertainty.

Speaking of the exam, Felix were told: "I didn't even know how many marks or how many questions or what it was on!"

The exams were held for the School's Joint Honours Programme, a course where students do the final year of their degrees full time in business. These difficulties therefore have a great effect on people's entire degree and have the potential to gravely affect the relevant students.

Felix requested the relevant policy from Imperial and received a "College Notice" from last year for Management Board implementations. The document was written by >>>6



## Engineers abroad

This year Imperial had only two places  
for the University of California Page 4

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### Where to work?

Internships are all the rage. This feature looks briefly at the experiences of students interning in the city and in the third sector.



## POLITICS

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### Depardeski

The strange news that (formerly) French actor Gérard Depardieu now has a Russian passport (see right) in protest to his tax bill rising.

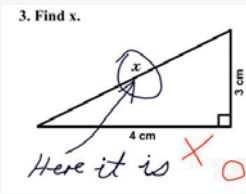


## COMMENT

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### Failed an exam?

If you've ever divebombed below the 40% mark then you'll know that often you think it's wrong. This piece tells you what to do if you suspect a mistake.



## CLASSIFIEDS

### Flatmate wanted

I have a large room in a 3 bedroom flat to let. The flat is by Bishops Park in Fulham, £645pcm. Very close to 74, 430, 414 and 14 bus routes, living with one imperial student and one alumnus.

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### LOLCAT OF THE WEEK: Finding these is a perk of the job



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## Where to work

**Tim Arbabzadah**  
Editor-in-Chief

**T**his week there is a feature on page 10 (it's one of my picks) about internships. The basic idea is to interview a few people who have done city internships and some that have done third sector work. The plan is to see what similarities and differences there are. Obviously, this isn't some survey from the survey fetishists over at Ipsos MORI, so it's not the largest most scientific set of data. What's interesting is the general trend: we like internships (and you can extrapolate jobs) where we gain some kind of valuable experience, and where we feel like we are actually a valued and important member of the team. Of course, if your long term goal is to just work for the company, then you may be more interested in networking during an internship, and there are many other situations where you may want different experiences. For example, horny people may be seeking multiple sexual partners while also wanting to be valued for their hard work - but I wouldn't put down "sex drive of Russell Brand" on your CV. The point is that we obviously want to feel wanted in some way. Nobody wants to just be the person updating a calendar or reformatting a word document.

When reading the feature, you can make up your mind as to what you

think and which of the jobs sounds best based on what they liked and hated the most.

The reason I write this is because elections are on their way. That's when I'm deposed and someone else takes a crack at it.

What do I do after this year? Journalism? Science? Science journalism? Do I apply for a job in the city? I've been thinking about it. Don't lie and say you've never entertained the thought, we all have had that "hmm, maybe" thought. For some people, they really do find finance and economics fascinating. Or they just really like the environment of a company. Perhaps they like the fact that there is sense of camaraderie. That's absolutely fine if you do. Personally, except for the fact that you get to meet a bunch of new people, I don't think I really have much interest in that sector.

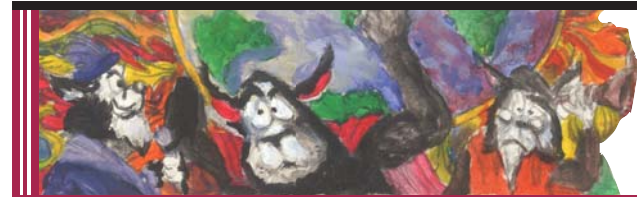
You may then reasonably think that it seems odd to even think about starting a career in a job you don't really care for too much. Thinking about it a bit more, I realised that the reason for this sudden, strange urge to wear a suit and tie every day was the security it could potentially offer. The job not the suit - that would probably rip fairly easily, and so wouldn't be that safe. A job at a big company brings with it a guaranteed salary and

a stable structure to your weekdays. Some people really hate not having a structure, some love it. I remember a friend from halls being very excited about becoming an accountant (I know, my friends sound like a right laugh). I found it amazing that you could really want that, but he insisted he did. He disclosed the reason: the fact that you wake up and go into an office, then you go home at a similar time each day was the real reason he enjoyed it.

I think I quite like being able to choose a structure to my day, but also having something to aim at is always a good motivator.

Then what about being an entrepreneur or doing something a little bit different without a guaranteed salary? Well, it really is a risk/reward (uhoh this sounds like economics) game. You risk having no security and being tired and stressed. That's not to say that the city, and jobhunting, is not stressful, but, you know what I mean. The reward would be doing a job you really love. If you don't love the city, then think about other careers and decide if you want to take the risk. I'll be doing so.

That leaves me back at the all too common university student problem: "what do I want to do when I grow up. Oh, shit, I'm grown up. What do I do now..."



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**NEWS**

# Imperial chemist dies at home

## Joachim H. G. Steinke died suddenly last Tuesday

I knew Joachim for the last 23 years having done our PhD's together at the University of Strathclyde under Professor David's Sherrington's fine leadership.

Joachim was the "crazy" German guy. It was an incredibly intense but marvellously fun time of our lives. The overwhelming thing that struck you about Joachim was that he was always utterly, madly enthusiastic and passionate about chemistry, but he really, really loved his own discipline – polymers. He would gabble on for hours and hours about twiddling this and altering that part of the polymer and would then turn and ask me what effect it would have on the outcome of the polymer structure. To which I would often reply "I've absolutely no idea". I shared a flat with him for a long time during that period and learnt all about his silly foibles – his obsessions with Macintosh mugs, bits of bicycles, awful fondues and Birkenstocks – all the things that made him so much of a colourful character.

After this, we both went our separate ways he went to US, to join Fréchet's group at Cornell and then re-

turning to Cambridge whilst I went to Japan, still keeping in touch over email. Serendipitously, after our post-doc's we both started at the same time at Imperial College. He hadn't changed. He was full of exuberance and fun, full of stupendous ideas, rich in their ludicrousness, but at the same time they had sparkles of brilliance flecked through them. That was a very difficult time of my life and I simply cannot say how helpful and generous he was to me during that time.

Joachim always expected the highest standards from himself and others. He was a true scholar in the real sense of the word; leaving no stone unturned in pursuit of the truth. He was exceedingly well read and knowledgeable about a vast range of subjects both, within chemistry and beyond, and would severely chastise anyone who was not as well prepared as him. I fear that many a research proposal wilted under that fearsome gaze. He had a formidable intellect and was incredibly generous as an individual giving his time endlessly to any student or anyone else who needed help. He was exceedingly selfless in this re-

gard.

Joachim really grew to love this country that became his home and all things British – the good bits and the bad. He had a great sense of humour, and he genuinely loved the "British" way of looking at the world. He really loved life, he loved his food and loved a good wine.

God-parent to my son, ex-flat mate, intellectual giant and the best friend a man could ever have, he will be very sorely missed by one and all, but especially by me.

He leaves his long-term partner, Natasha and my thoughts are with her at this time.

*This obituary was written by Dr Rob Law from the Department of Chemistry at Imperial College London. Dr Law was Dr Steinke's oldest and best friend.*

*Dr Steinke died suddenly last Tuesday. The death is not being treated as suspicious. The cause of death was most likely a heart attack. His funeral will be held in Germany.*



## Justification sought

» continued from the front page

hard to help all international students by asking for more transparency: it is important for us to know how tuition fees are calculated so that, hopefully, we can then design a system, which allows students to know the cost of their entire degree in advance."

The latest fee rises come as no surprise, being synonymous with the trend of previous academic years, with year-on-year increases superlative to the rate of inflation. Addressing the issue is now a big concern for the Union, who have adopted the stance, "that the incremental rise in tuition fees, with sudden changes as experienced this year, is affecting (international) students on tight budgets. This causes student dissatisfaction, again affecting university prestige."

This is in line with the opinion of Dominic Scott, Chief Executive of the UK Council for International Affairs, who expressed deep concern and acknowledged that students deserved increased levels of transparency.

The rhetoric spawned by the issue has emerged against the backdrop of a record number of international students applying for hardship funds in

the 2012/2013 academic year. This may come as a surprise to the wider student body, with the consensus belief that overseas undergraduates are of affluent background. It converges with the Union's concern that student budgets are being constrained more than ever. It has been speculated that only rich students will be able to come to Imperial if the University fails to take swift remedial action. As cited by Wasim Khouri, OSC chair, "Many international students have approached me this year questioning whether students can do anything to get justification from College as to the fee rise."

It is feared that the prospective international clientele of Imperial College may become disillusioned by the fee hikes if they continue to be uninhibited and unjustified, with guardians and sponsors withdrawing financial backing for students in the wake of the current economic climate. In the interval between the academic years of 2008/2009 – 2009/2010 average fee hikes of 4.88% were imposed on students, which is above the current UK inflation rate of 2.2%.

Other Universities are experiencing a back lash from their wider respective

student bodies. The University of Edinburgh has notably engaged in negotiations with its student association to de-escalate student resentment and to introduce a sustainable solution. The University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge are furthermore known to charge as much as £37,300 for a number of courses (2009/2010 figures).

Other clear action proposed by Imperial College Union is that they intend to lobby the College to "give students information on how they come up with the increase and where the money is distributed" and provide advance notification of future rises in academic tuition fees. Proposed impetuses include a signed petition, open to all (international) students, which will be forwarded to the appropriate College authorities. It has even been suggested that if nothing is done about the matter, there may be student led protests by the international community.

The issue surrounding fee transparency is borne in context of the waning satisfaction of students at Imperial College (as indicated by the appropriate student surveys) which have the potential to affect prestigious rankings (8th Times World Universities; 2012-2013).

Sponsored Editorial

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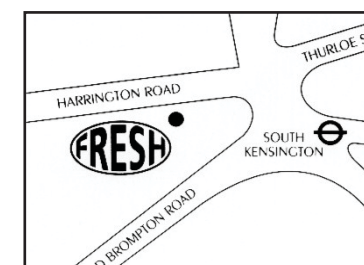
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# Engineers left frustrated over exchange

**Maciej Matuszewski** Reporter

A foreign exchange scheme that, in previous years, had often allowed a student from each department in the Faculty of Engineering to study for a year at the University of California has this year drastically reduced its places. As a result of a decrease in the number of students at the University of California who wish to participate in the project only two places were available this year for Imperial students.

The programme is open to students in their final year – who apply in autumn of the preceding year. The University of California curriculum involves those studied at Imperial and students must also complete an “independent research project”.

A third year mechanical engineering student, told Felix that he “applied for the program and went through a motivational letter stage and then an interview stage in front of three lecturers from the mechanical engineering department and was selected mid-November”. He was told that he “might have another interview at faculty level” but that on the last day of term was told that he “won’t be going”. He added that he

was “deeply upset about this” and that, so far, he has “been unsuccessful in trying to gather reasons for why the faculty has chosen the other departments’ members and not mechanical engineering (especially since it is the biggest in terms of size) without further interviews or selection procedures”.

Dr Pat Leever, Mechanical Engineering Director of Courses, responded that the Department was “to say the least, disappointed in the outcome of this year’s U Cal exchange scheme”. He praised the candidates who “had put time and effort into preparing strong applications” and expressed “bitter disappointment” at how the student who was selected by the department was “unsuccessful at the Faculty level, where the odds of success seem to diminish each year”. He added that the Department would “certainly now be looking at alternative options to the present Faculty-wide scheme”.

Doug Hunt, Imperial College Union Deputy President (Education), commented on the exchange programme saying: “It is quite hard to get more than 2 [places] as we need students from UC wishing to come here to be able to send more there. Currently that isn’t happening



though. Only way of creating more places at US universities is having more US partners but this is more admin for the College and departments.”

American students have offered insight into the possible reason for the decrease in incoming applicants.

It may be due to Imperial offering only year long exchanges. Other universities offer single terms. As the system in the USA works on credits, it could mean that students from the USA are less prepared to leave for an entire year as it would require harder work when they returned. This

would be because year away could harm their credit choices more than just a term abroad. At the time of going to print Adrian Hawksworth, College Assistant Registrar (Placements), who until recently had been in charge of the programme, was unavailable for comment.

## €25m of funding won by IC

**Nida Mahmud** News Editor

The European Research Council (ERC) has awarded over €25m to Imperial College in the latest funding round. These grants are for 11 projects, and these include two prestigious synergy grants that promote partnerships in academic research.

The Synergy grant scheme was piloted this year, it allocates up to €15m over six years for projects that aim to enhance collaborations between researchers that can produce results that would not be possible to produce working alone. Consequently, the collaborations enhance the complementary skills, knowledge and resources available to researchers.

The ERC received over 700 applications for Synergy grants, but only 11 projects were funded across the EU. The first Synergy project at Imperial is the “Intelligent implantable modulator of Vagus nerve function for treatment of obesity” (i2MOVE). This received a grant of over €7m and was awarded to Professor Christopher Toumazou and Professor Sir Stephen Bloom, from

the Departments of Electrical Engineering and Medicine respectively. This team will create a device that mimics the response of the vagus nerve after eating, suppressing the appetite of a patient; achieved by combining their expertise in bioengineering and endocrinology. The second project grant was awarded to Professor Daniel Rueckert, from the Department of Computing, in partnership with colleagues at Kings College and Oxford. The project is entitled “The Developing Human Connectome Project” (dHCP), which aims to provide an insight into neuropsychiatry conditions such as autism; achieved by using MRI to track brain connectivity in foetuses and newborn children. The project has received a grant of over €14m, of which €3.250m will go to Professor Rueckert.

Although the synergy grants are the most high profile, the College has also received another €15m in grants by the ERC in Starting and Advanced Grants. Dr Michelle Moram (Department of Materials), Dr Aimee Morgans (Department of Aeronautics), Dr Toby Gee (Department of Mathematics), Dr Tom Bell

(Division of Ecology and Evolution), and Dr Irene Miguel-Aliaga and Dr Rill Bartke (Institute of Clinical Science) were all awarded Starting Grants of over €1m for research projects spanning the next five. Additionally, Professor Ed Hinds (Department of Physics), Christos Vasillicos (Department of Aeronautics) and Peter Kohl (National Heart and Lung Institute) were all awarded grants of over €2m each from the ERC’s Advanced Grants fund.

Professor Donal Bradley, Pro-Rector for Research at Imperial College London, said: “This latest outstanding success in securing multiple awards from the ERC’s highly competitive funding schemes provides further recognition of the strength of research being undertaken across the College. Our involvement in two of the first round of ERC Synergy projects is a testament to the multi-disciplinary research ethos that pervades the College and, in both cases, also emphasises the College’s focus on the translation of research into practical solutions that address some of society’s most pressing issues.”

## Employers don’t want you they want Warwick – says survey

**Aemun Reza** News Editor

A recent study by High Flier Research claims that the top 100 graduate employers focussing on finding graduate recruits on a small number of universities. A list of twenty universities targeted found Warwick University at the top and Imperial at 12th place.

The majority of graduate employers including BP, Civil Service, IBM, Goldman Sachs, PwC, Google and HSBC concentrate on this small handful of universities with some highly rated institutions such as St Andrews not appearing in the list.

Cambridge came a respectable 4th behind Nottingham and Manchester and Oxford is considered the 7th most targeted university. Imperial comes behind Bristol, Durham, Birmingham, Bath, Leeds and Sheffield University, but thankfully not UCL – so we can all celebrate a bit.

The report showed a fall in the number of graduate jobs available with a drop of 0.8 per cent in entry-level graduate jobs over the last year. It was revealed that one-in-five firms are scaling back funding for their graduate recruitment programmes compared with last year.

Firms are more likely to use social media to promote their graduate schemes with 71% of firms planning to increase the use of this approach and one-in-four saying they would be putting fewer resources into university career fairs.

The Graduate Market in 2013 report indicates that students are being approached earlier, with 42 of the top 100 firms saying they were more likely to promote graduate roles to first years than in previous years. 28 of the top firms claimed to be targeting penultimate year students more than they have done in the past. So get ready to be tweeted at.

Register by 28<sup>th</sup> Jan  
Deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> Feb

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# Science Challenge returns

RCSU Science Challenge is back for another year, with a total prize pot of £4000 and an all expenses paid trip to CERN up for grabs

**James Tsim**

RCSU President

The RCSU Science Challenge returns! With a total prize-pot of over £4,000 to give away and the chance to win an all-expenses paid trip to CERN, Geneva, this is a competition you don't want to miss.

The Science Challenge was created in 2006 to encourage scientific debate, reasoning and the communication of science in a public-friendly context. In previous years this has meant the setting of questions by high-profile judges which must be answered through an essay. The competition is open to all Imperial College students, and 500 schools nationally.

The Science Challenge 2013 brings a new edge to the competition, keeping three questions open to be answered by an essay, but for the first time introducing a dedicated question which must be answered through the glorious format of video! Video entries must be answered in less than three minutes running time, using any props or setting that you deem necessary – and team entries are very much welcomed; whilst essay questions must be answered in an essay of around 800 words. A key factor in both entries is that your answer must be in a 'public-friendly context', that is, a compelling scientific argument that any member of the public

who possesses only a basic scientific knowledge could understand.

Our Judges this year are an all-Imperial elite, and will be speaking at our Launch Event this coming Thursday, 24th. Lord Robert Winston, Professor of Science and Society and TV personality leads the panel, with Professor Sir Brian Hoskins, Director of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change, Professor Sir Roy Anderson, former Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence and current Chair in Infectious Disease Epidemiology at Imperial, and Dr Jad Marrouche, a research associate both here at Imperial and at CERN, who has made both the CERN and video prizes possible, completing the full judging line-up.

At the Launch Event, the Judges questions will be released, the full list of prizes announced, and each Judge will give a speech detailing the background of their question as well as their experience with science communication. Professor Maggie Dallman, Principal of the Faculty of Natural Sciences (generously sponsoring the event), will also be giving a guest speech; and there will be the chance to win tickets to our Grand Final (whether you are successful in the competition or not!).

To register yourself for the Launch Event (which includes free food and wine!) visit: <http://rcsu.org.uk/exec/sciencechallenge2013/>

## Infringement of exam policy

» continued from the front page

Rodney Eastwood, the College Secretary at the time. The policy clearly states that, except for exceptional circumstances, students should not "be expected to sit an early morning examination after having taken a late afternoon examination the previous day." The Business School seems clearly to be infringing this and, in doing so, negatively affecting its own students.

"I can confirm that Departments are individually responsible for setting their exam timetables but they have to work within the constraints of availability of suitable space on campus"; a College spokesperson of quality assurance, Laura McConnell (Assistant Registrar), responded.

Either the lack of enforcement of

internal policy by Imperial College or the possibility that guidelines have to be bypassed due to lack of facilities are being raised as issues. There has been general concern through the student body, with people fearing that their course management may too think it acceptable to bend rules that have been set in place.

Any issues with examinations affect most people and not adhering to the rules or expectations during the exam times create greater difficulty, when those affected are under pressure and have greater priorities.

One student who fears this happening in his own department has said, "I wouldn't want to be left in the dark or have to protest against this sort of thing when I'm revising for exams that will change my future".



ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE UNION  
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Start time: 19:00 - Catered networking to follow  
**BOOKING: [rcsu.org.uk/exec/sciencechallenge2013](http://rcsu.org.uk/exec/sciencechallenge2013)**

I wish this story had links and shit.  
Well, it will online at [felixonline.co.uk](http://felixonline.co.uk)

## With the University Challenge team coasting into the next round, the team for next year is chosen

**Pietro Aronica**

Reporter

While this season's University Challenge is still underway, with Imperial College's team still in the running, the selections have already been made for next year.

The tryouts were organised by Imperial College Quiz Society, mostly composed of keen quizzers and former UC contestants, and was open to all students at Imperial. Around seventy people showed up for the first round, in which they had to answer 60 questions set by the makers of the show. This was no easy task, as they were ranging very diverse topics and going quite in depth in very obscure fields. Wannabe quizzers had to

know about former counties of Wales, opinion columns of the *Economist* and half-asteroid, half-comet astronomical bodies. It was a hard set, and only 17 would be invited again.

The second round was structured in a more familiar, University Challenge manner: teams of four with actual working buzzers would compete for starters for ten and sets of bonuses. A rota was established so that the judging panel could see everyone and decide who'd make a good UC contestant: they looked for raw knowledge, obviously, but they also had an eye on impulsiveness, speed on the buzzer, willingness to listen to teammates and ability to guess. The questions came from a variety of sources, and ranged from football in Japan to

Imperial Stormtroopers to the Sloan Great Wall. Again, it was not an easy quiz and some truly excellent performances were given.

Eventually, though, only five would make onto the team: four contestants and a reserve. The following five individuals will be representing Imperial College in the 2013/2014 season of University Challenge: Charlie Yuan, the reserve, in first year biochemistry; Daniela Weston, in third year physics; George Coombs, in second year physics; Rhys Davies, in fifth year medicine; and their captain, John Wheatley, in third year materials science. Hopefully together they have enough facts and smarts to bring television glory to Imperial! The team has already started practicing in the London Quiz League



with some success and is meeting every week to flex their quizzing muscles. Soon they will be invited by the makers of the show in a quiz/interview, which will determine if they make it to the televised portion. We have no doubt they will, and we will be looking forward to their matches starting from July next year.

In case you missed the selections or were not chosen, they are run every year, and you can try again come next November. In the meantime, the Imperial Quiz Society organises quizzes, where you might help this year's team practice.

Contact them at [quiz@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:quiz@imperial.ac.uk).

## Driving Lessons For Imperial Students

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*"Denis is a fantastic teacher and knows how to get people from completely inexperienced and utterly hopeless driving up to the standard to pass their test. He is always calm and his comments are constructive; his knowledge of London and his knack of engineering driving routes that test the learner make the lessons more than worth it. Since I have met him he has shown a great desire to offer cheaper lessons to Imperial students and with the backing of other students I am more than happy to support him."*

- Alex Kendall, IC Union President 2010-11

*"I learned to drive in one of the busiest cities in the world. I passed first time. Would I recommend Denis? Without hesitation."*

- Leon Vanstone, Aeronautical Engineering

To make inquiries and book lessons,  
call 07808 610 898

# FEATURES

Features Editors: Stephen Smith,  
Caroline Wood  
felix@imperial.ac.uk



# The Manifesto Review

In the run up to elections **Union President Paul Beaumont** looks at what he has and hasn't done this year



**A**s the 2012/13 academic year flies by (this time last year, I was already saying '14 weeks til exams' in an attempt to motivate myself...) there are a number of developments to update everyone on. For final years, the National Student Survey is back; for the whole student body we have, what I guess is kind of a survey, the dreaded e-word – elections – looming. One term down, and already it's nearly time to get rid of the sabbaticals.

Over the next few weeks, all the sabbs will be writing to tell you about what's gone on, what's changed, what's improved, what's not. Some things will be obvious (yes, I know everyone still has to pay £2 to get into the Union... will come on to that in a minute), some things are potentially meaningless without a bit of explanation. What's both amazing and annoying about my role (and if you're thinking of running for my position, this is possibly the most frustrating part you'll have to deal with) is that I can't tell you half the stuff I do: it's 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'. It's that way for a good reason: it's not that the College is trying to hide things from students, but it's not possible to put everything in the public domain (like business deals, etc) until they're done. Infuriatingly, I'm also not able to ask students for help in supporting me when I disagree with something the College is doing. Whoever you elect to be the next President, you'll have to trust that they'll fight for the right things too, as I hope you'd agree I'm doing at the moment, if I could tell you what those things were... catch twenty-two.

On a more positive note, I thought best to do a sort of 'manifesto review' of the year so far. I've marked myself (wouldn't it be nice if exams worked that way too?), and feel free to disagree – as I'm sure a few will. See right.

I'm not going to bang on about it, because last time people on the online comments thought I 'had no mandate' to do this, but one of the things I'm most proud of this year is working towards securing a future for the Union: both through Charity Registration and through updated and improved agreements with the College.

Doug and Becky will no doubt be telling you about the leaps and bounds in which the College has improved in their articles; I've already rambled enough but will give you a sneak preview. Lecture recording is being rolled out. Imperial Horizons has broadened

**"I promise to revise the new Responsible Drinking Policy to follow the law, whilst putting the fun back into our bars."** ✓

A new Retailing of Alcohol policy (I always thought 'Responsible' sounded really condescending too...) went to the Executive Committee on 3 December and will be taken to the next Trustee Board for final approval in late January.

**"As it's financially viable (RCSU does it), I want an 'open bar' Summer Ball."** ✓

Planning for the Ball 2013 has started and I have in my first version of a budget – just as the RCSU, which I used to be Vice President for has – included a sizeable bar tab. This is yet to be approved though, so I won't say too much: watch this space. We're also planning on making the funfair bigger and better, more 'free stuff', and hopefully a cheaper dinner than last year.

**"I promise to spend time with students: currently hardly anyone sees the people that represent us."** ✗

Well I go to the bar on an evening, but there is genuinely no free time during the day to go to the JCR like I thought there would be. I get in to the offices at 8:30 and leave (well, stagger out of the bar) late each evening. I don't know why I bother renting a flat

**"I want the Union to become a place students go to relax throughout the day – using Metric as a break-out space by day, and as a club at night."** ✓

Lights were installed over Summer and lots of people use Metric on a lunch-time for overspill space from FiveSixEight. Not a lot else to say really...

everyone's, well, horizons (and is being rolled out to more years next year). A Union review of PRES data for Postgraduate Research students (the research version of NSS) has been welcomed and will follow on from our NSS Response. Similarly for Becky's Student Experience survey – something that the College uses to help direct

sources for developing its support services. Services such as timetabling (and improving use of space for lectures and labs) are changing; syllabuses are being revised after student feedback. I'll stop now. If you think that you'd enjoy effecting change (or, fighting behind closed doors) and you're even just contemplating running as a sabb, drop any of the team an email. This year the sabbs are going to be asking candidates questions at hustings to make sure they – and everyone voting – know what they're getting themselves in for – do come talk to us!



**"I promise to improve our online systems, saving time for club officers."** ✓

We've launched a whole new website (written by the Union's Sysadmin, myself, and a couple of members of staff... costing the Union very little!) and a new version of eActivities (also written in-house). Imperial College Union truly does have the most advanced online systems of any Union in the country; most are still using paper forms. I know eActivities can be frustrating sometimes (we're working on speeding it up), but to be fair: it does do virtually everything and is a lot better than what other Unions have!

**"I promise to stop door charges for entry to our own Union."** ✗

The awkward one. I wish, when running for election, that I'd been told I had no ability to change the Union's budget for this year: that was set last year. Charges were cut at the start of this year, but not enough, I know. I will (in an attempt to still act on my promise, yes I know it's late) propose that the Union's Executive Committee does everything it can to pass a budget for next year that doesn't require door charges on a normal Wednesday and Friday night. For anyone running for a sabb position this year, do not, without making it clear that it will come into effect the year after, make financial promises – you'll feel annoyingly helpless like I have this year on this issue. Part of me is still glad I promised it, as it now means it will hopefully happen next year, but it's frustrating all the same. Hopefully by pushing back charging to 21:30 on Wednesdays we've afforded most people some extra pints.

**"I promise to put money back in students' pockets by introducing more student jobs in the Union."** ✓

Two recruitment sessions have been run so far this year (normally it'd only be one by now). I'm also planning on introducing more jobs by stealing an idea from Cambridge Union. They have a brilliant Access programme that both encourages widening participation students into University, and pays their current students to do the presentations and workshops. I'm still working on this, but watch this space!

**"I want to make the Union more transparent and better communicate the work it does for students."** ✓

I think the new website (where we publish all the Council's responses to government policy and views on College proposals) goes some way to helping this. I also revamped the newsletter though am not writing half as many Felix articles as I'd hoped. I guess people would just get bored anyway. Well done if you've made it this far. We've invested some more resources into the Union's marketing recently which should hopefully mean that over the coming years this will improve even more.

Ticks, crosses, and neutral are what Paul thinks. How about you? Comment online at [felixonline.co.uk](http://felixonline.co.uk)



# Holocaust Memorial Day at IC

Listen to an account. Step into his shoes, walk around in them.  
Don't forget.

**Andrea Levy**

Writer

On the evening of this coming Thursday 24th of January we, at Imperial College, will have the honour and the privilege to hear the account of Mr Yisrael Abelesz, a survivor of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, to tell us his experiences on the occasion of Holocaust Memorial Day and answer our questions.

Auschwitz, "has become a symbol of the Holocaust, representing man's inhumanity to man", as described by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. It was the largest of the Nazi killing camps, where approximately 1.1 million men, women and children, including Jews, gypsies, the handicapped, homosexuals, Soviet prisoners of war and political dissidents, were killed, out of a total estimate of 11 million assassinations throughout the Holocaust across Europe at the hands of the Nazis, from 1933 to 1945.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a day of remembrance held annually on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, by Soviet soldiers. Mr Yisrael Abelesz was interned as a

By listening to a personal account, behind mere figures, we can be led to empathy

teenager in Auschwitz-Birkenau and after the war, he came to England to work and bring up his family. His grandson is a current student at Imperial College.

Over six decades after the end of World War II, two generations have passed and the generation that lived through the Holocaust is dwindling in numbers. Why must we listen to them and tell our children about the atrocities they faced? By listening to a personal account, behind mere fig-



The Holocaust Memorial in Berlin

ures, we can be led to empathy and therefore to action, in a world that is too often infected by epidemic apathy. Indeed, as Lithuanian researcher Vladimir Orlov, involved with investigations into the Nazi killing camps in his country recently pointed out, it is "insane" that historians remember the names of the murderers, allowing them to live on in history, while the victims remain anonymous.

Hearing an account first-hand is not the same as reading history that has been watered down. As Professor Dinur, famously said "If we wish to live and bequeath life to our offspring, if we believe that we are to pave the way to the future, then we must first of all not forget". He suggests that witnesses that survived ensure a certain moral strength and we cannot allow their decreasing

numbers to create a moral, cultural and educational vacuum, particularly when genocidal ideologies and Holocaust denial persist.

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is "Communities Together: Build a Bridge", to remind us that the strongest communities are those that respect difference and create connections, to stop the spread of hate in our own time.

Come and hear an account of a survivor of the Holocaust, while you can.

Thursday 24th January, 6.00pm, Royal School of Mines, Lecture Theatre G20

Please try to RSVP by visiting the facebook page "Holocaust Memorial Day - A Talk and Q&A with Holocaust Survivor Yisrael Abelesz" or contact jsoc@imperial.ac.uk.



Execution wall in Auschwitz I

wikipedia.org

Mark A. Wilson

# FEATURES

Features Editors: Stephen Smith,

Caroline Wood

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# Internship decisions: City? ..

Already secured a city internship for summer '13? Or perhaps you're lo

## Intro

Everyone wants one. Some people seem to want one more than they want their degree. And some lucky people already have one. Gone are the days where Imperial students waste their summers away in Kavo's indoors watching Crystal Maze repeats, in these 'tough times' it's all about the summer internship.

But what makes a good internship? What do we want to gain from a summer of work? And where can we find the best experiences? We all know that the big city firms offer up healthy pay packets in exchange for long hours and the opportunity to sample the life of an analyst. But how do internships elsewhere compare. Are internships in the not-for-profit and charity sectors valuable too? Read these reports from Imperial students who have sampled both to find out...

## 4th year Physicist

### What aspect of your internship did you enjoy most?

The fact that the work I was doing actually went into active projects that would be seen by senior management and clients. It made a great change from say, writing a lab report, where the experimentation has been done a hundred times previously, everyone already knows the outcome and there is little space for individuality.

### What aspect of your internship did you dislike most?

Deadline changes! Now and then the piece of work you had planned to finish for the end of the week could be required the very next morning – something that doesn't really happen at university and that takes a bit of getting used to.

### Did you feel your work was valued by your team?

Gradually, yes. Due to the nature of the work, the team you're with can't give you free reign with an assignment straight off the bat, however as the summer progressed I was allowed to make more of my own judgements on various aspects of a project.

### Did your internship give you the opportunity to develop your skills and increase your knowledge?

Yes, a huge amount of information was available and had to be applied continuously throughout the summer. The hours may seem very tough to some, however in practical terms I was able to gain so much more experience within a single summer compared to an 'ordinary' 9-5 job.

### Would you like to work at the organisation full time? Why / Why not?

I enjoyed working with the people within my team and the sector itself interests me greatly so I would be more than happy to go back.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch, London

## 4th year Chemist

### What aspect of your internship did you enjoy most?

Meeting and working with people my age, who had the same ambitions and goals as me. Also, getting help and guidance from people who had been working at the company for a while. It felt very friendly.

### What aspect of your internship did you dislike most?

The limited number of full time offers available often meant that stress levels were high. There was a lot of pressure to produce high quality work, and this often meant working long hours. Having said that, the intensity wasn't as high as Imperial; managers are very wary of burnout, and there is an ethos of making the job sustainable in the long term (I think this is more of a London thing rather than an industry thing).

### Did you feel your work was valued by your team?

As an intern it is difficult to produce "valuable" work because you probably don't have the skill set required yet. What is really valued is the amount of effort you put into the work, which is reflected in its quality. Giving interns work to do actually tends to slow full-time staff down, but it does provide them with an idea of what it would be like to work with you, which is the most important thing, as the rest can be learned.

### Did your internship give you the opportunity to develop your skills and increase your knowledge?

The internship was a form of immersive learning. No academic course can prepare you for the skills you learn when you are on the job. This is part of the reason why there are no prerequisites or degree requirements for the job. I learned valuable life skills very quickly, which I believe were more valuable than the technical skills I picked up.

### Would you like to work at the organisation full time? Why / Why not?

I loved my internship and got along with my team really well. The culture of the firm was very friendly and it was a great place to spend my summer. I accepted an offer to work full-time and I am really looking forward to going back.

I don't think that the work is for everyone and there are downsides to the job. But there are downsides to every job, and for me these were far outweighed by the fact I am working on something I enjoy, the opportunities the job offers, and the people I will be working with day-to-day.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch, London

## 4th year Chemist

### What aspect of your internship did you enjoy most?

Working with a senior member of the firm to help compile some initial information for a client bid. The client project was in Africa and so I was tasked with compiling information about related work Accenture has done in Africa in the past. It meant I needed to be resourceful, show initiative and also got the chance to speak with colleagues in places such as Johannesburg and Lagos.

### What aspect of your internship did you dislike most?

As consultants often work on their client's sites, I was based in the less than exotic Park Royal (at the end of the West bound Piccadilly line). This meant I didn't get to join all of the intern social events in the city and sometimes felt a bit isolated.

### Did you feel your work was valued by your team?

Kind of. Although I felt that I didn't have enough technical knowledge to add value most of the time.

### Did your internship give you the opportunity to develop your skills and increase your knowledge?

In some areas, definitely yes. However, at times I felt like I was being given mundane tasks such as preparing ppt. slides and updating spreadsheets that weren't giving me much insight into how the firm operated.

### Would you like to work at the organisation full time? Why / Why not?

The people area great and the work is varied and can be interesting. Consulting work is highly dependent on your team, location and project and this gamble would be one of the things that would deter me from going back.

Accenture, London

Features Editors: Stephen Smith,  
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# FEATURES

# ... Or Charity?

Looking to work in the third sector? **Caroline Wood** compares the two

## 3rd year Biologist

### What aspect of your internship did you enjoy most?

I enjoyed the freedom and lack of hierarchy in the workplace. I was able to ask anyone questions and they were willing to talk to all the interns.

### What aspect of your internship did you dislike most?

I disliked the lack of structure in certain aspects of the internship. For example at times I felt I was doing filler-jobs that weren't properly thought through.

### Did you feel your work was valued by your team?

I do feel my work was valued however I feel I could have done more.

### Did your internship give you the opportunity to develop your skills and increase your knowledge?

Yes it did. I was surrounded by intelligent people, many of them extremely knowledgeable in fields I would like to go into.

### Would you like to work at the organisation full time? Why / Why not?

I would definitely like to work for the organisation full-time. The Wellcome Trust funds biomedical research and although I've enjoyed my degree, I don't want to become a researcher. Working in science, but not at the bench really appeals to me.

Wellcome Trust

## 3rd year Mathematician

### What aspect of your internship did you enjoy most?

The independence I was given. The trust too. I was PA to Director and Project Manager. The project I was in charge of aimed at analysing where communication departments sit within UK charities, how they are run as well as how they relate to the other core functions within the organization.

### What aspect of your internship did you dislike most?

The team I joined was rather small; hence we all had to contribute to the tedious yet necessary tasks such as mass emailing or database cleaning.

### Did you feel your work was valued by your team?

Definitely.

### Did your internship give you the opportunity to develop your skills and increase your knowledge?

Yes, I was given a lot of autonomy and freedom in my work, and could interact with member organisations without direct supervision, which felt very gratifying.

### Would you like to work at the organisation full time? Why / Why not?

Not in the near future, there's a great deal of things I would like to try my hand at first! However I have thoroughly enjoyed being an active part of such a dynamic team and don't exclude the possibility of joining a similar professional framework at some point in the future.

Ethical Internship with CharityComms

## 3rd year Biomedical Engineer

Rhiannon spent a six week placement with AHPN, the African Health Policy Network as part of the Imperial Hub ethical internship scheme. Here's her report:

I took part in the Ethical Internship Scheme just after completing my second year of a Biomedical Engineering degree at Imperial College London. I applied to the scheme as I was keen to explore slightly different career options than those of my course mates, i.e. I don't want to be a research scientist, doctor or banker! I knew I wanted to bridge a gap between the scientific elite and the wider community, educating those who otherwise would be fearful of change and development.

After the Easter networking event for all Student Hubs interns, I knew I'd met the type of people I would like to work with one day: they were dynamic, fascinating and impassioned people who weren't afraid to play silly games and express themselves unashamedly.

My six week placement was with AHPN, the African Health Policy Network, a charity that seeks to represent the healthcare needs and opinions of the Black African population living in the UK, as well as disseminating guidance and education concerning six key health care issues, known to affect the Black African community disproportionately (HIV, Tuberculosis, Breast and Prostate Cancer, Mental Health, Stroke and Diabetes) My main project was to re-draft a report published by BHIVA, the British HIV Association, which outlined the latest treatment guidelines, making it more accessible and relevant to community members. Processing the report in its original form was quite tough going. (I got the sense they'd been waiting for a scientist like me to come aboard!) but with a little bit of online research I reached the bare bones of the report.

It was important information, previously buried under scientific vocabulary; it felt great to dig it out to genuinely help the lives of others for the long term. I suppose I used my scientific powers for good this time!

Ethical Internship with AHPN, the African Health Policy Network

## Conclusion?

This very unofficial comparison of internships within different sectors draws out, for me, one key point. We like internships where we feel we are gaining valuable experiences. That may be networking with a team in a sector where we know we want to work, or having the opportunity to apply our skills to novel situations outside of the library/lab. As long as we are learning, gaining skills and expanding our knowledge we generally seem quite satisfied.

If you know what you want to do then it's obviously best to seek an internship in that particular area. However, if you are not sure what career path you want to take, does it really matter where you intern? In my opinion, not really.

A good and useful experience is worthwhile whether it's with a corporate or a charity. After all, that's what an internship is all about right? Trying new things to see what parts you like and what parts you don't.

*If you are still thinking about what to do this summer and fancy trying something a bit different, you can still apply to the Imperial Hub Ethical Internship scheme before 5pm on Monday 21st February. More details can be found by searching "Student Hubs Ethical Internships" or by checking out the Imperial Hub Facebook page.*



# FEATURES

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# A long term strategist

**Tim Arbabzadah** interviews the new Pro-Rector (Education)

Debra Humphris

**Tim Arbabzadah:** Does your background help you in your current role? Did you gain – I hate this word – transferrable skills?

Debra Humphris: It keeps me fairly grounded in what we're trying to achieve. Universities are extraordinary institutions and Imperial is definitely one of the best. Not just in terms of the amazing research that we do that transforms peoples lives, but the education and the whole experience that equally transforms the lives of our students. There's nothing more satisfying for me than seeing students flourish. We should give them an outstanding experience, and just set them off to do amazing things in life and society.

**TA:** You've only just come in, so I guess is one of your aims to start meeting student reps so they know that right up at the top there is someone that they know?

DH: Of course, I met with Doug [Hunt, Deputy President (Education)] Becky [Lane, Deputy President (Welfare)] and Paul [Beaumont, Union President] before I took up post. For me the Student Union is a really important part of the wider student experience, and how we work in partnership is really matters. As part of my background research on the College I read the 2011 NSS Response, it was a really helpful insight on the issues that matter to our students. Recently I've worked with Paul and Doug on the 2012 report. We had some interesting conversations to make sure it's absolutely accurate, because it wouldn't help anybody if it wasn't accurate. It's a really helpful way to focus on the key areas where we can enhance the education and student experience, but we won't be able to do it all at once. The outgoing graduates who complete the NSS in 2013 might have very different views from the previous cohorts, but there will always be improvements we can make. My normal modus operandi is that my job is education and student experience, and therefore I need to be close to the student body, listening to their views, being accessible to students for me is really important.

**TA:** Some students may feel a bit intimidated talking to a higher up person and attempt to act in a different way around you. Would you rather a warts and all portrayal of modern student life?

DH: I remember at my interview when asked about what my style was I said "what you see is what you get". I would rather students felt able to have a very

straightforward conversation with me, because I can't see the point of doing anything otherwise, it's far better that we're frank and open with each other.

**TA:** What do you think the internet's role is? Is there a big challenge in using the internet effectively rather than just because you can?

DH: There are a number of universities around the world who have taken significant steps to open up online resources. Most notable is Edx started by Harvard and MIT with others now joining. What I have been exploring with colleagues is that we have 'digital natives' coming through in terms of students for whom technology is normal. The question now is how then do we combine that in the most effective way to enhance the educational experience. I'm also very interested in where we as Imperial want to position ourselves in terms of that online community. In February I'm bringing a group of people together internally as part of a strategy development process to consider why and what we want to do about this. There's no doubt we could do more and but first we need to be clear about our strategy for that? I'd be quite keen to explore how we might use some of our online resources to better encourage young people in secondary schools to engage with science, technology and maths.

**TA:** A lot of universities get lambasted for not doing enough for outreach to get people into university? What is the universities place in this? Or would you say that the Government unfairly point the blame at the universities for a school system that is their jurisdiction?

DH: With the change to tuition fees for Home/EU undergraduate students the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) has required us in our access agreement to make clear how we make additional investment in student support and outreach activities. As tuition fee income increases so the grant from the

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is reducing, So we're using investing more in outreach, we can't do everything so we have to be really quite strategic and focused on what makes a difference.

There's one thing about encouraging young people to consider higher education, but it's another thing to encourage them to apply to Imperial.

Our outreach team does great work; we've got some great developments such as Reach Out Lab and the number of schools that they engage with. We're at a point where we probably need to take stock and review where we can most effectively focus our efforts.

**TA:** At Imperial, Departments are quite autonomous. Would you say the way forward is making things uniform across all Departments? Or is it a better approach to look at departments individually?

DH: Well in terms of education we also have to operate within the framework of the Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code, and one of the issues this raises is how we ensure parity of experience. There will be disciplinary differences: chemistry is not the same as mechanical engineering. Where we've made a commitment to students in our quality framework and in our regulations we need to ensure we deliver

our commitments.

Feedback has always been the one that people highlight, not just at Imperial. In terms of assessment and feedback I think there's a bigger issue around what's feedback, how do you know you're getting feedback? What does feedback look like? Helping students understand what that really means. And in terms of assessment, I suspect that we need to think about and really understand the purpose of assessment. What does the assessment look like? I would hazard a guess that there are areas in which we might be over assessing students for whatever reason. If we really want to focus on assessment and feedback we need to think about what constitutes assessment. When do we need to assess? What are we assessing in terms of the learning outcomes for particular courses?

**TA:** The difficulty, in my view, with making everything standardised involves chasing up and ensuring every lecturer does something to a perfect standard?

DH: In reality there is variation in all things, we are all somewhere in a range in a distribution curve. But I go back to the point that it's about being clear about what feedback is and signalling that very clearly to students. If we've made a promise about when we'll give you feedback then we need to keep our promises. Still there's a bigger issue about what is assessment, how are we assessing, what assessment do we actually need to do. There's a bigger piece of work to do on this.

**TA:** Are these sorts of issues that you're taking a back to square one approach, rather than building on current framework? Maybe thinking: perhaps let's dismantle and put the framework back together again?

DH: With the support of the Management Board in the next 6 months I'll be taking forward a process to refresh and refine an education and student experience strategy. There will be a range of provocations that will invite students and staff to contribute going to a whole set of elements that should shape our strategy. This has to build upon the great education and experience we offer and to take it further. As part of the process I'll be encouraging us all to look up and out to consider best practice from across the globe. Once we've decided what we want to do it strikes me that Imperial will do it with gusto!

## Background

Didn't go to university  
Trained as a nurse  
Qualified as a nurse educator  
Did part time masters while working full time  
Spotted and recruited for a regional health authority  
Held various jobs at the Department of Health  
PhD at George's Medical School  
Recruited by University of Southampton  
Worked on "big curriculum change around interprofessional education, health, and social care" called New Generation Project  
Appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education & Student Experience)  
Appointed Pro-Rector (Education) at Imperial College London  
...Makes big impact at Imperial?

My strategy is to take forward a conversation across the College to develop a strategy that engages the genius of the staff and students in the College. The focus is the education and wider student experience and everybody should have a voice in this process.

**TA:** Last question. So would you say that the educational experience of a student can improve a student's satisfaction and welfare as a whole? Do you think the educational experience is a stem to their general enjoyment of university?

DH: Well, students fundamentally come to the university to take part in an educational experience to receive an award from the institution. That's not just the educational experience; it included the wider support that is in place: the accommodation, the catering, the sports and recreation, volunteering, careers advice, disability service etc. There are a whole range of elements that are there to support and help students to not just on their programme but in the wider experience as a student. I'm interested in the rounded genius of our students, because it's more than just their programme. It's the students that take part in volunteering, get involved in outreach in schools, sports, fund raising and the other elements. That's the rounded genius of our students and I really like to work with the Union and students to find a way to further enhance such opportunities.



# CHURCH

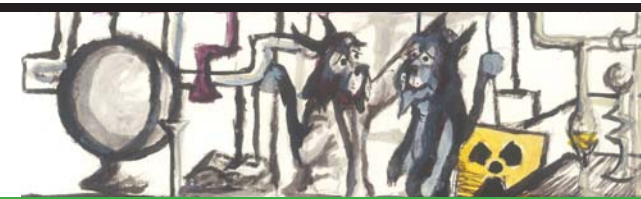
[everynation.co.uk](http://everynation.co.uk)



**SUNDAYS**  
ACTIVITY SPACE 1  
**STUDENT UNION**

Free café – 5:30  
**LIVE BAND**





# Your atomic number's up

**Pavitar Singh Devgon** talks about the new clock that has got the masses into a frenzy

<http://www.hsmagazine.net>

**W**hether it was using sand, sundials or swinging pendulums, humans have strived to create more efficient time keeping devices. The past century saw a large jump with the introduction of the atomic clock. Current models operate by measuring the microwave energy signature of electrons dropping between energy levels. These are remarkably precise with errors as little as 1 part in 1017, which equates to dropping a second every 3 billion years or so.

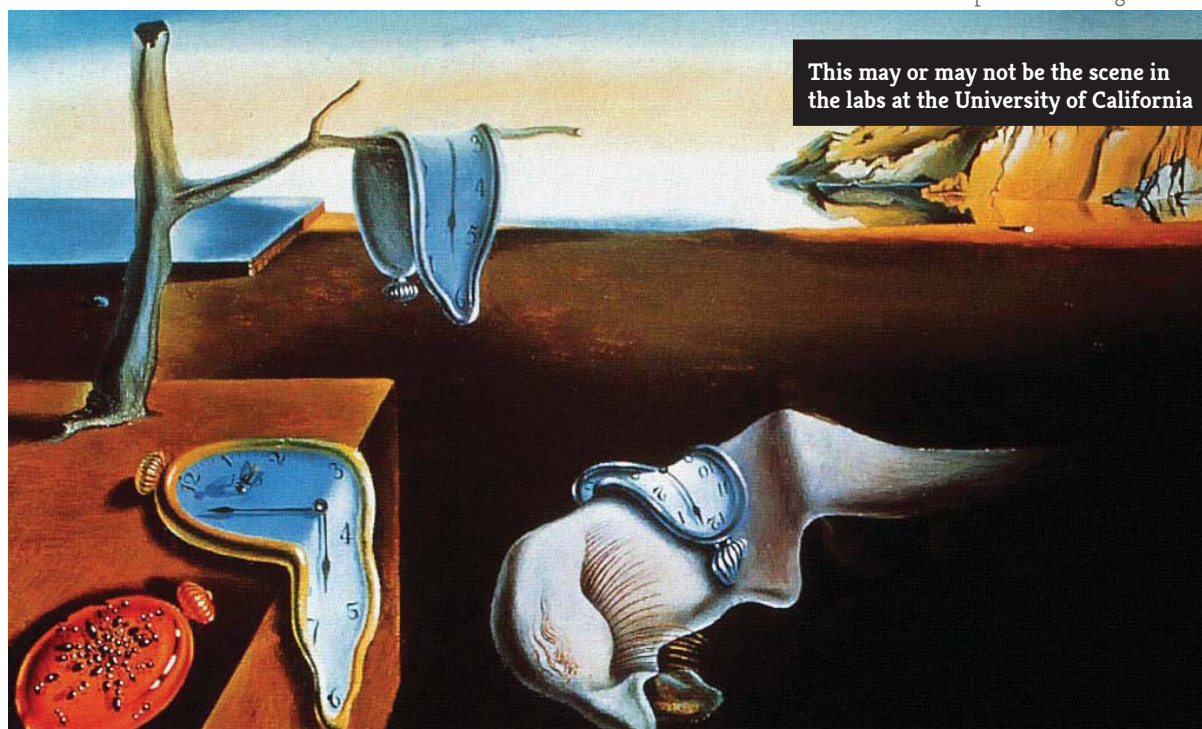
Since the metric system was defined (later superseded by the International System of Units), physicists have sought ever more precise methods to determine the standard weights and measures. For example, the metre was first defined as a fraction of the meridian line on the Earth – a very physical and tangible measure. With the aim of improving accuracy, however, it was generally adopted to define the base units in terms of important physical constants, which are more resolute and rigid. This had led to the metre being defined as a fraction of the speed of light. The second is measured by the radiation emitted from electron shell transitions of a fixed, duplicable atom. All the other SI units are defined this way, apart from

the kilogram, which is defined only in terms of a prototype platinum-iridium rod kept in France.

A research experiment by a team from the University of California, Berkeley, intended to produce accurate atomic clocks, and could now also be used to refine the definition of the kilogram. Based on Arthur Compton's idea that photons deliver kinetic energy to electrons and alter their momentum, and Louis de Broglie's theory that moving electrons can be thought of as waves, the new atomic clock works by measuring the Compton frequency of atoms.

Characteristic Compton frequencies are used: around 1020 Hz for electron-waves, and  $3 \times 10^{25}$  Hz for a caesium atom. An ultra-precise laser is used to deliver fixed impact pulses to half a sample of caesium atoms, with the effect of slowing the Compton frequency. By combining the pulsed sample with the original half and using atom interferometry to measure their interaction. When the samples separate to a multiple of the Compton frequency, the output of the interferometer is high. The frequency of the fixed impact pulses is then the frequency of the atomic clock.

Though the new atomic clock is only accurate to 4 parts per billion, Holger Müller, leader of the research team, states that "it's no better than the



original atomic clocks 50 years ago. But who knows what we could achieve with five decades of improvement?"

What is different about this experiment is that other atomic clocks are dependent on several parameters of the system, such as spin of electrons and its interaction with the nucleus. These are not always fundamental and could be improved. Additionally,

they require at least two atoms, one for reference, while this design could be adapted to work with single atoms and high-precision lasers.

Nevertheless, there is criticism of the research. Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, winner of the 1997 Nobel Prize, is not satisfied with the findings and what is claimed from them: their paper "reports a measurement

of the recoil frequency, but this recoil effect has been known for decades. Any atomic clock involves masses. But nowhere in their experiment, does a real Compton oscillator at 1025 Hz appear!" While the debate continues, other physicists are at least interested in the possibilities mentioned.

DOI:10.1038/nature.2013.12191

## Ugandan pygmy tribe display flexible footwork skills

<http://phenomena.nationalgeographic.com>

**Nick Kennedy** Science Writer

Scientists from Dartmouth College, Hanover, recently focused on the ankle-flexibility of pygmy populations in Uganda. They filmed the honey-gathering behaviour of pygmies to measure the flexibility of their ankle joints.

The findings, reported in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, show that pygmy hunter-gatherers have extraordinarily flexible ankles. This enables them to climb up trees with their shins almost touching the trunk, like a chimpanzee. If a person unaccustomed to climbing bent their foot to such extremes, they would suffer severe damage.

The team used ultrasound to compare the length of leg muscle fibres in the Twa of Uganda, a pygmy tribe, with those found in the Bakiga, Ugandan farmers who seldom climb trees. They found that the fibres running



alongside the shin bone were much longer in the Twa.

The pygmy climb trees mainly to collect honey, a vital component of their diet and an indicator of social prestige. But climbing and foraging at such heights, in excess of fifty metres, is extremely dangerous. Among the Aka, a nomadic pygmy tribe, falls from trees account for seven per cent of male deaths.

Safe, quick climbing could have acted as the selection pressure driving unusually flexible ankles.

These findings have important implications for human evolution. About five million years ago, ancestral humans started walking about on two feet, but exactly what drove this milestone in human development has long been debated. From studying the fossil record, some anthropolo-

gists believe that early hominids were incapable of climbing trees because of their foot structure. This has led to the over-simplified classification of dividing human ancestors into two groups: those that swung through the forests and those that stalked the

open plains. However, with the discovery of an ankle adapted for life in the trees in modern humans, the situation becomes a touch more perplexing.

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SCIENCE

# Aquatic pornography

Philippa Skett on how bisexuality and fish porn have come together this week

<http://www.aquaportal.com/fiche-poisson-1620-poecilia-mexicana.html>

**N**ew research published this week that involved female fish watching fish-porn, among other things, could possibly shed new light onto the causation of homosexuality, mating preferences and mate determination. Experiments on the tropical fresh-water fish species *Poecilia mexicana* presented interesting results that could solve the Darwinian puzzle of same-sex mating, despite it occurring in a multitude of species, including our own.

It has previously been found that female mate choice in certain species is dependent on information gathered whilst observing the social interactions of the candidates in mind, to determine if they are worthy of copulation. Social interactions observed can be sexual or not, and allow for an insight into the reproductive quality of the male in question. Such organisms, such as *P. Mexicana*, prefer to just sit back and watch the action, then go from there.

In particular, these nosy fish like to observe males consorting with other females, and tend to prefer mating with those that they have already observed getting frisky. This “sharing is caring” attitude is known as mate choice copying, and places a significant value on mating behaviour. However, with the social hierarchies seemingly experienced in high schools everywhere also common to fish shoals, it is often the case that some “subordinate” males cannot access the top notch females of the community.



*P. mexicana* doing it's best “come-hither” glance- coupled with some fish-on-fish action

Listening to the song ‘Teenage Dirt bag’ allows for understanding of how this translates Homo sapiens, but, unlike two tickets to an **Iron Maiden** gig, these fish have developed something a bit sneakier to bag that mate.

These lonely males attempt to improve their mating chances by simply mating with each other to exploit the mate choice copying strategy, and it seems like this homosexual behaviour does the trick. *P. mexicana* are prone to a behavioural trait known as nipping, where males nip at the female genital opening prior to copulation, and this was filmed between two male

fish, one notably less colourful and therefore less attractive, and shown to a female on a screen. It was found that a significant increase was observed in the females’ attraction to the drabber of the male pair, and not only that, as there was no significant preference between the males’ homosexual behaviour and heterosexual behaviour, it doesn’t seem to matter too much who you are screwing, as long as you are screwing someone in the eyes of these fickle females.

This therefore means that in this species of fish, being a bit more experimental can do you some favours

if you are particularly unattractive male. However, does this translate to the wider world of homosexual occurrences?

Exclusive homosexuality so far has only been observed in humans, sheep and certain birds, although bisexual male mating behaviour is much more prominent. Homosexuality has been a Darwinian puzzle for decades, with it seemingly resulting in decreasing the male reproductive fitness, although new research is constantly honing in on what could cause homosexuality and why.

Many independent studies into hu-

man homosexuality have determined that people are probably born with their sexuality defined as opposed to being environmentally influenced. Differences in brain structure between homosexual males and heterosexual males have been noted, alongside the pattern of brain activation seen in homosexual men and heterosexual females being distinct from that of heterosexual men. Genetic markers on Xq28, a region on the X chromosome, and also possibly on three other chromosomes have been statistically linked to sexual orientation too.

Therefore considering the behaviourally-derived advantages of same sex mating alongside biological influences may provide an alternative view point of the evolution of this completely natural phenomenon. This research could further the dialogue about the intricacies behind same sex mating across the multitude of species it has been observed in, and bring us a step closer to understanding it fully.

So, regardless of the species involved, the evolutionary derivation it may have and what Westboro Baptist Church say on the matter, same sex mating is highly prevalent in nature, and it could be that it will be fully understood as to why within our lifetime. Until then however, tread carefully when from taking a leaf out of the *P. mexicana* book of love – what may work for these fish may not necessarily work for other species.

DOI: 10.1038/493136a

## The epic genetics (or epigenetics) of invasive species

Fiona Hartley Science Writer

Even at Imperial I doubt you’d find biology students wearing T-shirts referring to Lamarckism, but you especially wouldn’t find them wearing shirts that deride, “In hindsight, pretty ridiculous”. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s evolutionary theories are remembered for suggesting that offspring could inherit characteristics that their parents had acquired due to the environment. The classic example is that every generation of baby giraffes has slightly longer and stronger necks because their parents are continuously stretching their necks to reach the leaves of Acacia trees.

Dismissed if not outright ridiculed for decades, nowadays Lamarckism

has made its comeback in the form of epigenetics: the study of changes in gene expression that don’t alter the genome itself. Such modifications are acquired in both childhood and adulthood, and can be inherited by one’s progeny. As well as occurring naturally in cellular processes, such as regulating the fate of stem cells, epigenetic changes to the genome can be caused by environmental factors.

With the understanding that variation exists not only at the genomic level but at the epigenetic level too, some ecologists are beginning to speculate on the roles that epigenetic diversity might play in evolutionary adaptations to the environment. In particular, they speculate that one reason that invasive species do so well in novel environments is because of

epigenetics.

Adaptation needs two things: genetic diversity, and time for beneficial mutations to the genome to accumulate. But invasive species are often limited in their genetic diversity and establish very quickly. Japanese knotweed reproduces asexually, thus forgoing the high gene variation that we think makes sexual reproduction so advantageous. So if they are not adapting to the environment via permanent changes to their genome, how are they so successful?

Christina Richards, an evolutionary ecologist at the University of South Florida, thinks that epigenetics is one answer. She has found that Japanese knotweed exhibits high epigenetic diversity, with plants possessing different leaf shapes and growing to dif-

ferent heights depending on the environments they inhabit. Invasive house sparrows in Kenya also show high epigenetic variation between populations in different environments, despite the limited genetic diversity of the sparrows (they are descended from a single group). Both results support the idea that genes modified epigenetically by the environment could be passed on, ultimately helping invasive species to gain footholds in new areas.

The jury is still out: critics are not convinced, arguing that the success of invasive species is explained perfectly well by other reasons supported by well-founded evolutionary theories, such as expanding into unoccupied niches where they can thrive despite limited genetic diversity. But re-

search into ecological and evolutionary epigenetics seems set to take off as obstacles like the limited number of sequenced wild plant and animal genomes are overcome by decreasing costs.

The budding integration of disparate research fields investigating epigenetic variation and inheritance in natural populations, facilitated by symposiums and increased dialogue, is likely to lead to several studies that will demonstrate how environmental changes affect gene expression. These studies will also address the impacts, if any, that epigenetics have on the evolution of species. Once again, it is an exciting time for evolutionary biology.

DOI: 10.1038/nature.2013.12179



# Le Misérable

A story of tax increases, strong words, national identity and Russian passports. Not up for nominations at the Oscars

**Padraic Calpin** Politics Editor

“GéGé” is the affectionate nickname of famous French actor Gérard Depardieu; but lately he hasn’t been the recipient of much affection. Instead, Depardieu has found himself at the centre of a debate that has taken place in countless nations since the financial crisis began; how great should the tax burden be, and how should it be shared? In practice, the question is narrowed down further, so that the narrative focuses on the highest earners in society and the disparity of the “1%” versus the 99.

In France, current centre-left President Francois Hollande brought the debate into the political sphere during his election campaign; his Parti Socialiste ran on a platform of equally split budget cuts, tax cuts and tax rises that included a so called 75% “Super Tax” on individuals earning over €1m. Though largely taken as a symbolic gesture for its expected revenue of €200m, the tax made Hollande’s political stance resolutely clear, but immediately attracted

controversy.

The 75% rate constitutes the highest income tax of any nation in the world, followed up by Sweden’s 57% upper limit. Despite an overwhelming public support of 60%, however, many business groups accuse Hollande of driving away entrepreneurs and threatening the French recovery; if these arguments sound familiar, it’s because they’re almost identical to the debate over the 50% tax instigated at the end of the last Labour government, and now cut to 45% by the Coalition.

Shortly after Hollande’s announcement, many prominent wealthy citizens such as Jean Michel Jarre, Brigitte Bardot, and CEO of the luxury LVMH group Bernard Arnault admitted to considering or even taking steps towards expatriating. And, of course, Depardieu.

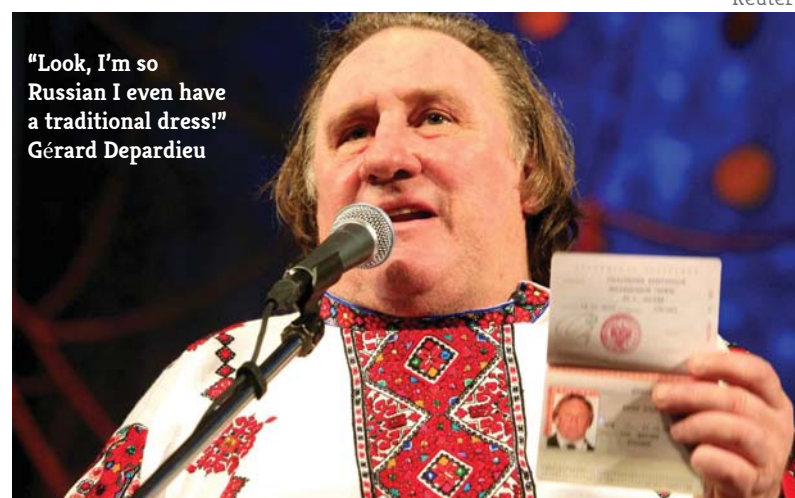
Why, then, does Gérard’s case make the headlines, even here in the United Kingdom? Because it has far greater symbolism than any of the others; Depardieu was born the son of a poor metal worker, and left school at age 15; given his own upbringing, shouldn’t the issue of taxation and provision of

public services be close to his heart?

Thus, when it emerged Depardieu had purchased a mansion in the Belgian village of Néchin, it provoked outrage; Néchin is notorious for its community of wealthy French “frontalières”, who profit from the region’s lower taxation.

France’s Prime Minister, Jean-Jacques Ayrault, weighed in, declaring Depardieu’s actions “pathetic”, and culture minister Audrey Filippetti accused the actor of “deserting the battlefield” in the country’s war against economic crisis. The story then took an amazingly bizarre turn, with Depardieu writing an open letter to the Prime Minister declaring that he was “returning his passport”, and accepting an offer of Russian citizenship from Vladimir Putin himself.

Though for the moment it seems the story is on pause; the 75% tax is presently unworkable as it was rejected by the French constitutional courts on a technicality. However, the analysis of Depardieu’s letter rumbles on. In it, he rejects accusations of shirking responsibility, claiming



to have paid €145M in tax over his lifetime, and that he paid a total of 85% tax on his income last year. It seems that, in arriving at this 85% figure, Depardieu is taking into account all the charges levied on incomes from his various business interests and the 75% rate; that this hasn’t yet been imposed, and indeed ignores other vast contributions to his fortune such as the recent sale of his Parisian hotel.

As Hollande has sworn to rework

and pursue his 75% tax rate, the debate over tax in France looks set to continue, and indeed similar fights are playing out the world over. From America’s fiscal cliff negotiations to Britain’s recent debate over welfare reform, the crisis is forcing many nations to reassess the conditions that prevailed in the years of boom and lax regulation, and the political establishment will have to grind away at this issue for years to come.

Reuters

## France steps up intervention in Mali

**Alexander Soloviev** Writer

Mali is in the middle of a crisis. Since the start of 2012, a war of independence has been fought in its northern provinces, known collectively as Azawad. The conflict ended abruptly in April with the ousting of the then President Amadou Toumani Touré, by rebelling soldiers over his handling of the war. The loose alliance of Tuaregs and Islamists (Ansar Dine, a group linked to Al-Qaeda) then declared Azawad an independent state.

The short war led to a dire humanitarian crisis: some 200,000 people are currently displaced, with millions more expected to be affected by drought. Amnesty International, a human rights group, reported instances of gang rape, executions without trial and the use of child soldiers in Azawad.

Besides the human suffering, cultural casualties are also amassing: Islamists seem to be keen on wiping out the UNESCO-recognized Islamic shrines, considered sacred by Sufi muslims. Ansar Dine views

these shrines as idolatrous and, thus, inconsistent with their aim of spreading and ruling Azawad by Sharia law.

With such a large humanitarian crisis at hand and the potential for the birth of a Sharia-ruled Al-Qaeda linked state in Saharan Africa, the costs of containing the crisis could never be higher. The government in Mali formally requested for international support, following an Islamist push into southern Mali.

It is reassuring to see that the call for help answered so expediently,

“The French [...] are experiencing a renewed involvement in world affairs”

with both the African Union and the European Union offering military support to Mali. The French are at the forefront of intervention, already deploying 800 soldiers with hundreds more arriving in the coming days. Air strikes are a daily occurrence. The British and Belgians are providing the French intervention with equipment or technical support.

In addition to the French boots on the ground, thousands of African Union troops are being deployed as well. Neighbouring nations are particularly interested in preventing a terrorist haven from entrenching in their backyards.

Curiously absent from the scene is the United States. As the State Department stated, no direct military aid to Mali can be allocated until leaders are appointed through elections. Though troop deployment does not seem like a possibility, the Pentagon has been collaborating with the French military, providing intelligence from satellite images, as well as intercepted signals.

The foreign involvement in Mali represents an intriguing change in global politics. America no longer

views itself as the global police force to every conflict, wisely choosing the cheaper and politically safer option of supporting regional powers to solve their issues. The debt crisis, as well as the legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan, weighs in heavily.

The French, on the other hand, are experiencing a renewed involvement in world affairs as a vocal leader. Qaddafi was toppled with the help of French-led air support, a victory for France and Sarkozy, even if it didn’t keep him in office. French involvement does pose some acute problems, with Islamists threatening attacks upon France itself. President Hollande seems willing to risk the possibility of a terrorist attack and even entertains the possibility of prolonged involvement in Mali, so long as it means the end of a lawless and unstable region so close to home.

For the most part, Malians have welcomed the foreign troops happily. Stabilizing the situation in Azawad would allow closing refugee camps that taxed the south of the country, as well as its neighbours. For the thousands of displaced, it means they can return home.

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# COMMENT

Comment Editors: George Barnett,  
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# Failed your exams, huh?

**Daniel Sokol** gives his advice on writing appeals for those with legitimate grounds



**Daniel Sokol**

**L**ast year, a friend of mine failed his PhD. He turned to me for advice. I reviewed the case, and discovered that he had not been offered a second viva, contrary to the university's regulations. Without a second viva, he had no opportunity to defend his thesis orally. The examiners had little experience of examining PhDs and there was evidence of bias in the assessment of the thesis. When the examiners told my friend the bad news, they barely gave any reasons.

A few weeks after receiving my friend's appeal letter, the university's appeal board held that the regulations had been breached. My friend was allowed to resubmit his thesis with new examiners. This experience inspired me to set up Alpha Academic Appeals, which advises and assists students in their appeals.

When I was a lecturer, I marked hundreds of exam scripts. Few academics will deny that marking is, on the whole, a soul-sapping task. On one occasion, a student contacted me to say there was an error in his script. My office partner at the time, a more senior academic, advised me to say that the result is final and to refuse to revisit the script. I thought it fair to double check. To my surprise, the marks were added incorrectly. Examiners, however experienced, will occasionally make mistakes, and those will not always be picked up by a second examiner.

So what if you fail an exam and want to appeal? There are two grounds for appealing against a decision of the Board of Examiners, and you will note that disagreeing with the academic judgment of the examiners is not one of them. They are:

1. That the exam(s) was not conducted in accordance with the relevant instructions, regulations or requirements.



2. Where new evidence is provided of circumstances which might have adversely affected your performance in the exams.

Whatever your reasons, they must fit within at least one of the above. You must therefore find out what the relevant "instructions, regulations or requirements" are. They can be found on the Imperial website (<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations>).

Illness and bereavement are often invoked as reasons for appealing an exam result. The 'Guidance to Students' is clear on this issue:

"You are reminded that if you believe your performance in exams may be affected by illness (or by other personal circumstances) you should report the matter to your tutor before sitting the exams, or as soon as possible thereafter. You should not wait for your results before deciding to notify the College of the situation. "Information regarding extenuat-

ing circumstances received after the exams will not be considered as the grounds for an appeal, unless there are exceptional reasons why this information could not be provided at the time."

If you have been withdrawn from your course, there are different grounds of appeal, which can be found in Appendix 1 of the Regulations. Whatever the appeal, the key point is to refer to the appropriate grounds of appeal and to the rules and regulations which were allegedly breached.

Finally, Imperial College is a university, and universities, like NHS trusts and local authorities, are public bodies. This means that, in making decisions, Imperial must adhere to recognised principles of public law. It must, for example, follow a fair procedure and avoid bias. In short, its decisions must be fair.

All this can be daunting, especially after receiving the bad news

of a failed exam or withdrawal from the course. You may wish to contact a College Tutor or the Imperial College Student Adviser for help. It costs nothing, but remember to act promptly. You generally only have four weeks from the date of receiving official notification of your results to submit your appeal, along with supporting evidence.

You want to give yourself plenty of time to read the rules and regulations, write a persuasive appeal letter, and gather any evidence to support your claims. Ask others to read your appeal letter and make suggestions on how to improve it.

One final point. Statistically, the chances of a successful appeal are low. Most appeals are weak and rightly dismissed. There is no entitlement to passing exams, however high the tuition fees. Yet, some appeals have strong grounds and good prospects of success. In such cases, students should be encouraged to appeal.

Write a persuasive appeal letter, and gather evidence to support your claims.

## Letters



In Felix 11/01, an article attempted to compare workloads at Imperial and Oxbridge. Was the writer aware that Oxford only has 20 teaching weeks per year? Was he aware of the importance of the Supervision/tutorial system at Oxbridge? Very poor research leading to misleading conclusions!!

Professor Roderick A Smith, FREng, ScD  
Chief Scientific Advisor Department for Transport  
Immediate Past President Institution of Mechanical Engineers  
Chairman Future Rail Research Centre Imperial College London  
via email

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# COMMENT

# Faitheism: the importance of dialogue



Rory Fenton

**E**very Christmas for the past several years I sit down and I cry. It's not that I'm sad; it's an important tradition. Every Christmas I sit down and watch *It's A Wonderful Life* and like a predictable fool each time I'm blinking back salty water. And it's not just with this film – name a tear jerker and it's probably worked its magic on me. I even cried at Susan Boyle's *Britain's Got Talent* audition.

But books, now that's a different story. I'm always so much more engaged by books. They can move and inspire. I've changed countless opinions on the strength of a book I've read, and found myself in many more people's shoes than ever I have in films. But a book has yet to win a tear from me. Perhaps it's the lack of soundtrack, I've just never had a pile of paper get the slightest boo or hoo from me, never-mind both at the same time.

That is, until I read *Faitheist*.

*Faitheist* is a memoir from Chris Stedman, assistant chaplain at the Harvard Humanist Chaplaincy. I've actually known Chris for over two years now, ever since I wrote for his blog, Non Prophet Status. But while I've been following his work since, I can't claim to know him personally, which is why reading his memoir feels so strange, like I'm peeking into his diary. So why does someone just two years older than me have his memoirs out already? It's because as atheists

and the religious debate how to engage one another, his is a very important story to tell.

Chris tells the story of how he went from evangelical Christian to atheist. Such a transition could never be smooth but Chris' was made all the rockier by his realisation from his early teens that he is gay. He tells of his struggle to reconcile his sexuality with his faith, a struggle that at first he seems to be loosing. He is told that his sexuality is a demon inside him trying to prise him from God. Unable to accept himself, Chris is driven to despair. He describes how one evening, home alone and hating himself for simply being Chris, he took a sharp kitchen knife and locked himself in the family bathroom. Tears and snot smearing his face, he rolled up his left sleeve and practiced, slicing through the warm air above his living skin, the movement he needed to make to end it all. Chris is, of course, still with us but unlike in *It's a Wonderful Life* he had no realisation, crouched with his back against the cold shower tiles, of what the world would miss without him – only the thought that suicide would be yet another black mark against his soul made him step out of that shower and replace the knife in its drawer.

This is a very powerful moment and, yes, it moved me to tears. This book and Chris' life itself could easily, after that episode, have been dedicated to vehemently opposing religion in all its forms. I for one couldn't blame him



yet incredibly the message of the book and Chris' professional life is one of tolerance; a call for dialogue, not division, between believer and non-believer. Confident now in his atheism, Chris wishes to use his story to highlight intolerance of all kinds – and this includes intolerance within the atheist community for the religious. In his work at Harvard, Chris aims to build constructive dialogue with religious people, focusing on shared values and making genuine, sincere attempts at mutual understanding. Chris stresses that the enemy of secularism is not religion but religious extremism. In combatting this extremism, atheists can find many allies among the religious. Indeed, there simply aren't enough of us to achieve a good society on our own. We simply must work together and Chris believes it is possible.

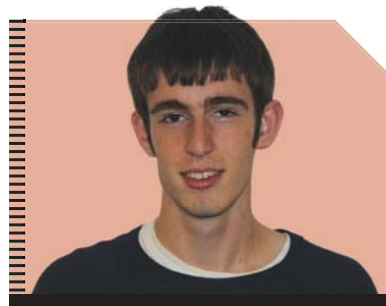
If someone who was driven close to suicide by religiously-inspired homophobia can make peace with religion,

surely so too can many atheists. The world is simply too complex to divide along the tribal lines of religious and atheist, us and them. In making active efforts to reach across this faith divide we stand to make not just useful allies in fighting the homophobia, sexism and anti-science behind religious extremism, we stand too to build real relationships and gain real friendships. This is Chris' challenge to his readers and I'm with him on it. Atheists and religious people have too much to gain from sincere dialogue to wallow in lazy stereotyping. As most of us begin to lose the momentum of our two week old New Year's resolutions, perhaps atheists at large could make a fresh resolution, to make an attempt this year to actively engage a religious person about their beliefs, to try to understand where they come from and see what you might have in common. You could just be surprised. Let the dialogue begin.

Rory tweets as @roryfenton

# The mother of all inferiority complexes

## Imperial is a world-leading university: we should all stop moaning about Oxbridge, says **George Butcher**



George Butcher

**L**ast week Felix published an article discussing the differences in workload between Oxbridge and Imperial. 'Who works harder?' seemed to be the question it was asking. It threw lots of figures at the reader and seemed to suggest that Oxbridge gives students more contact hours and was much better value for money. The comments online erupted. Imperial's longer terms were pointed out as an explanation for reduced contact times and there were debates on the quality of the course content, particularly amongst the physicists.

This all really annoys me. Imperial students seem to be incapable of getting over an Oxbridge rejection.

Everyone seems to complain and be all "Oh we work so hard," or "Aren't we so underappreciated?" Or my personal favourite, "People don't fill out the NSS properly and league tables are just rubbish." We seem to have a constant fixation with how hard we supposedly work and an innate bitterness at Oxbridge for not letting us in. It's bizarre and no other university is daft enough to do it.

Firstly, everyone thinks they work hard. The hours you work are perfectly comparable to the hours many people work in a job. It's a cliché, but nothing worth achieving has been easy to do so. I don't know what you want to do with your life, and dare I say it, nor do you. But whatever it is, if you want to

be successful at it, you're going to have to work hard to get there. Get used to it now.

Secondly, Imperial is one of the best further education institutions in the world. Let's say it's the third best in the UK. That's pretty good. So what if Oxford and Cambridge claim spots one and two, you're still at a university which consistently ranks in the top ten world-wide. When you graduate and go looking for a job, nobody is ever going to say, "We would give you the job, but frankly, we don't think Imperial is a serious enough university." Imperial's courses are different to Oxbridge's and this is good. I'll have different skills and experiences to engineering graduates from there. There is no 'gold

standard' on what to do in a course. Let's all take the opportunity to learn from some of the best in the world and not waste time complaining.

There is research to be done on how different university courses differ all over the world. Last week's article tried it, but with lots of short comings which it was frank about. For now though, let's enjoy our time at Imperial and all its unique qualities. Enjoy living and working in central London and take advantage of everything it can offer. Write for Felix! Take up a sport. Challenge yourself. Don't be obsessed with being 'as good as Oxbridge' because it's inane and frankly it's boring.

George tweets as @georgebutcher

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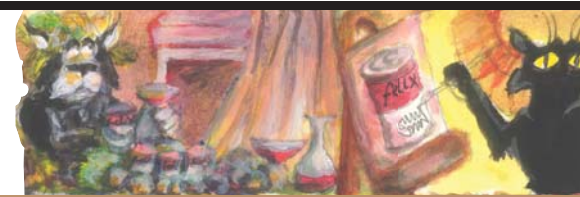
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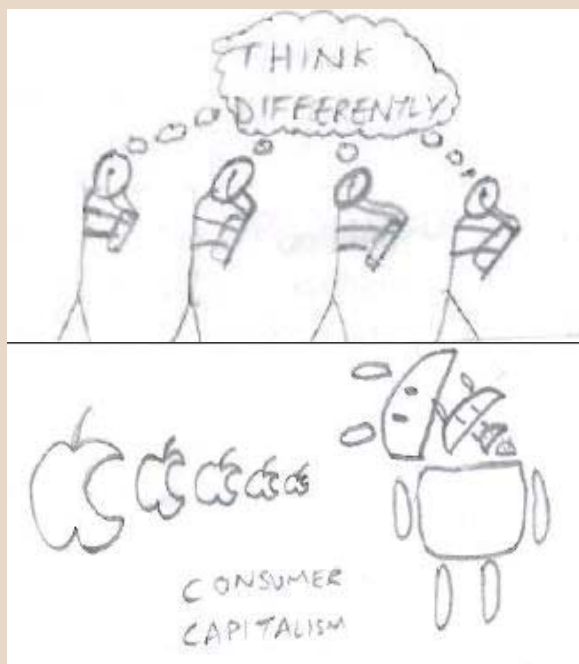
## ARTS

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Meredith Thomas

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## DOODLE OF THE WEEK



Why work? Instead, doodle all lecture long and then send us your drawings to [arts.felix@ic.ac.uk](mailto:arts.felix@ic.ac.uk). These doodles were done, tongue firmly wedged in cheek, by Pavitar Singh Devgon.

## TIRED OF LIFE?

## Our pick of what's on in London

**Juergen Teller:** @ Institution of Contemporary Art – Teller is one of the few photographers to successfully bridge the divide between commercial and art photography. This major retrospective covers his entire career from portraits of Kurt Cobain, through shoots with a 15 year old Kate Moss up to contemporary work with landscapes and family, £10. 23 January - 17 March.

**Spirit Collection** @ Natural History Museum – If you have a spare afternoon take a trip just down the road to the Darwin Centre's collection of 22 million preserved organisms. Not strictly art, but fantastic all the same, Everyday (Booking required).

**Jonas Mekas** @ The Serpentine Gallery – Retrospective of the avant-garde filmmaker and poet, who ran in the same circles as Allen Ginsberg and Andy Warhol in 50's NYC. The exhibition presents a collection of Mekas' moving images, poetry and sound. Best of all... this is just down the road. Now - 27 January.

**A Bigger Splash: Painting after performance** @ Tate Modern – Rather boring premise: can painting and performance art be reconciled? The answer is yes. And the answer would have remained a solid yes without the £12 ticket. However, some crazy 60's/70's video art to be seen. Now - April 1.



## Polar-oids



You and me baby ain't  
nothing but mammals...



...let's do it like they do at  
the Wildlife Photographer  
of the year exhibition

Lily Le

Writer

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition always proves an exciting, engaging, and inspiring visit if the permanent NHM displays were not already enough.

Every year, the number of categories, pictures and confusing pathways needed to navigate around each section seems to expand. This year it was annoying that they made the winning photos the first on display in each section's line-up, which ruins the suspense and excitement when you know the subsequent images will be (in the judges' eyes) worse.

It is always fun to go with a friend and have a debate about whether the right winners were chosen and why. Every visitor has an opinion for every photo and it is very interesting to eavesdrop and hear what other people think in comparison to yourself.

Particular highlights include "Ghost Bears", an image of two male brown bears fighting in the eastern Finland. Take one look at the picture, and you hear their violent growls and roars which seem to be muffled by the visual blurring of the picture. It feels as if the lack of clarity of the image makes it less frightening to look at, but at the same time reminds you of the strength of these

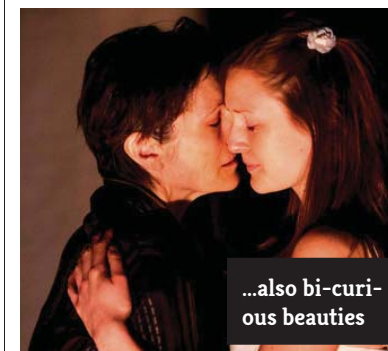
creatures in motion.

Also enjoyed was "Fly-by Drinking", a snap of the endangered grey-headed flying fox bat with a cheeky tongue bobbing out as it skims over a body of water for a drink, as well as "Sands of Time", which displays the intricate beauty and colour of marine invertebrate skeletons worthy of any wrapping paper (which the gift shop disappointingly did not have).

These were just a few personal favourites amongst numerous other unbelievably striking images. However, fans who regularly attend may also be slightly disappointed by many repetitive themes which seem to crop up each year, and even throughout the exhibition. It does not make them uninteresting or unoriginal pictures, but it does get a bit boring after seeing, for the umpteenth time, a stranded or struggling polar bear accompanied by a caption about the melting ice and our environmental responsibilities; the opposite reaction to what the photographs were probably trying to evoke.

This is not an exhibition solely for photography, wildlife or biology fans. You do not have to be any of those things to appreciate the stunning aesthetics of nature, and what they represent in our world today. Plus, entry is a bargain: half price for students (at £5), and the gift shop is always an exciting end to the visit.

Bad belles  
bring the bard  
behind bars  
brilliantly



...also bi-curious  
beauties

Eva Rosenthal

Arts editor

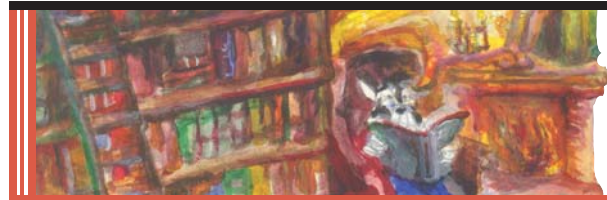
At the Donmar Warehouse, I have always found my way into the parallel reality that theatre should create. With Phillipa Lloyd's new production of Julius Caesar, one can simultaneously find oneself in not one, but two different realities.

There was no real need to set an all-female production of Julius Caesar in a women's jail. The staging seems to be an excuse for the all-female cast when a justification is entirely unnecessary. These women play men as well as any man can play a woman.

That said, the jail scenario is a fresh approach and works well, especially under Lloyd's precise direction. The prisoners roam the halls in stark, simple costumes, play-acting at Julius Caesar and guards interrupt when the rowdiness becomes intolerable. These interruptions were very frustrating to the audience, who could, however, also feel the frustration of the women whose only pastime had been rudely broken off. It creates a dual level of complicity with the characters; our sympathies are not only with Shakespeare's characters, but also with the prisoners who are trying to take part in a form of escapism, in the same way that we, the audience, are.

The acting was faultless and every word was spoken with clarity and with individual meaning. The characters in Julius Caesar all search for freedom from tyrannical rule; even Caesar is under the tyranny of fear. This struggle was evoked with lucidity by the very strong cast.

Frances Barber is a sensual, attractive Caesar. The vulgarity she assumes when in the role has an element of repulsiveness, which plays off very well against the nobility displayed by Harriet Walter's Brutus. Walter's Brutus is a man of restrained emotion, but one who suffers deeply for his actions. Clare Dunne plays Brutus' wife, Portia, with a touching combination of frailty and strength. She also appears as the brutal, murderous avenger Octavius Caesar, and is equally at ease in both roles. Finally, Jenny Jules is a powerful Cassius, compelling as the instigator of Caesar's murder.



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**BOOKS**

# Inside the Centre

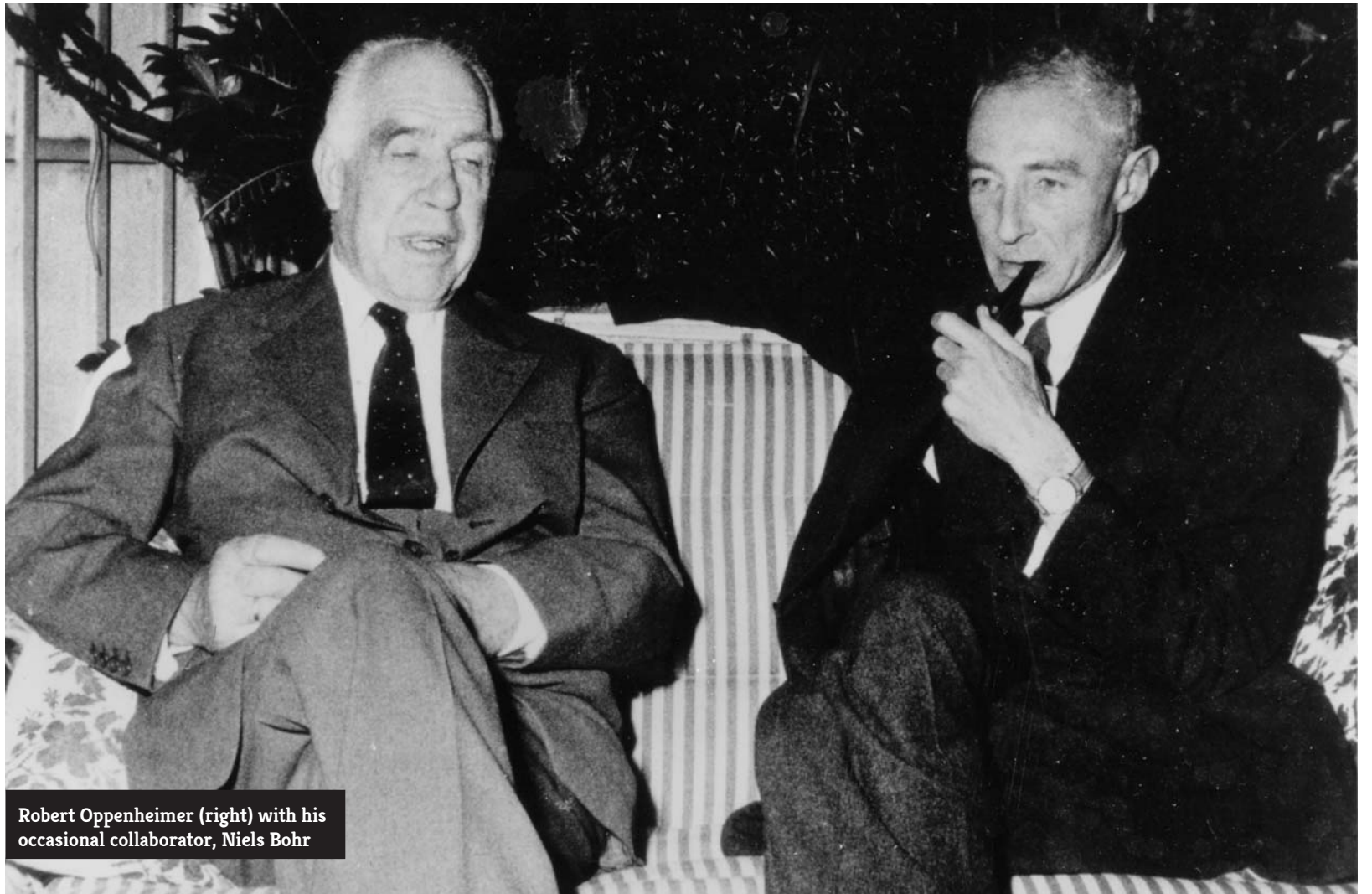
**Maciej Matuszewski** reviews Ray Monk's Oppenheimer biography

**R**ay Monk has long been highly regarded as a skilled biographer. A philosopher himself, his 1991 biography of Wittgenstein won him the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. In his latest work, however, Monk has chosen to explore the life of one of America's most controversial scientists – Robert Oppenheimer.

While currently best remembered for his work on the Manhattan Project, he was a fascinating and complex man. At first sight, indeed, he appears to be a man of great inconsistencies. He was always academically brilliant yet, while studying at Cambridge, he became so depressed with feelings about his inadequacies that he allegedly attempted to murder PMS Blackett with a poisoned apple. In the early 1930s he was so out of touch with current affairs that he was unaware of the Wall Street Crash yet twenty years later his left wing political sympathies cost him his security clearance.

Monk, however, argues that throughout his life, Oppenheimer was deeply driven by a goal to achieve his full potential. In other words, to be the centre of everything he could.

This is a convincingly argued theory and the book shows the decade of research that Monk has devoted to it. This is a truly insightful work and is surely set to become the definitive text on Oppenheimer.



Robert Oppenheimer (right) with his occasional collaborator, Niels Bohr

# Michael Ondaatje *The English Patient*

**Amanda Diez**

Writer

"The story is a poem disguised in prose", says the introduction to the 2007 edition of this novel.

It is exactly that.

The story has no order or structure; arguably a mere progression in the lives of our four characters. The book is a true exhibition of the author's admirable ability to narrate: a gripping story where nothing happens.

Four people: a middle aged man, a burnt body of an explorer, a twenty year old nurse and a sapper from Punjab; all in a lonely landscape of rural Italy with nothing to do but wait, breathe, observe and let the emotions of the terrible war flow back to the place where they will stay for the rest of their lives.

Things can happen at 2am in the morning as well as at midday or dawn:

there is no time or obligation, just the sun, the sky, a library and candles.

What is the story about?

Objectively about nothing.  
Just like life.

What have you done during your weekend?

Nothing.

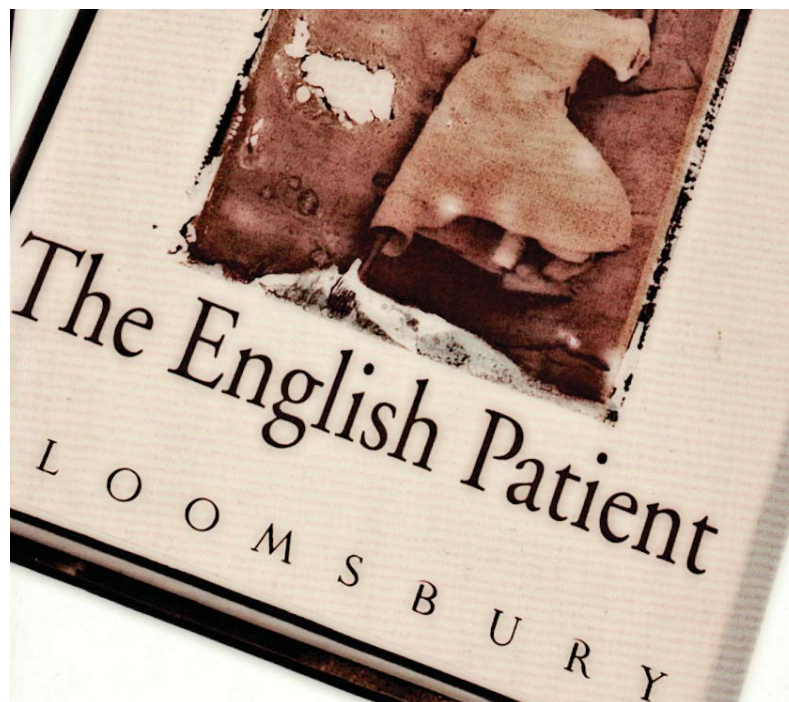
Ask me again and I'll tell you what made me laugh or cry.

Sentences are not precise.

No, not necessarily, not always.

"White sound" – ...? Yes, a sound that makes you blind, oh yes, you just realise three sentences later that the expression was actually a metaphor.

Michael Ondaatje takes you through their experiences as paintbrush strokes across an empty canvas. Images, scenes... an impression, a thought... the narrators vary, the four characters remember the past that brought them here. It establishes the tone: memories, flashes – you might



hear the same story twice, the second time with another hint of emotion.

You are taken to the desert of Libya across the golden sands and into the sweaty rooms of Cairo and then back to the valley in Tuscany, mined, shelled and abandoned. You are immersed in the war, crossing muddy fields at night under the light of bombing fire. You experience the horror of hospitals, nurses expected to act like priests accompanying – constantly – the souls imprisoned in their broken bodies to their death.

There are paragraphs that make you stop.

Again?

It was just absolutely beautiful and exact. How did he manage to say that so well?

...sentences you could rip off the book and put on the wall.

Amanda tweets as @amandsllu

# MUSIC

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Ross Gray, Simon Hunter  
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# ¡Uno! ¡Dos! ¡Tres!

Max Eggl reviews the first of a trilogy of new Green Day albums

Since 2009, after the release of *21st Century Breakdown*, news surrounding Green Day was few and far between. However the American punk band has now not only released a set of albums, but the trio has now also become a quartet. The newest member of the group, that brought among others *American Idiot*, has added Jason White to their ranks. The guitarist who has toured with Green Day on several occasions, and can be heard on previous albums, has now officially been credited as being a band-member. If this will have an impact on the future music that they will release remains to be seen.

Now to the meat of the article, the actual review of the album. *¡Uno!*, in contrast to the previous album, is a bit more back to roots for Green Day, relying on a more punky theme. This album is akin more to *Dookie* or *American Idiot* more than *21st Century*

*Breakdown*. It was released on the 21st of September of last year. One of three singles released prior to the albums was the song 'Oh Love', and this song perfectly summarises the rest of the album. Well-placed power-chords, good lyrics, catchy tune and a solo that ain't half bad (albeit somewhat short) that all mesh together to form quite an addictive song. However, if you are looking for slow/sad type songs this is the wrong album for you; there's not one ballad on this album, with 'Sweet 16' being the closest you get. Although some may be dismayed at the lack of "sadness" to wallow in, the album is still very well balanced with each high-powered song adding something different, and it thus does not feel repetitive at all.

Rather than bore you by describing each and every song, I prefer to describe to you what I feel are the main songs that define this album and hopefully you will agree with me on

this. When listening to the CD, 'Nuclear Family' will be the first song you encounter, and therefore it must deliver a punch to make you want to keep listening. For me it certainly did that. It may not be the best song of *¡Uno!*, but it draws you in with lyrics that I had in my head the rest of the day. Furthermore the collaboration of White and Armstrong is apparent not only in the exquisite solo; the following verse sent a shiver down my spine. The most popular song of the album, named as part of Zane Lowe's Hottest Tracks of 2012, is 'Kill the DJ', although this may have more to do with the profanity in it more than anything else! Looking past the occasional swear word, this is actually a very well crafted song. Armstrong's vocals in this song are outstanding, powering above the superb bass line, which gives this piece a different feel from what Green Day usually delivers, yet does not fail to impress. This may be a better explanation why this song is quite such a hit. The last song that I really believe defines *¡Uno!* is 'Troublemaker'. If you are a self-proclaimed punk rock enthusiast, then I hope for your sake that you cried out "Hey,

I've heard that title before". If you did utter (or think) those words, then I congratulate you and answer, yes, dear reader, Weezer did write a very good as well as successful song of the same name (also Olly Murs released a song of that name, although I hope for your sake you didn't think of that). Sadly the Green Day song, does not pack the same amount of punch, and the chorus is somewhat lacking. Yet the riff of the verse describes mischiefousness nearly perfectly and the solo is the best of the whole album. This song which certainly is not the best of the album still manages to wow me, and it displays the future of what Green Day may be.

*¡Uno!* is a rocky, fast paced album with enough variety to keep it from being boring, it includes some catchy and well written songs that make it a joy to listen to. I give it a 4.5/5, with that last point not being included be-

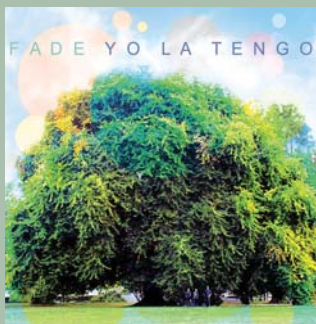


cause I am dismayed at the lack of a ballad, as I believe that is where Green Day thrive. All in all I think is a great opening for the trio of albums that the band released last year. It promises to be a good collection of albums, if this opening is anything to judge by. Anyhow if you are a Green Day, or just a punk fan, this album should be on your shopping list as it is good enough to warrant its price. Let's hope the other albums are just as good, fingers crossed!

## AMS album of the week

### Yo La Tengo : Fade

Yo La Tengo are not the sort of band you can pigeonhole. Their albums are a mish-mash of genres from across the alternative rock spectrum and beyond. Their latest effort, *Fade*, is slightly less of a mixed bag. All of the standard sounds are here, but they don't get their own tracks any more. There are no songs here that are primarily shoegaze or psychedelic or folk. The vast majority of the album is indie pop with shoegaze or psychedelic or folk influences. The tracks not only stand up individually, but they also all work as a coherent body as well. It's an interesting change and one I'm not 100% about.



The tracks themselves are generally pretty great. 'Ohm' is a Pavement track slowly drowning under more and more layers of fuzzy distortion, and it's as good as it sounds. 'Is That Enough' is YLT's take on *Tindersticks*-esque chamber pop and it is one of my favourite tracks of recent months. 'Well You Better' sounds a bit like *Eels* meets the *Housemartins* and they have a fairly subdued evening together, but it's better than it sounds. 'Paddle Forward' is a fairly standard 90s indie track (think *Guided by Voices* / *Sebadoh*), but it's a fairly good one. 'Stupid Things' is the sort of thing I think *Youth Lagoon* would sound like as a full band, and it makes me really want Youth Lagoon to start being a full band. 'I'll Be Around' is beautiful, understated and subtle. The delivery of the line 'and I still miss you at times' is probably the closest YLT will ever come to making a grown man cry.

This is a really good album. Come the end of the year this will probably be in my top 10 and it'll be getting a lot more listens over the next few weeks. I just have one problem with it. About halfway through you do really start craving a huge fucking noise track. Yo La Tengo's classic albums work *because* of the contrasting tracks, not despite them. The whole point was that it didn't blend together – it was supposed to surprise and excite and challenge. *Fade* all feels a bit safe, a bit, dare I say it, boring. It's the sort of album I'll put on when I'm doing something else, but I wouldn't be able to sit in a darkened room and listen to this in the same way I can with *I Can Hear the Heart Beating as One*.

Stuart Masson

## D-beat Review: Krömosom – Live Forever

Ross Gray

Music Editor

Within my university life I have had frequent exposure to cybergrind and noisecore, whilst maintaining particular passions for the more punk-routed powerviolence and the extreme grind stylings of *The Gerogerigegege*. That said, the first thing that struck me upon listening to *Krömosom* was the sheer sonic brutality. The second track on *Live Forever*, 'Bred to Lose', hits you from the off with pounding drums so dense and fast that, at times, you can barely distinguish them from the mix. This sheer aural madness is produced not by using hundreds of pedals and a hefty amount of electronics, but rather by physical annihilation of their simple instrumental set-up.

As is often the case with bands who, upon first glance, have an almost unapproachable density and violence to their soundscapes, once the initial shock wears off, rhythms and melodies are so prominent that I question why I couldn't initially pick out the catchy punk refrains from under the scuzz. It's really these driving riffs and



drum lines under the noise that push *Krömosom* to so effectively convey the kind of aggression that smashes up the party at 5am. Would some pre-tentious *Wire* (magazine, not band) devotees argue that it's immature? Probably. But they're missing out on

all the fun.

*Live Forever* is being released by Southern Lord on Monday 21st January. 'Bred To Lose' was played on the final broadcast of *Outhouse*, Thursday 17th January.

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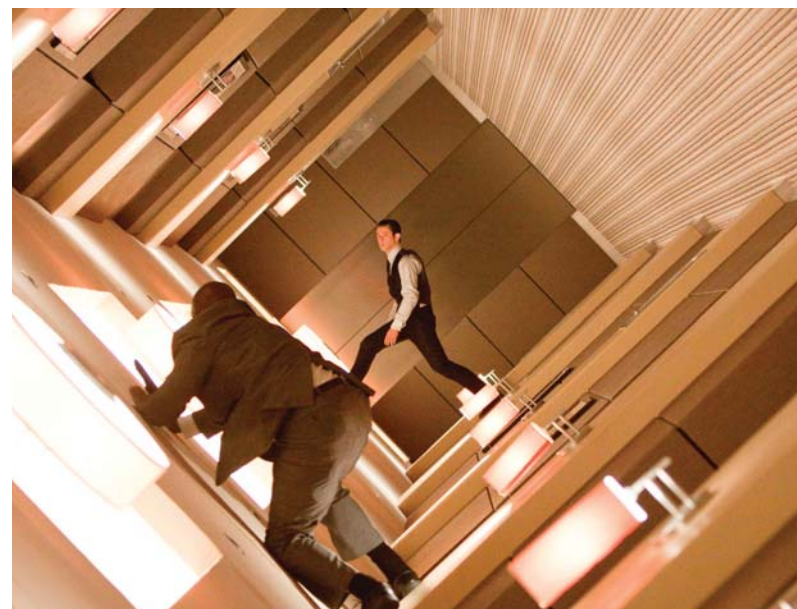
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# Inception: the theory of the ring

An analysis of the real story told by Nolan's movie and a different vision of the ending



**Luca De-Benedetti** Film Writer

Ok, yes, I am two years late. I am aware of that. I am also aware of the fact that everyone has now seen *Inception*, discussed it, explained it and looked for the mathematical inconsistencies of the dream world (although I suspect the latter is only true for Imperial students). What more can possibly be said about it after two years?

Well, there must be something, because you can be certain that, as a movie conversation grows longer, the probability of someone bringing *Inception* into it approaches 1 (yes, this is my own variation of Godwin's law).

Obviously *Inception* is a very original movie, where its storyline entwines and unfolds between past and present, dreams and reality, long dialogues and James Bond-type action sequences (was the snow scene really necessary?). And certainly the impeccable filming, the phenomenal cast and the breathtaking special effects contribute towards making this one of the best films of recent years and one which will be remembered.

Nevertheless, after two years people are still racking their brains over the ending, seeking for an answer to the question raised by the last scene. Will the spinning top fall? Was he

trapped in a dream or did he manage to escape Limbo reaching the real world? Is there a workable answer or will Nolan take the mystery to the grave? Will I be able to ever look at Ellen Page without thinking: "Hey! It's Juno!"?

I never really hoped to find a definitive answer to any of these questions (although for the last one I'm pretty confident that the answer is no, I won't). Yet some months ago, in an afternoon completely dedicated to work, while I was wandering the internet during the sixth or seventh half an hour break of the day, I ran into a very interesting theory.

A crazy man with too much free time has noticed a small detail, during what I presume was his 100th screening of the movie. Leonardo DiCaprio's character (Cobb) wears a wedding ring in every sequence in which he wanders through the dream world. This ring is however absent when he is awake. Is this the definitive distinction between dream and reality in the movie?

The intriguing part of the theory is that, during the last scene, in which he finally sees his children again, the ring is not on his finger. We can therefore logically conclude that the absence of the ring proves that Cobb wasn't dreaming. Happy ending and case closed.

But is it? Having gained knowledge of this theory I decided to watch *Inception* once more. My mind, freed from the burden of having to understand the intricate plot, was ready to concentrate on the small details missed out during the first screening. I ended up watching it twice in two days. And I understood that the ring theory is wrong. And actually *Inception* tells a completely different story. But let's try to explain things in an orderly fashion.

At the beginning and for most of the movie, Cobb is a character gripped by guilt. Having performed *Inception* on his wife during their stay in Limbo, implanting deep inside her mind the idea that the world she was living in was not real, he became directly responsible for her death. Indeed, despite the fact that it was the right idea, considering where they found themselves, it was implanted so deeply into her subconscious that, even when they came back to reality, it kept growing in her head, persuading her that she was still dreaming and leading to her suicide. Because of him she was convinced she would just wake up.

It is this guilt that chains him to his deceased wife. Cobb cannot accept her death, he cannot let her go. In his subconscious he is still married with her. For this reason, in his

dreams, in the subconscious world, he still wears the ring. Deep inside, she is still his wife.

From there unfold the parallel stories of the heist and of the evolution of Cobb's character and his fight to find inner peace, which culminates in a scene near the end of the movie. In the deeper dream level, just before Cobb goes to Limbo to rescue Saito, he has a conversation with the mind projection of his wife, in which he forsakes the temptation of staying with her. His subconscious acknowledges for the first time that she is just a projection of his mind, that his real wife is gone forever and his real life is with his son and daughter. He takes the conscious (and unconscious) decision of leaving her, leaving the memories behind and freeing himself from his chains.

For this reason, in my opinion, the theory of the ring is wrong. For how I see it, past that moment Cobb is not haunted anymore by the memory of his wife even in his unconscious. From that moment on, he will not wear the ring anymore in his dreams nor in the real world. Therefore uncertainty left by the last scene stays.

But does it really matter? We have just seen that *Inception* is not about a mind heist, or, if you prefer, the heist is not the main story of the movie. The actual story told by Nolan is the

inner and emotional path undertaken by DiCaprio's character. In my opinion, the key moment of the ending scene is not the last shot on the spinning top, which staggers slightly just before the credits start, but is located some seconds before. Cobb spins the totem but then forgets about it when he sees his children's faces. He takes the (unconscious?) decision that he doesn't care anymore if this is dream or reality. He reached inner peace, which is what he was looking for during the whole movie. This is the real ending of *Inception*.

Now, having deceived those who believed I could provide a meaningful answer to the finale, let me just say one last thing. You cannot watch a good movie only once. Cinema is an art so full of small details that it makes it impossible to fully appreciate its beauty in one screening. *Inception* (like all good movies) is full of them. Some details are essential for a deeper understanding of the story, other are just proof of good writing and acting. Small things that, however, make you enjoy the movie a lot more.

Watch *Inception* again. Concentrate your attention on the characters and not the plot and I can promise you that, by the end, you'll feel like you have watched a completely different movie.

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John Park, Lucy Wiles  
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FILM

# They dreamed a dream: an IMAX experience

## Les Misérables

**Director:** Tom Hooper  
**Screenwriter:** William Nicholson  
**Starring:** Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway, Amanda Seyfried, Eddie Redmayne, Helena Bonham Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen, Samantha Barks, Aaron Tveit



John Park

Film Editor



The BFI IMAX is a strange and wonderful place. Boasting its “biggest screen in the UK,” it lives up to its reputation in giving you a blistering headache should you sit too far forward, or a set of splittingly painful eardrums should you sit too close to the sides where the massive speakers are located. So the lesson here is this: sit as far back as possible – you’ll still see everything. The screen is really that big. And of course, centre seats are recommended. As soon as the adverts go full-size, you almost feel the words and numbers come out towards the audience. There is hardly any need for a 3D conversion it seems, as everything feels so close and awe-inspiring in the first place. Adding an extra dimension and an extra pair of glasses would almost certainly have everyone crawling to their exits.

A certain level of hilarity also ensues with a film like Tom Hooper’s latest, *Les Misérables*, a film adaptation of the worldwide smash-hit musical that’s been going strong ever since its debut in 1986. During his many, many musical sequences, especially ones involving solos with his actors, Hooper is a big fan of taking their close-ups, and using as few takes as possible, focusing solely on their faces. On the IMAX screen, the actors are placed under a microscope. Ever wondered how many freckles Eddie Redmayne has on his face? Or how about the number of wrinkles on Hugh Jackman’s face? Or perhaps the skin tone of Anne Hathaway’s? All becomes (far too) clear. It’s not exactly a distraction by any means, but an observation that cannot go unnoticed.

That Hooper doesn’t hold a thing back further benefits from the IMAX treatment. As prisoners in 1815 France are forced into physical labour, there are waves crashing in around them, along with the thunderous opening orchestral score, a mix that generates nothing but excitement for what lays ahead. Here is where we meet Jean Valjean (Jackman) a thief who stole a loaf of bread – a crime for which he’s served 19 years – 5 for the stealing, the rest for his numerous failed escapes. He is finally released on parole, with Inspector Javert (Crowe) reminding him of his condition and status. Valjean has forever been marked as a convict, and will remain as such for as long as he lives.

But Valjean decides to reinvent himself, with some very touching help from a kind-hearted priest (Colm Wilkinson in his mighty fine cameo), breaking his parole, and disappearing, creating a new identity for himself. The time fast-forwards eight years, and he’s now a well-off mayor and factory owner, under an alias. It is here he encounters Fantine (Anne Hathaway), a hard-working single

mother forced into prostitution to provide for her illegitimate daughter. Promising the dying mother to take care of her vulnerable child Cosette (the pitch perfect Isabelle Allen), Valjean is once again forced to go on the run once the persistent Javert finally catches up with him.

We get another time-jump: this one of nine years. Fantine’s daughter Cosette has grown up now (to Seyfried), and becomes the subject of passionate desire for Marius (Redmayne), an idealistic student revolutionary planning a dangerous demonstration on the streets of Paris. He too, is the subject of desire for Eponine (Barks).

It has a lot to juggle: plenty of meaty characters and decades of events and themes all expressed through music and the film’s most unique element, the live-singing of its cast, works massively to its benefit. For the sharply tuned musicians amongst the audience, a certain bum notes will most certainly be evident, most likely from a certain Aussie Gladiator whose smooth voice is more suited for singing the blues rather than an intense solo (‘Stars’). And it may be a little awkward at times to hear verbal dialogue given a musical treatment.

But oh the power and emotion it adds to the narrative is quite simply unmatched to anything we have ever seen. Take Hathaway’s solo, for example. Forget about Susan Boyle and how she blew away everyone during her talent audition. Here, Fantine is a bruised and beaten woman, having reached the lowest of the low, singing her guts out in Hathaway’s heart-wrenchingly beautiful rendition of ‘I Dreamed a Dream’. You may not like the song – but seeing Hathaway (a lock for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar) carry the song throughout a single, intimate close-up shot is a hauntingly memorable scene.

The closest thing we get to a love triangle is also interestingly explored here; with Seyfried proving she can sing a lot more than her ABBA repertoire, comfortably reaching those top notes in her many duets and trios, Redmayne has an incredible voice to show off, and once you can look past how the actor shakes his face intensely whenever he’s trying to hold on to a note (unintentionally hilarious, this), be blown away as he performs ‘Empty Chairs and Empty Tables’. Barks, who had previously played the same role on stage before, is also excellent in her film debut, and her big moment comes in ‘On My Own’ in which she despairs over her secret crush on Marius.

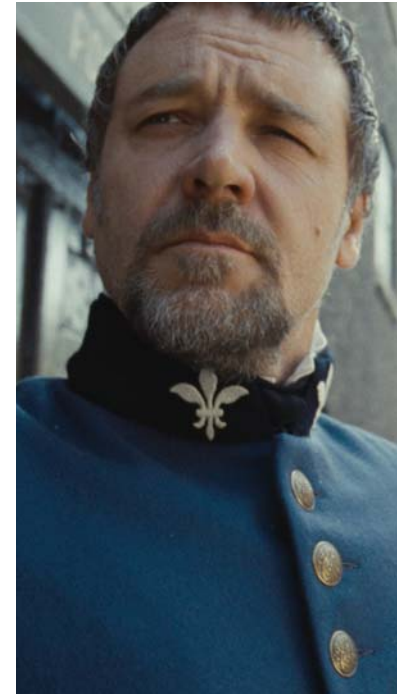
Jackman, previously trained in the musical theatre, takes on his two challenging solos (‘Who Am I’ and ‘Bring Him Home’) with gusto and utmost intensity for his character – he has fight left in him even when the

universe seems to be against him, he has compassion for the poor, he has mercy, he has grief, he has guilt, and Jackman, in a single performance, sweepingly embodies all of these characteristics, most impressively even whilst he’s singing a set of difficult tunes.

And of course, the revolution – you know these students don’t stand a chance against the well-organised military, but there is something stirring about their cause their firm beliefs. As they sing their hearts out with ‘Red and Black’ and ‘Do You Hear the People Sing?’ the battlelines are drawn, and subsequent violence ensues, ending in shocking tragedy. The scale remains relatively small, staying true to the stage adaptation, and feels more intimate because of it.

Without an intermission to wipe your tears away, bounce back from all the depressing drama, the 157-minute running time can be a challenge to sit through. But thank heavens for the Thenadiers (Cohen, Carter), the evil, conning innkeepers who act as “guardians” to little Cosette. Cohen and Carter are there for the comedic purposes only, and it’s sure a welcome addition. Their intermittent appearances add some priceless moments where we can forget about all the injustices in the world, and have a laugh as this outrageous couple go about their business singing ‘Master of the House’. Cohen and Carter do what they normally do best, providing plenty of wacky comic relief into a plot that really needs it.

There won’t be a dry pair of eyes in the house by the time we get to hear the rousing finale, as a magnificent musical comes to a close, one with a unique approach that will be remembered for years to come. Bravo Tom Hooper, for thinking that live-singing would be a good idea, and a special round of applause to everyone in the cast for making it work. As everyone comes together to sing the biggest song of the musical, ‘One Day More’, there isn’t a better representation of what excellent teamwork can really achieve.



# FILM

Film Editors: Katy Bettany,  
John Park, Lucy Wiles  
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# The nominees are...

## 2013 Academy Awards Winners announced on 24th Feb

### Best Picture:

*Amour*  
*Argo*  
*Beasts of the Southern Wild*  
*Django Unchained*  
*Les Misérables*  
*Life of Pi*  
*Lincoln*  
*Silver Linings Playbook*  
*Zero Dark Thirty*

### Best Director:

Michael Haneke (*Amour*)  
Ang Lee (*Life of Pi*)  
David O. Russell (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Steven Spielberg (*Lincoln*)  
Benh Zeitlin (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*)

### Best Actor:

Bradley Cooper (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Daniel Day-Lewis (*Lincoln*)  
Hugh Jackman (*Les Misérables*)  
Joaquin Phoenix (*The Master*)  
Denzel Washington (*Flight*)

### Best Actress:

Jessica Chastain (*Zero Dark Thirty*)  
Jennifer Lawrence (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Emmanuelle Riva (*Amour*)  
Quvenzhané Wallis (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*)  
Naomi Watts (*The Impossible*)

### Best Supporting Actor:

Alan Arkin (*Argo*)

Robert De Niro (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Philip Seymour Hoffman (*The Master*)  
Tommy Lee Jones (*Lincoln*)  
Christoph Waltz (*Django Unchained*)

### Best Supporting Actress:

Amy Adams (*The Master*)  
Sally Field (*Lincoln*)  
Anne Hathaway (*Les Misérables*)  
Helen Hunt (*The Sessions*)  
Jacki Weaver (*Silver Linings Playbook*)

### Best Original Screenplay:

*Amour*  
*Django Unchained*  
*Flight*  
*Moonrise Kingdom*  
*Zero Dark Thirty*

### Best Adapted Screenplay:

*Argo*  
*Beasts of the Southern Wild*  
*Life of Pi*  
*Lincoln*  
*Silver Linings Playbook*

### Best Animated Film:

*Brave*  
*Frankenweenie*  
*ParaNorman*  
*The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!*  
*Wreck-It Ralph*

### Best Foreign Language Film:

*Amour (Austria)*  
*War Witch (Canada)*  
*No (Chile)*  
*A Royal Affair (Denmark)*  
*Kon-Tiki (Norway)*



## 2013 BAFTAs Winners announced on 10th Feb

### Best Film:

*Argo*  
*Les Misérables*  
*Life of Pi*  
*Lincoln*  
*Zero Dark Thirty*

### Best British Film:

*Anna Karenina*  
*The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*  
*Les Misérables*  
*Seven Psychopaths*  
*Skyfall*

### Best Director:

Ben Affleck (*Argo*)  
Kathryn Bigelow (*Zero Dark Thirty*)  
Michael Haneke (*Amour*)  
Ang Lee (*Life of Pi*)  
Quentin Tarantino (*Django Unchained*)

### Best Actor:

Ben Affleck (*Argo*)

Bradley Cooper (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Daniel Day-Lewis (*Lincoln*)  
Hugh Jackman (*Les Misérables*)  
Joaquin Phoenix (*The Master*)

### Best Actress:

Jessica Chastain (*Zero Dark Thirty*)  
Marion Cotillard (*Rust and Bone*)  
Jennifer Lawrence (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Helen Mirren (*Hitchcock*)  
Emmanuelle Riva (*Amour*)

### Best Supporting Actor:

Alan Arkin (*Argo*)  
Javier Bardem (*Skyfall*)  
Philip Seymour Hoffman (*The Master*)  
Tommy Lee Jones (*Lincoln*)  
Christoph Waltz (*Django Unchained*)

### Best Supporting Actress:

Amy Adams (*The Master*)  
Judi Dench (*Skyfall*)  
Sally Field (*Lincoln*)  
Anne Hathaway (*Les Misérables*)

Helen Hunt (*The Sessions*)

### Best Original Screenplay:

*Amour*  
*Django Unchained*  
*The Master*  
*Moonrise Kingdom*  
*Zero Dark Thirty*

### Best Adapted Screenplay:

*Argo*  
*Beasts of the Southern Wild*  
*Life of Pi*  
*Lincoln*  
*Silver Linings Playbook*

### Best Animated Film:

*Brave*  
*Frankenweenie*  
*ParaNorman*

### Best Foreign Language Film:

*Amour*  
*Headhunters*  
*The Hunters*  
*Rust and Bone*  
*Untouchable*



## 2013 SAG Awards Winners announced on 27th Jan

### Best Cast:

*Argo*  
*The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*  
*Les Misérables*  
*Lincoln*  
*Silver Linings Playbook*

### Best Actor:

Bradley Cooper (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Daniel Day-Lewis (*Lincoln*)  
John Hawkes (*The Sessions*)  
Hugh Jackman (*Les Misérables*)  
Denzel Washington (*Flight*)

### Best Actress:

Jessica Chastain (*Zero Dark Thirty*)  
Marion Cotillard (*Rust and Bone*)

Jennifer Lawrence (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Helen Mirren (*Hitchcock*)  
Naomi Watts (*The Impossible*)

### Best Supporting Actor:

Alan Arkin (*Argo*)  
Javier Bardem (*Skyfall*)  
Robert De Niro (*Silver Linings Playbook*)  
Philip Seymour Hoffman (*The Master*)  
Tommy Lee Jones (*Lincoln*)

### Best Supporting Actress:

Sally Field (*Lincoln*)  
Anne Hathaway (*Les Misérables*)  
Helen Hunt (*The Sessions*)  
Nicole Kidman (*The Paperboy*)  
Maggie Smith (*The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*)

Film Editors: Katy Bettany,  
John Park, Lucy Wiles  
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FILM

# And the winners...

## 2013 Critics' Choice Awards

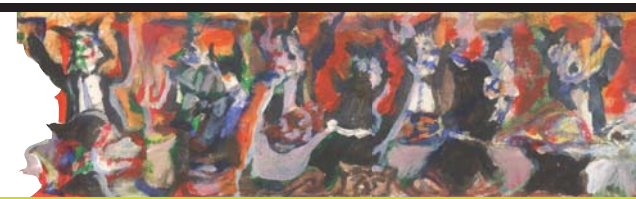
- Best Film:**  
*Argo*
- Best Actor:**  
Daniel Day-Lewis (*Lincoln*)
- Best Actress:**  
Jessica Chastain (*Zero Dark Thirty*)
- Best Supporting Actor:**  
Philip Seymour Hoffman (*The Master*)
- Best Supporting Actress:**  
Anne Hathaway (*Les Misérables*)
- Best Director:**  
Ben Affleck (*Argo*)
- Best Acting Ensemble:**  
*Silver Linings Playbook*
- Best Original Screenplay:**  
*Django Unchained*
- Best Adapted Screenplay:**  
*Lincoln*
- Best Animated Feature:**  
*Wreck-It Ralph*
- Best Young Actor/Actress:**  
Quvenzhané Wallis (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*)
- Best Action Movie:**  
*Skyfall*
- Best Actor in an Action Movie:**  
Daniel Craig (*Skyfall*)
- Best Actress in an Action Movie:**  
Jennifer Lawrence (*The Hunger Games*)
- Best Comedy Movie:**  
*Silver Linings Playbook*
- Best Actor in a Comedy Movie:**  
Bradley Cooper (*Silver Linings Playbook*)
- Best Actress in a Comedy Movie:**  
Jennifer Lawrence (*Silver Linings Playbook*)
- Best Sci-fi/Horror Movie:**  
*Looper*
- Best Foreign Language Film:**  
*Amour*
- Best Documentary Feature:**  
*Searching for Sugar Man*
- Best Song:**  
*Skyfall*



## 2013 Golden Globe Awards

- Best Film - Drama:**  
*Argo*
- Best Film - Musical or Comedy:**  
*Les Misérables*
- Best Actor - Drama:**  
Daniel Day-Lewis (*Lincoln*)
- Best Actress - Drama:**  
Jessica Chastain (*Zero Dark Thirty*)
- Best Actor - Musical or Comedy:**  
Hugh Jackman (*Les Misérables*)
- Best Actress - Musical or Comedy:**  
Jennifer Lawrence (*Silver Linings Playbook*)
- Best Supporting Actor:**  
Christoph Waltz (*Django Unchained*)
- Best Supporting Actress:**  
Anne Hathaway (*Les Misérables*)
- Best Director:**  
Ben Affleck (*Argo*)
- Best Screenplay:**  
*Django Unchained*
- Best Animated Feature:**  
*Brave*
- Best Foreign Language Film:**  
*Amour*
- Best Original Song:**  
*Skyfall*
- Best Original Score:**  
*Life of Pi*





# The Lunchbox Lowdown #02

**Carol Ann Cheah** with more NY Resolution-friendly healthy grub

I'm picking up where my fellow Editor Sophia left off last week. If you're stuck in a sandwich/pie rut but you're still aiming to pack lunches to keep your wallet and waistline in check, look East for some inspiration. The Japanese have long been the purveyors of colourful, varied and nutritious bentos (bento = packed lunch in Japanese) – and you don't need to spend hours or make everything from scratch, as you can opt to use choice

leftovers. Done right, you can streamline the cooking/assembly process into 20 minutes or less.

To the right is a bento I prepared some time ago, which I'll deconstruct into its components below. This is what we'd call an Asian bento, mainly because the main carb component/staple here is rice. Of course, I've since been able to fit other grains in that slim Japanese bento box (namely couscous and quinoa) with other sides – the possibilities are endless.

## Containers

First, a disclaimer: proper Japanese bento boxes like the one on the right are NOT mandatory, even though I find they offer the advantage of being easier to pack (the box I have is approx 15cm x 6.5cm x 8cm in size with both tiers stacked). That said if you already have a decent inexpensive leak-proof container, you're good to go.

Size does matter a bit (hah!) – don't be fooled by the small vessel, as packing the components in compactly means there's less room for them to move and get messy during transit – so go smaller than usual. I find a 500-700ml capacity works best for most adults, but if you've got a hearty appetite (or your bento needs to be packed a little looser) then 900ml onwards works – please DON'T crush any poor salad leaves!

Containers without built-in dividers are far more flexible, as your side dishes may vary in sizes from meal to meal. You can easily use lettuce leaves, or silicone muffin cups like I've done above to keep different food flavours from mingling; but if built-in dividers are more your thing, go ahead.

A proper Japanese bento lunch is actually meant to be eaten at room

temperature (gasp!), which is NOT a problem given our current cool weather, and assuming the proteins are fully cooked – no medium-rare steak bites, I'm afraid. But if you want your food above that temperature, you can look at thermal lunch containers if you don't have a microwave, though they're pricier and bulkier. Alternatively, just make sure your regular container's nuke-friendly or pop it into an insulated lunch bag if it's only going to be a few hours and you don't mind it being scalding hot.

One thing I find about thermal containers: they're perfect for soups (see our Lunchbox #01 issue), but not all foods stand up well in them – main reason being that food WILL carry on cooking in residual heat. You'd be fine with a stew or curry (or anything that's fine with slow cooking), and maybe certain grains (rice!); but steamed veggies, pasta and certain meats will just look sorry, taste gooey and get bone dry respectively.

*Editor's Picks: Lock & Lock 550ml container, £6.64 from Amazon; Glit & Brilia Bento Lunchbox with Belts, £4.75 from japancentre.com*



Always one loser who pouts for the camera

## Carbs

Sure, the carb of choice for Asian bentos happens to be rice; but like mentioned before it doesn't \*have\* to be. I've had bentos with couscous, braised potatoes and quinoa and they came out just as yummy. That said, if you're using rice, you don't have to wake up at the crack of dawn to prepare it. I alternate between setting the timer on my rice cooker the night before so I have fresh rice in the morning, or defrosting pre-cooked frozen rice in the microwave.

The Japanese (and myself) are partial to short grain rice that sticks a bit when cooked, but I'm not fussy – a decent basmati or jasmine rice works just as well. Whatever you do, don't use the easy cook stuff; it isn't as palatable whether hot or at room temp, and the extra time taken to prepare non-easy-cook rice pays off plenty in taste.

In the event you've scratched your

head (or the bottom of pan) plenty of times while trying to cook rice, I've provided a method below – rice cooker optional. Remember the cardinal rule of Asians: don't measure rice by weight; do it by volume. We usually use the small cups that come with rice cookers; but one regular coffee mug will cook up two hearty portions depending on your appetite.

## Proteins

It's funny, but in Asia leaner cuts like chicken breast sell for much cheaper than the slightly tougher but more flavoursome (and more in-demand) thigh/leg meat, which is the reverse of what chicken prices are like here in the UK. Asians have the last laugh though: darker meat tastes better at room temperature and can withstand reheating better without turning Sahara-esque, even sans the sinful skin.

Whatever cut you choose is totally up

to you, though if you're not using leftovers and will be prepping the meat dish in the morning, chances are you'll be stir-frying it – so you need something that's quick to cook but won't dry out over time.

In that case, I find chicken leg/thigh, pork shoulder, or flank from beef (cut against the grain) work well. Just cut them into thin strips to save on cooking time. You can tenderize tougher and cheaper cuts than these if you prep them the night before in marinade – all you have to do in the morning is fry! Done right, you should only need perhaps 5-10 minutes to fry your meat, plus maybe a few more minutes to pack into your box and let cool.

If you plan on making a slow-cooked stew for dinner, why not make an extra portion seeing as it takes the same amount of effort? You can reheat, pop into your bento and serve it with your other side dishes. the next day.

## Fluffy stovetop rice

Sayonara, Dr Ben's! Measure rice as per the instructions in the "Carbs" section, depending on how many you're serving or how many portions you're planning on making ahead. We don't advocate making a massive pot, though; a 4-person serving is much easier to control evenly during the cooking process.

Wash rice to remove excess starch and any nasties like talc that were used while processing, then drain and pop into a decent non-stick pan with a lid. Add water in a 1:(1.5-2) ratio, so for every 1 cup of rice you're using about 1.5 to 2 cups of water. Stick it on the boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and let it simmer, covered. Resist the urge to stir because you'll otherwise just destroy the rice and make it all mushy.

After 20-25 minutes (or until most of the water has been absorbed), take it off the heat (don't take the lid off!) and let stand for 5-10 minutes on a damp tea towel. Fluff up with a fork, and then serve/pack into your bento box/portion up for freezing.

Protip: If you've got extra time to kill, feel free to soak the rice post-wash for about 30 minutes - this seems to make it fluffier and easier to separate. Drain, then add water and proceed as per directions.



Bento box with a mini cereal box for size comparison

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Sophia Goldberg, Yianggo  
Mavrocostanti**  
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# FOOD

## Asian Stir-Fried (Shaoxing) Chicken

This is the recipe I used for the chicken in this bento. Well, it's not so much a recipe as it was me throwing in a bunch of random seasonings with the meat in the spirit of true old Asian cooking when everything was done in pinches of X and splashes of Y. Experience and tasting your wares will mean you'll get better with time.

1 chicken breast/up to 2 de-boned chicken legs  
Light soy sauce  
Sesame oil  
Cornstarch  
Shaoxing Wine - optional  
Diced garlic - use however much you feel like

Cut your meat into thin strips, and bung them in a bowl with two tablespoons of light soy sauce, a drizzle of sesame oil, and a bit of cornstarch. Amounts can be adjusted – you can always add more! Leave to marinate overnight in the fridge, and in the morning, chuck them in a hot frying pan that's already had about 2 tablespoons of oil and some chopped garlic in it. Stir-fry until almost cooked through (clear juices + no trace of pink in the meat), deglaze with some Shaoxing wine (optional) and boil off. Serve up or pack in box.

Protip: Feel free to add other veggies or seasonings which you think would fit. [Spring] onions would work well.

### Proteins: Vegetarians

If there's something that even the best meat can't do, it's to add a touch of vibrant colour to the resulting bento. Thankfully this is managed by eggs, which are quick to whip up in a wide variety of ways.

If you're health conscious, slices of hard boiled eggs add interest without the grease. For those among you who are suckers for cutesy stuff, some boiled quail eggs would probably be up your alley.

Personally, I have three favourite ways to cook eggs for bento. One is in the traditional Japanese style called "tamagoyaki", a rolled omelette which is a staple in their cuisine – you'll probably have seen slices or strips of it when dining in a Japanese restaurant. Unfortunately I haven't quite mastered it yet, so I tend to fall back on the egg "mince" ("iri tamago/tamago soboro") you see here. You'd be right in thinking that it's scrambled egg gone past the "creamy" stage, but it's an Asian favourite sans no cream/milk/butter. The recipe is provided below.

My final favourite? Pouring out a thin layer of egg on a frying pan, not unlike making an omelette. When it's cooked, I remove the circular sheet of egg and leave to cool on a chopping board, then roll up and cut into fine shreds. (try garnishing your next noodle dish with this!) One egg, so many ways.

Then there's the token Asian vegetarian protein: tofu. A few slices of the firm variety, lightly pan-fried on both sides with a drizzle of soya sauce –yum!

### Veggies

Like it or not, these "bad" boys are the main way you're going to get your lunch to look interesting – they add pops of colour (apart from the fact that not having them means you run foul of the 5-a-day gamut.)

Again, you can make life easier for yourself here. Pre-chop everything the night before – sometimes I'll chop more peppers/carrots than I'll need for the night's meal and save the extra chopped veg for use in my bento the

next day.

When time comes to cook them, you've got a good arsenal of methods at your disposal. Steaming or stir-frying is the best way to retain their nutrients – I'm biased towards the latter.

Now, a confession: the mixed veggies in the bento shown came straight out of a bag of frozen mixed veg. Before you go after my head, though, hear me out – no one's saying you CAN'T use frozen mixed veg. In fact, it's inherently better than the pre-cut non-frozen as it's frozen right after harvest and cleaning. Of course, I don't recommend doing it all the time; but it's perfectly acceptable in a pinch.

If you've got your veggies all chopped ready for a stir fry, here's a simple basic method you can utilize and tweak. Heat up a bit of oil in your pan, then chuck in a bit of minced garlic before adding your veggies in. Put the longer-cooking stuff first; so for instance carrots would go in before pak choi. Add your seasoning while you stir-fry, taste to check, and remove when everything is done. One cardinal rule of stir-frying: NEVER overcook – you're talking a few minutes, tops!

### Treats

No reason to restrict yourself completely from having them – the key here is portion control, or using healthier alternatives. Sometimes if I've baked something like brownies, I'll wrap a small slice and pack it in together with my bento box. On the other hand, my housemates will also testify that I buy clementines like there's no tomorrow from North End Road market, which is another of my favourite "desserts" (it's quite common for Asians to eat fresh fruit at the end of a meal in lieu of hot pudding). Sophia also swears by North End Road market as well, as that's where you can find other fruits and veggies for dirt cheap.

### Using Leftovers

There's nothing stopping you from using leftover dishes to save time. I find that if I've made a bit too much stir fry or stew for dinner one night, it ends up with a fresh spot of rice as my lunch for the next day. Have some common sense, though; the "younger" the leftovers, the better. I'm not responsible for what happens if you pack that stew which seems to have developed a new ecosystem on its surface.

Should you end up including leftovers, make sure you heat it through until it's piping hot to kill off whatever nasties have just begun to grow. Of course you can do this in the microwave; though that won't kill the stuff on the surface unlike direct heating using a pan.

### Packing and safety

If you're using a thermal lunch container, make sure you preheat it following the manufacturer's directions (boiling water for a few minutes?) and that your food goes in PIPING hot. Semi-warm food means that your food will stay at that temperature for ages, which is a lot better than current room temperature for nasties to grow. Otherwise, if you're using a non-thermal box sans dividers, start by packing your rice to one side. Compress it a bit with a moistened spoon, then arrange your other components to fit the rest of the space, making sure there's minimal room for movement. You'll get better with time - sometimes I find myself stuffing a few boiled broccoli florets to fill in the gaps.

Now the important bit for non-thermal containers - make sure \*everything\* has sufficiently cooled down to room temp or just about. Condensation in lunchboxes is your enemy; the moisture that results due to that is just an open invitation for bugs to breed on the inside. Don't seal your container completely until you can be sure you've sufficiently minimized this!

### Frills and fancies

You don't \*have\* to make your lunch look uber-pretty – at the end of the day, your lunch's going down the hatch so there's no need to fuss around with various animal-shaped cutters or the like. However, if it's not going to take more than a minute and you're a closet crafter like moi, then by all means, arrange your food in whatever quirky way you want (like the smiley/frowney faces you see here. Just try not to handle the food too much with your fingers – use clean utensils (cocktail sticks are your friend for decorations like these.)

And that's it – a really rudimentary insight on how to pack Asian style lunches/bentos. Hopefully those with "culinary yellow fever" will now have an excuse to prepare Asian home cooking to take with you into uni. Enjoy, and we hope you get on alright with your healthy eating plans!

*Editor's Picks for bento resources, equipment and ingredients:*

- *The Just Bento Cookbook: Everyday Lunches To Go - Makiko Itoh*  
- *Japan Centre, 14-16 Regent Street, SW1Y 4PH, japancentre.com*  
- *Atari-Ya Foods (as per the famous sushi place), 7 Station Parade, Noel Road, West Acton, W3 0DS*  
- *TK Trading, Unit 6-7, The Chase Centre, Chase Road, NW10 6QD*

## Sample bento preparation timeline

It helps to practise - the first few times you make bento lunches, don't be surprised if you're a bit slow. You'll soon pick up ways to shave minutes off the prep process. Here's an example of what my morning would be like if I was prepping the bento shown and chopping meat/veg from scratch:

8.20: Take out pans, ingredients and utensils needed (utensils can be laid out the night before if desired - saves rummaging!)

8.22: Take precooked rice out from freezer, defrost in microwave (if I cooked it with a timed rice cooker, even better! Just pack and let cool.)

8.23: Cut up vegetables and chicken. Mix chicken with marinade.

8.27: Pack rice into bento box, let cool.

8.29: Stir fry meat and eggs at the same time in separate pans.

8.32: Take eggs out and put into bento box to cool with silicone cup divider. Wipe pan down with kitchen paper and stir fry vegetables (or bung in microwave!)

8.35: Take meat out, pack into box to cool.

8.36: Pack veggies into bento box with divider, leave to cool. Hunt for treats.

8.40: Close box properly, pop everything in backpack and head out for gam class!

## Iri Tamago/Tamago Soboro (egg mince)

Stir as much as you want depending on how "minced" you want the it to be.

Eggs (depending how much you want - don't go more than 3!)  
Light soy sauce  
Dark soy sauce (adds colour, not flavour. OD and you get brown egg.)  
Salt and pepper  
Sesame oil  
Cornstarch

Heat up a bit of the oil in a frying pan on medium-high while you lightly combine the eggs with sufficient seasoning (don't use a heavy hand though!) Pour your egg mix in the pan, and stir as you would scrambled eggs - the only difference being you don't have to stir as often if you want your "mince" to be a bit chunkier like I have in my bento. When you don't see any wetness, the egg's ready for serving or packing.

Protip: Adding a bit of chopped spring onions to the mix adds a nice pop of fresh colour.

## NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH?

Psst - we at Food have been in touch with a couple of London establishments recently, and we're expecting to do some reviews in the near future. We're still on the hunt for more, though!

If you'd like to suggest a great little place for us to try out – heck, if you want to be the one doing the trying and giving feedback after – then get in touch! We're contactable at: [food.felix@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:food.felix@imperial.ac.uk).

# GAMES

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# Steam sales pseudo-soliloquy

**Pietro Aronica** on "My Restraint" with foreword by Jeremy Pac-man

If you are a student at Imperial College, then there is a reasonable chance that you play video games, possibly on a PC. If you do, then you'll most likely be familiar with Steam, but if not, let me sum it up for you: it's like a vacuum cleaner for money. Specifically, my money, and the money of thousands of others who would never think to play certain titles if they weren't sold at extremely slashed prices. Steam is a program for the digital distribution of games that will often pop up with offers and sales and whatnot for titles that look interesting and cost half, a quarter, a tenth of their original price. Might as well, right? Twenty might-as-wells later, you have a full library of games, full afternoons and evenings from here till the next Steam sale, and a much emptier wallet.

I used to mock women. "Silly women!" I would say (incidentally, I'm not very good with girls). "Silly women," I would repeat, "What pleasure do they derive from shopping, from hunting bargains on shoes and blouses and dresses that they buy more for the price

than for their actual utility? They are worn once, and then left in some wardrobe, and they complain they never have enough. Such a waste of money!" Well, I now understand. For them, it may be clothes, but for me, it's the cheap, intriguing, only-a-click-away games that Steam offers me.

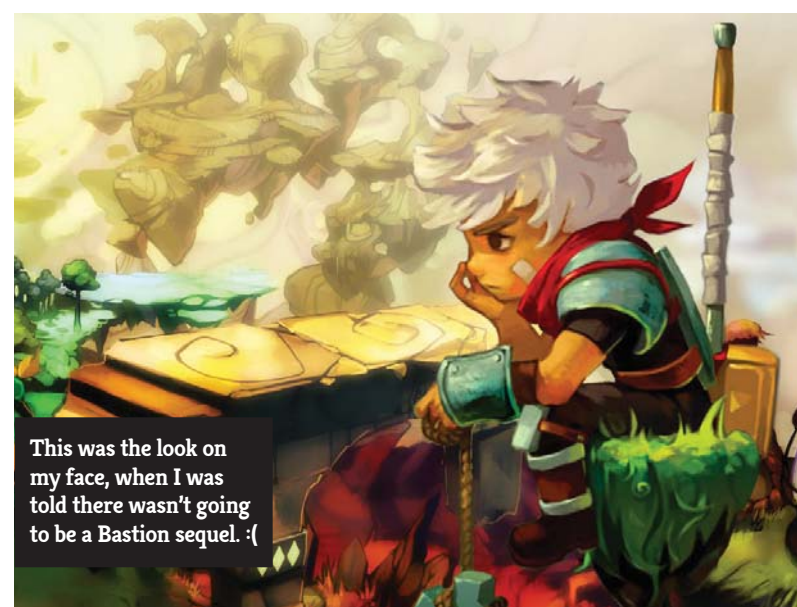
So last year, I drew the line. I looked at the list of games in my library, and saw that most were unfinished, some not even installed, and vowed to not be tempted by sales or offers until I reached the conclusion, or equally satisfying degree of mastery with the games, of all of them. That would be my resolution for the new year.

I started with *Bastion*, the game that prompted my change of policy on falling for Steam's tricks, and finished it in a couple of weeks. It's an isometric brawler where you control some dude going around smashing stuff and finding more about this forsaken world you live in. Though I make it sound simplistic, it is in fact very deep and engaging, and some of the most satisfying combat manoeuvres I've ever pulled were with this game.

I then had to tackle *Oblivion*, the Eater of Time. In my folly, I had purchased the super ultra deluxe collector's limited edition, with a bunch more missions and an entire extra region. Though I usually try to finish all games in their entirety, I had to drastically reconsider my definition of completion, or I would get mired in endless fetch quests. I powered through the main missions, which were monumentally disappointing: virtually indistinguishable from the other quests, they had more scripted scenes and a bombastic tone that failed to deliver. I didn't really believe we were all going to die at the hand of a demon any moment now, when I'd spent the last in-game month running errands for various people. It was a problem of *Morrowind* before it, and I suspect of *Skyrim* as well, though I haven't played it. A greater sense of urgency would help with the narrative.

I then finished *Mass Effect*, which had been in my library for years and which I went through in a couple of hours when I managed to tear myself from the preconception that I should go for 100% completion. It is a hard habit to kick, though: both *Assassin's Creed II* and *Far Cry II* are still in need of some more playing, despite the fact that it would take maybe a day at most. It's those damn collectibles: pointless, idiotic baubles that are infuriatingly hard to find and add nothing. If I don't retrieve them all, my OCD tendencies will twitch; if I do by looking at an online walkthrough, I'll grumble at myself for giving up; if I actually manage to find them all, I'll cry at how I was manipulated and how much time I wasted.

*Age of Wonders* came next, a criminally underrated series of turn-based, fantasy strategy games. The second title and its standalone expansion, *Shad-*



*ow Magic*, are complex, interesting and at times very funny; less finicky than the *Civilization* series, with more visceral combat and a greater emphasis on fighting than empire-building, I think they are among the best of the genre.

I then moved onto a *Aquaria*, a 2D Metroidvania sort of game, where you wander in an immense map defeating enemies, solving puzzles and acquiring new powers that let you go to different parts of the map. It's interesting and challenging, but its save system is punitive and the ending is an infuriating (Spoiler Alert) "To Be Continued" that was never continued, so make of that what you will.

*Torchlight* followed, aka *Diablo* with WoW graphics, a cute enough game to keep me busy for a bunch of hours. After it, I finished *S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl*, a gritty, depressing, tough shooter that will bring you from looting corpses in grey and abandoned power

plants to fleeing monstrous mutants in grey and abandoned warehouses. I still liked it: it's immersive and atmospheric and a nice change from games in which you are a superpowered machine of destruction, with infinite bullets and regenerating health. I wouldn't play it for too long, though, as getting eaten by ravenous dogs while evading bullets and trying to dodge the radiation zones becomes pretty grim after a while.

With this, I reached the end of the year, but by no means the end of the Steam library. I have many more left to finish, many realms to save, many enemies to shoot, many goddamned collectibles to find: who'd knew that being a gamer would be so hard?

*Games Editor's note – if anyone wants to gift Steam games to prolong Pietro's torment, please do. Let me know, and I'll send you his details, and in return, you'll get a death warrant signed by the man himself.*



## Bridging the gap

Ross Webster They call me Ross

I wonder if any of you actually get any revision done – by an almost unanimous vote, this week's review selection is *The Bridge Project*. A quick introduction to the game's genre would be as follows: you have a bridge you need to build, and you've limited resources. Your bridge will have to stand up to a variety of tests (buses, boats (use pistons) and earthquakes, to name a few). Savvy?

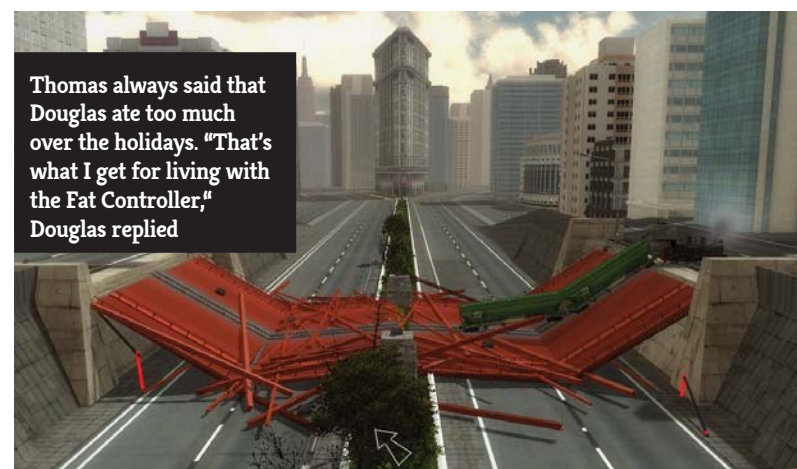
The game uses a simple physics engine and works out the stress and strain caused by all the traffic over your

bridge. Uneven or lacklustre construction commonly leads to broken girders, snapped cables and drowned pedestrians. The only thing missing is a sad trombone. I really enjoy this type of game, so I thought it was good to have a new bunch of challenges to go through, yet I wonder why no advancements have been made since the olden days, apart from graphically. Why not spice up the gameplay by allowing you to build in more than two dimensions, to allow massive bridge networks with helter-skelter sections? Production team, I hope you're reading. Verdict-wise, you'll get lots of hours of fun out of it, if you're

into spending nights creating a bridge that only spans 100 metres, contains enough steel to make a few *Titanics* and still collapses when a single car drives over it.

If your interest has been piqued, pick up the demos for the predecessors and give them a go. If you take a break in the middle of a bridge-sesh (as we call them in the Felix Office) and find that 4 hours have passed since you started, I'd look into getting this game. And a therapist.

Next week's options – *Garbage Truck Simulator* and *Ski Region Simulator*. Get your votes in to [games.felix@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:games.felix@imperial.ac.uk).





Coffee Break Boss: Matt Colvin  
felix@imperial.ac.uk

# COFFEE BREAK

## L-ice-nce to cold

Could this be the worst headline ever?



A timely reminder from the best artist of the past twenty years

**HOT!** NOTHING. IT'S FREEZING. **EVERYTHING.** IT'S FREEZING. **NOT!**

## Pedant's' Corner

The grand return of a section no-one was asking for

Felix shared a link. 9 January

At least there's a backup if you're degree doesn't work out... <http://metro.co.uk/2013/01/09/best-job-in-the-world-professional-water-slide-tester-wanted-3344727/>

**Best job in the world? Professional water slide tester wanted**  
metro.co.uk

Bored office workers are being given the chance to leave the rat race behind and begin a new career as a

That's right. We're celebrating pedantry in all of its forms once again. Why? Just check out this absolute clunker (left) delivered by our very own esteemed Editor-in-Chief last week. With one inappropriate contraction this well-meaning Facebook update undid all it set out to do. Causing a rightful flurry of controversy, the debacle opened up a thrilling debate about the usage of grammar. Poor show.

Make sure you 'like' Felix on Facebook ([facebook.com/feliximperial](https://www.facebook.com/feliximperial)) for regular updates from the Editor, including dubious musical recommendations.

## TRASH TALK



Cutting to the heart of the week's **big** topics

## POSTGRAD NEARLY SLIPS ON ICE



**Exhibition Road** played host to a **dramatic incident** on Tuesday when a postgraduate student nearly **slipped** on a patch of ice, before steadying himself and continuing on with his journey. Chaos engulfed the exterior of the Science Museum for a brief few seconds when the student placed his right foot on a newly frozen puddle of water. **Nearly-slipper** Jerome Ross, who is currently writing a thesis entitled 'Gravitational stability problems and their relationship with the dis-

cography of Duran Duran', opined on the **treachery** of the weather: "It was pretty treacherous," he said. "My foot kind of gave way and I thought I was going to slip, but then I didn't, which was great." Despite his **close brush** with the **remorseless ice**, Jerome isn't hoping for **mass thawing** anytime soon: "Looking back, I'd say this is the **most exciting thing** that's happened to me this week." After ruminating on the affair, he concluded: "**I have no regrets.**"

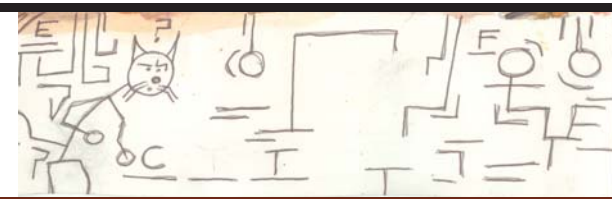
## SNOW MARQUEE SET TO WARM HEARTS OF NATION



**Following the huge** festive success of animated short *The Snowman and The Snowdog*, the Entirely Fictional Queen's Lawn Association (EFQLA) announced on Wednesday that it had been **inspired** to commission a new 20-minute animated feature for transmission next **Christmas**. Entitled *The Snowman, The Snowdog and The Snow Marquee*, the plot will revolve around a young boy whose ambitions stretch beyond mere snow-based creature sculpture: "In the spirit of **entrepreneurship**, our main character - eight-year-old

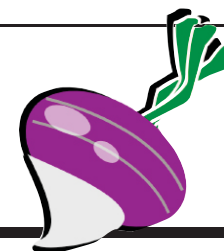
Kenny - will quickly move on from sculpting people and animals to fully-fledged architecture in the hope of mapping out his future career," said EFQLA spokesman Dennis Lardon. "At the end, everyone flies to the North Pole for the annual **Snowman Careers Fair** and they all have a great time before everything melts." Executives are seeking a musical artist for a **heartwarming** Christmas **anthem**. Lardon divulged that EFQLA are "trying to talk with **Keane** at the moment. Apparently they're really interested!"





## the turnip

Hangman's Finest College News Source



# Study claims LOLCATs cause climate change

A landmark new study published next month claims to have discovered an inextricable link between the recent proliferation of LOLCATs and the rise in the mean global temperature.

The conservative, libertarian and wholly unbiased think-tank (ahem) The Heartland Institute swear they've found a compelling correlation between the explosion of cute kitten pictures accompanied by short humorous phrases on the internet, and the rise in mean global temperature. This came in an announcement made late Wednesday.

A section of the statement reads: "We still don't quite know how the crafty LOLCATs are doing it, but there's no arguing with a Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient of  $0.894 \pm 0.05$ . The real take home message here is that the everyman no longer needs to install hippy solar panels or buy a communist wagon [electric car]. A UN lead initiative to instigate felinicide worldwide by 2020 is enough to avert the dreaded  $2.0^\circ\text{C}$  global temperature rise and ensure a stable climate planet wide for the foreseeable future. They aren't even that cute. The one with the cheeseburger just looks stupid."

Internet groups have responded

with a measure of courtesy proportional to the scientific rigour demonstrated by the study. At the time of going to print, The Heartland Institute was still in flames. The local authorities suspect arson, but agree that a smouldering wreck is probably best for the advancement of humankind all round.

One of the more literate and swearsy bloggers who contests Heartland's findings wrote that "the study does not provide any testable predictions for how LOLCATs could actually affect the climate... anyway rule zero of the internet says don't fuck with cats so shut the fuck up".

The Heartland Institute boasts an impressive history of painfully biased researching, claiming for a while that second hand smoking isn't all that bad for you and "contributes to social discourse as an excellent conversation starter" while insisting throughout the noughties that the planet wasn't heating up at all and that most peer reviewed science to the contrary was "frequently conducted too close to radiators, thus skewing the results".

In spite of this troubled past, the scientific community has seen fit to welcome the new research with open arms. One scientist we spoke to phrased it thus:

"Yeah they fucked about a bit with



One of the offending Lolcats, in a more reflective mood

all that denialist crap for a while, but it's like your mate from school who smoked too much dope, dropped out and is only now on the straight and narrow doing a BTEC in Horticulture or some shit. Sure it's no Maths degree, but we've all agreed to be really nice while they find their feet. I've never seen the appeal of LOLCATs

anyway. They aren't even that cute. The one with the cheeseburger just looks stupid."

Regardless of their stance on this divisive theory, scientists continue to advise that even though it's currently fucking chilly, that's just January and the planet is actually getting quite hot. It's all too easy to fein confusing

local variations in weather with the overall trend in global warming to make faux-witty comments to your mates about how shit climate science is. They've politely asked you to stop. You aren't funny and your grandkids are going to wonder what the fuck you were laughing at when their houses get flooded.

## Poll: Americans Think World Would be Safer With More Nuclear Weapons

After watching Alex Jones wave statistics in the face of Piers Morgan on CNN last week the majority of United States citizens are petrified by the fact that not all countries have nuclear weapons.

American Carl Noles, leader of the recently put together Arm The World organisation, has said "Think of all the war and violence which would not have happened if every country in the world were in possession of nuclear weapons. Would the atrocities of Vietnam have happened... No. Would there still be trouble between Israel and Palestine... No. Would we have invaded Iraq knowing they were in

custody of nuclear weapons... Almost certainly not."

On his own show Piers Morgan argued that the UK's 35 gun murders last year could be seen in some way as preferable to the US's 11,458.

Jones' agreed but quick as a flash pulled up a London Telegraph headline which read "UK - The violent crime capital of Europe" saying the british people, without guns to protect themselves, were subject to "hoards of people burning down cities and beating old women's brains out everyday."

So although we may have a slight increase in nuclear warfare the decline in non-nuclear warfare should be substantial, being almost eliminated. Plus nuclear winter means

snow days, and so most students are supportive.

A cost-benefit analysis that weighs up for most Americans.

Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said it is a "wonderful idea" adding "I can't believe I didn't think of it myself."

Tyrannical Syrian president Bashar al-Assad would also support repealing the UN's Treaty on Nuclear Weapons saying "Not only would this be wonderful for global diplomatic relations but it could have tremendous domestic impacts too."

The idea is gaining momentum in the wider international community after Piers Morgan vehemently opposed it.

## THE NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS

### THE EUROPEAN CAMERON IS HERE:



## CAMERON MAKES CHANCE BOWIE REFERENCE IN BRUSSELS

hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk

# HANGMAN

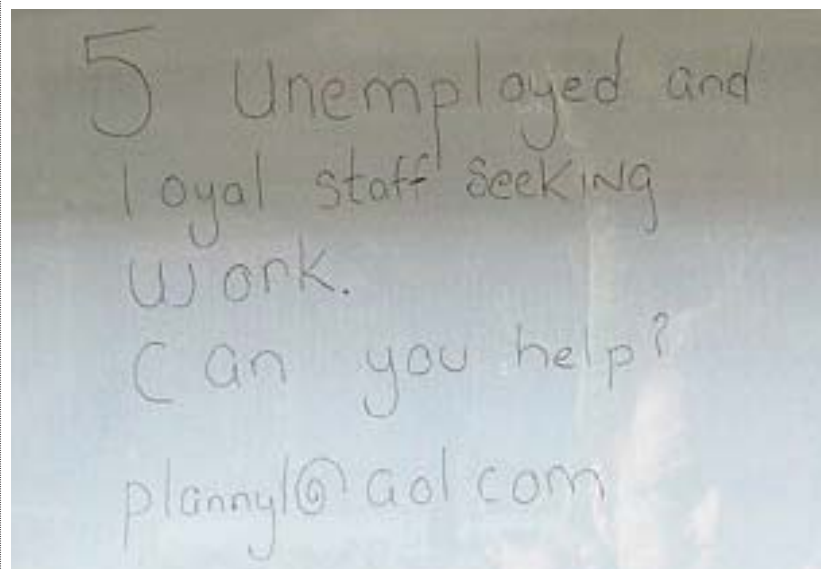
## TWAT OF THE WEEK



**Airing your dirty laundry in public. What would your mother say? Wait, she's right here. She says don't come home again, ever. Don't believe me. It's on film, you'll just have to fast forward through some of the more dodgy stuff to see it.**

**Got a photo of someone being a waste of a student loan?**  
Get permission, then just send it to us at: [felix@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:felix@imperial.ac.uk)

## THE NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS



**Staff at HMV seek gratification after news of closure. Man considers it.**

# H TO THE IZZ. IT'S THE HOROSCOPES



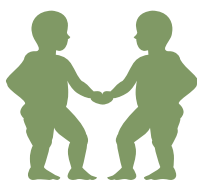
ARIES

This week your new year's resolution is to finish your coursework more than 10 minutes before the deadline for once. With 11 minutes to go, you smugly push it into the box, but you get so excited about handing it in early that you cum through the slot and ruin yours and everyone else's coursework.



TAURUS

This week you go to a house party and won't stop asking the DJ to play a totally hot new underground tech house track you found on Soundcloud to look cooler. They reluctantly play it to humour you but you get so into your techno two-step you trip over and show everyone your floral M&S granny knickers. You look cool now.



GEMINI

This week you decide to stop drinking – less embarrassment, less expense, no hangovers – a win-win situation. You realise that you're a horribly dull person and are incapable of holding a conversation without the lubrication of alcohol. You might be sober, but you don't have any friends any more... Look, even your liver is lonely...



CANCER

This week you venture to the gym in a desperate bid to get fit. You turn up intending to break yourself in gently with 15 mins on the treadmill but the receptionist advises you try a free circuits class. You give it a try – how bad can it be? Half way through though, you collapse and die of exhaustion. Pint?



LEO

This week, you decide to go on a tomato diet. You eat 20 tomatoes a day: nothing more, nothing less. After a few days you cut yourself and tomato juice leaks out of the wound. You feverishly lick it up and notice your skin is red too. You gulp down your own tomatoey flesh until only your eyeballs are left - so tasty.



VIRGO

This week you decide to inactivate your Facebook account in a bid to be more productive. You are so reclusive that everyone assumes this means you have died. Your friends sell all your clothes, your old Gameboy and even your fleshlight. Your textbooks are the only friends you have now... isn't this what you wanted?



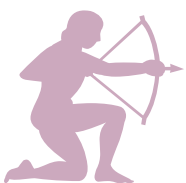
LIBRA

This week you decide to try and get to all your lectures on time. But instead of getting up 5 minutes earlier you decide to just cycle faster. You triumphantly arrive at College in time but have such a sweaty bum that it looks like you are trailing a stream of wee. You are so mortified you miss all your lectures anyway.



SCORPIO

This week you decide you really have to get a girlfriend. As the ratio at Imperial is not in your favour, you try online dating. You create a profile but are so ugly and socially awkward that no one replies to your messages. The rings of Saturn indicate that maybe your destiny is to die a virgin: accept your fate.



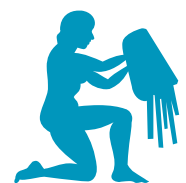
SAGITTARIUS

This week you decide get more sunlight as the many hours spent revising in the Library have given you rickets. Upon venturing outside you are so unused to the sun that you are immediately blinded and turn to stone. Your statue is left as a warning to anyone who ever tries to leave the Library before 11pm.



CAPRICORN

This week you fall down a drain and become trapped there. You try to befriend the rats but they are not fooled by your attempts to grow a tail. Before long you catch the plague; as you lie shivering in a sewer they begin to close in and nibble at your fingers. You cannot deny them fresh meat...



AQUARIUS

This week you are so fat that you begin to lose things in your folds of flesh. You lift up one of the folds in the hope you might have stored your problem sheet there, but the cheesy congealed sweaty rotting skin smell that greets you knocks you out and you fall into a coma. Pint (when you've woken up)?



PISCES

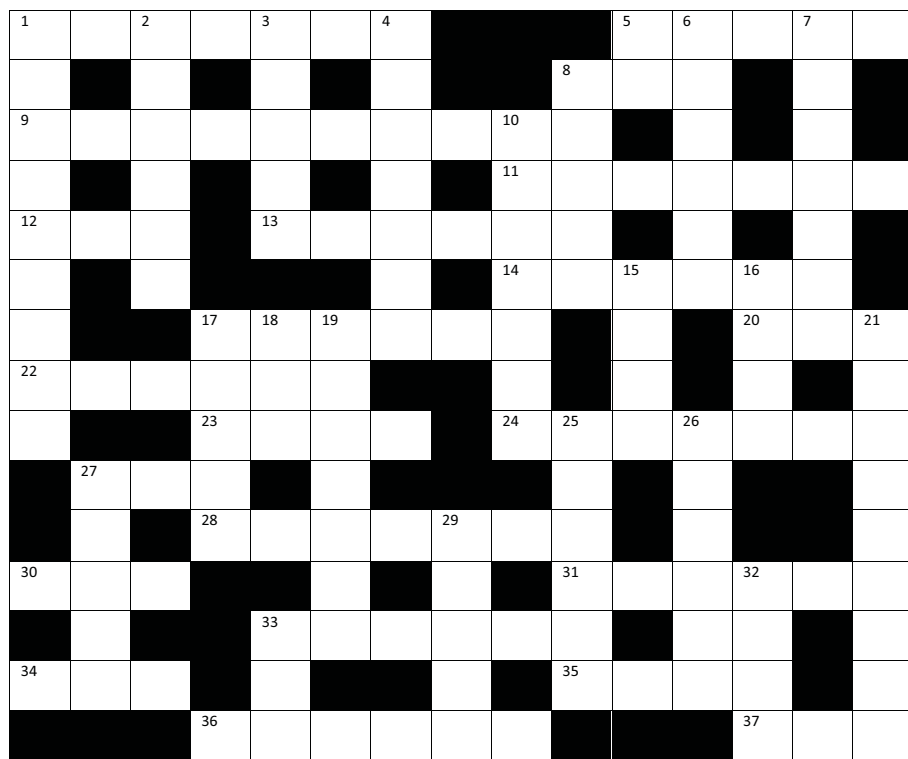
This week, you must choose between having daggers for fingernails or 3kg iron nipples. You'd never have to worry about walking home alone with the dagger nails but self-injury would be a grave risk. The nipples could be hidden by baggy jumpers, getting naked would be weird and you could never go swimming in public again. What's it going to be?

# PUZZLES

**Puzzles Commanders:**  
**Sotirios Karamitsos,**  
**Louisa Byrne**  
 puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk



## Crossword

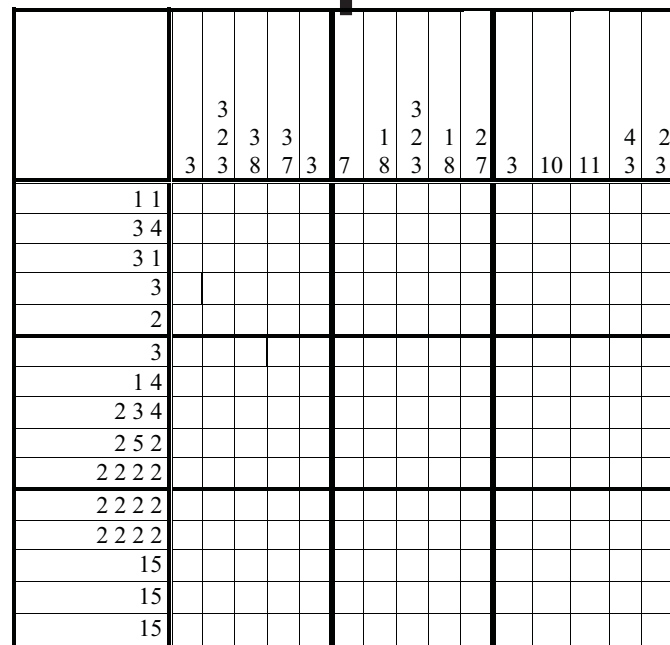


- Across**
- Mario bad guy (7)
  - Holiday accommodation (5)
  - Stop from entering (3)
  - Heavy (rain) (10)
  - Excuses (7)
  - Fish eggs (3)
  - Striped animals (6)
  - Respect and admiration (6)
  - Star sign (6)
  - Colouring agent (3)
  - Fairy \_\_\_\_, Christmas decoration (6)
  - Tall, slender leaved plant (4)
  - Teach (7)
  - Cut e.g. TV series (3)
  - Hold loved one closely in arms (7)
  - Insect (3)
  - Good farmland (6)
  - Use coupon (6)
  - Sense organ (3)
  - Other(s) (4)
  - Card suit (6)
  - Pen brand (3)

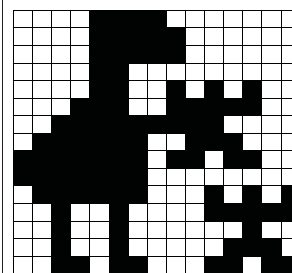
- Down**
- Wet geological feature (9)
  - Dry food store (6)
  - Incapable (5)
  - Whole number (7)
  - Expression of sarcastic laughter (2)
  - Comfy baby grow type outfit (6)
  - Wealth of a country or region (7)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ you, expression when someone sneezes (5)
  - Spanish municipality in the Aran Valley, Catalonia (5)
  - Bean curd often used as a meat replacement (4)
  - First name of Bart Simpson's teacher (4)
  - Number (5)
  - Had food (3)
  - Not ideal, but will do, its \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
  - Lively (9)
  - Sleep thought (6)
  - Bring into existence (6)
  - Mixture of metallic elements (5)
  - Paying attention (5)
  - Explosive (4)
  - Whiskey grain plant (3)

## 2. Can you see a pattern?

The numbers show you how many groups of black squares are in a row or column, as well as how many black squares each group consists of. Filling in the grid produces a pretty picture.

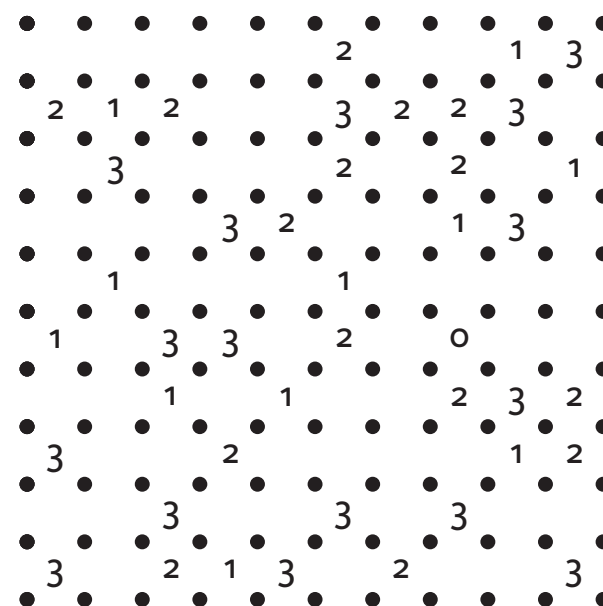


Last week's nonogram



## Slitherlink

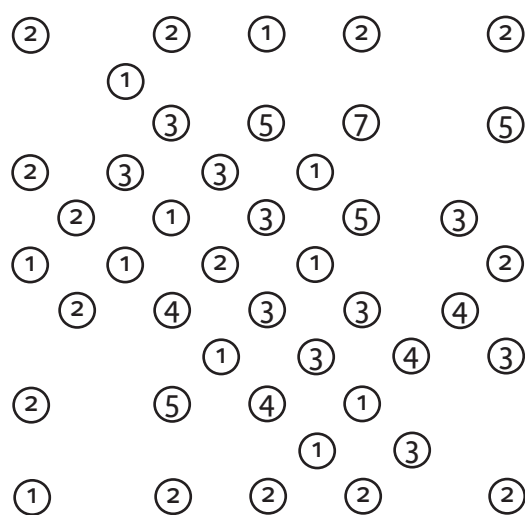
To solve a Slitherlink puzzle is easy: you need to draw a single closed loop by joining the dots (not diagonally!) so that the numbered squares are surrounded by the corresponding number of lines.



Solution for last week's crossword.



## Hashi



Connect all the islands with bridges so that you can get from any island to any other one. There are restrictions, though: the bridges have to be either vertical or horizontal and they must not intersect. You can have up to two bridges between any two islands and, last but not least, each island must have exactly as many bridges stemming from it as the number on it.

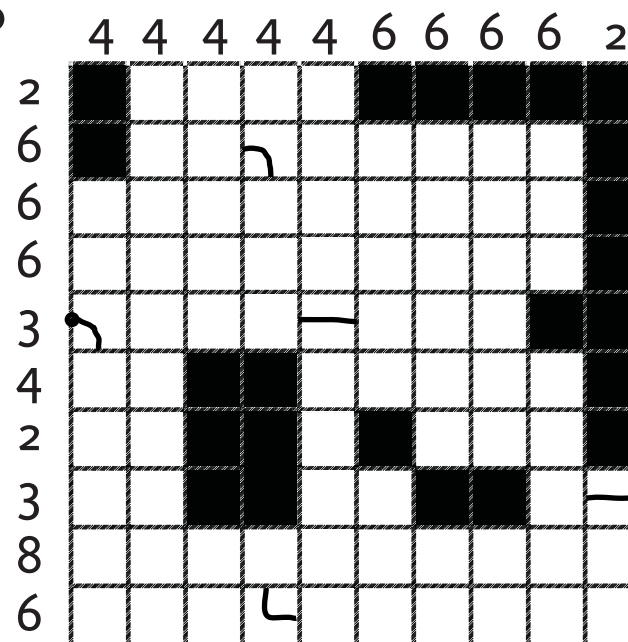
## FUCWIT League Table

Yufan Zhao	6
M-Soup	3
Wael Aljeshi	3
Tan Wei Jie	2

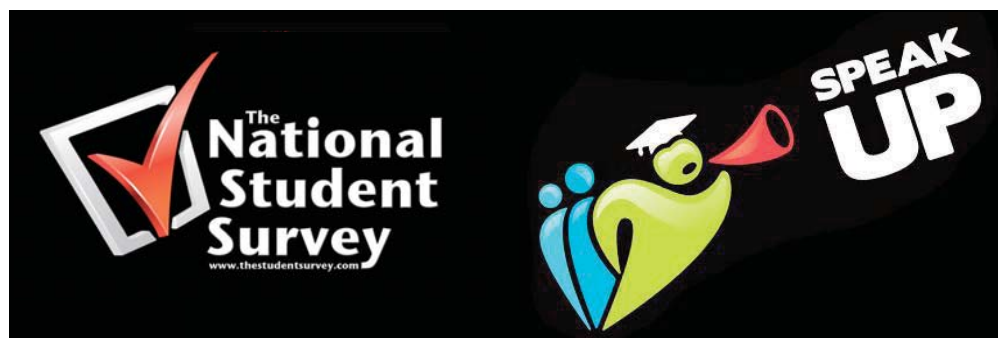
Say goodbye to FUCWIT, and say hello to FUCWIT 2: Electric Boogaloo. As promised, FUCWIT has reset and now is your chance to see yourself at the top of the leaderboard, so send your answers to [puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk). As a reminder of how points work, it's 1 point per correct solution, plus 1 point if you're the first one to send it (with double points for the cryptic crossword when we have one, because I hear it's a pain to crack).

## Ophis

Fill the cells with a continuous line (the "snake") that does not pass through a cell twice, doesn't intersect with itself, and passes through all white boxes. The numbers show you how many times the snake turns in the corresponding row or column. The snake enters and exits the grid at the shown points (and only those points). There are some hints to get you started.



## NSS has started!



The National Student Survey started today, which gives final years the chance to show their satisfaction to the general public on the education they have received here at Imperial.

The results of the NSS are used in national league table rankings, so be honest when you are filling it in, as prospective students and other interested parties will be using this data to compare the quality of education each university and course offers.

The NSS also raises important issues that College and the Union can respond to. Every year the Union publishes a

response to the NSS with the aim of improving the student experience across the whole College.

Last year, 71% of final years filled in the NSS and we are hoping to beat this percentage to give a more fully representative view of how satisfied Imperial's students are. To help make the survey as useful as possible we have a few tips to those who have yet to complete it:

**1. Rate your entire degree, not your final year.**

The NSS is very different to SOLE. Use SOLE to discuss the positives and

negatives of your year and NSS for the positives and negatives of your whole degree.

**2. Don't be neutral.**

On many questions you will see these options: strongly agree, slightly agree, neutral, slightly disagree, strongly disagree. Neutral responses give us no indication as to whether things need improving or are going very well. Make your voice count.

**3. Give detailed comments on open text boxes.**

There are free-text boxes on the survey. Be as detailed as possible if you want to make an impact.

So if you are a final year, fill in the survey now at [www.thestudentsurvey.com](http://www.thestudentsurvey.com). You can also win a £20 Union Shop voucher or a Summer Ball ticket for completing the survey!

Also, you don't need to wait until a survey to make changes in your Department. Your Representatives meet key teaching

and administrative staff regularly to fix issues and pass on praise; find your rep on the Union website now.



**Doug Hunt**

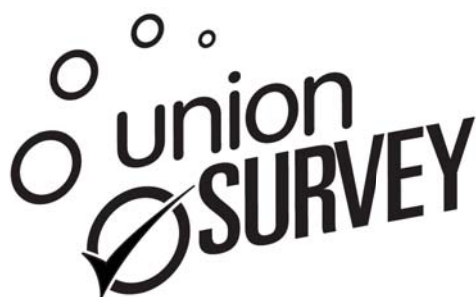
DEPUTY PRESIDENT (EDUCATION)  
president@imperial.ac.uk

Keep up-to-date with your Sabbaticals at:

[imperialcollegeunion.org/sabbs](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/sabbs)



## Union Survey - last chance to win an iPad Mini!



**FOR FIVE MINUTES OF YOUR TIME YOU COULD WIN AN IPAD MINI & MORE GREAT PRIZES!**



The Union Survey is your chance to let us know what you think about the many services that we run and provide.

**Take the survey online at [www.imperialcollegeunion.org/survey](http://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/survey) and you could win one of the following prizes:**

- An iPad Mini (WiFi 16GB Black)
- 2 x £20 Union Shop vouchers
- 4 x £10 Union Shop vouchers
- 4 pairs of Summer Ball 2013 tickets!



At the end of last academic year we ran the first ever Union Survey and we have already made positive changes as a result of your feedback. Our 'You said, we did' campaign highlights the changes we have made.

One of the most visible changes we made was in launching this new website! You said that the old site was slow and hard to navigate, so when we were thinking about our new site these were the two most important elements for us.

Other changes include the reintroduction of a wide-range of real ales in the Union bars, an Everyday Value range in the Union Shop and a comprehensive Rep Finder that helps you find out how represents you in College and the Union.

**Don't forget, the Union Survey closes this Sunday!** This really does help us to improve everything we do, so help us keep improving for you. We will be selecting winners at random for the prize draw and announcing them online.



## SPORT

Sport Editors: Oli Benton,  
Margot Pikovsky, Sorcha Cotter  
sport.felix@imperial.ac.uk

# Wandering the Lake District

Mark Bruggemann Sports Writer

## Day 1: The Journey

At the usual time of 17:30hrs, ten Fellwanderers met at the Union to embark upon the annual Winter Tour, this year to the Lake District. After introductions, Matt and Ping on their first trip, discussion immediately turned to the anticipated freezing conditions — photos from the 2010 tour had been circulating and did not inspire confidence. An efficient packing of the minibus (including walking axes) meant we were soon heading north through Hyde Park.

Fortunately, the London traffic didn't prove too tortuous so we made good time along the M1. A supermarket stop near Birmingham allowed one vital aspect of the trip to be sourced — food! An ambitious 20 minute target to be back in the bus was not met but soon enough we were motoring north again. Approximately five hours later, the minibus arrived at Thirlmere Recreation Hall, complete with Christmas tree, where we would be staying for the trip.

The hall was reassuringly — not to mention surprisingly — warm so after unpacking the bus and sorting out the food, roll mats and sleeping bags were out and everyone bedded down for the night.

## Day 2: Rain

To all those who have been on many Fellwanderers trips and suffered at the hands of the spreadless cheese and pickle sandwich, Saturday was a dream come true. In the lunch-preparation room, we found Claire cutting into a large joint of ham and butter on the table along with thick, seeded white bread.

Sandwiches made and fully waterproofed, we headed out into the rain surprised by the relative warmth of the morning. The walk started from the hall bearing due east through



Sorry, what about wandering fells is fun?  
Bleak, wet, cold... only one smile among them!

the Stair Wood and onto the ridge containing Wainwright's High Tove (515m), Ambroth Fell (479m), High Seat (608m), and Bleaberry Fell (590m).

The going was fairly easy without much steep ascent but due to the recent heavy rain we feared spending the whole day walking through deep bogs. Fortunately, and to the intrigue of many, the bogs were mostly frozen giving the strange sensation of walking on something that should be soft but is actually solid. Despite having two large lakes on either side of the ridge (Derwent Water and Thirlmere to the east and west, respectively) good views were few and far between as visibility was severely limited by low cloud cover and mist in the valleys.

The circular(ish) walk ended back at the hall just at the sun was going down. Dinner preparations were quickly underway for James' goulash with dumplings. The recipe had been attempted on a previous trip and turned out partially successful — the pitfall being the lack of scone-baking experience in the group. This time, there was no such trouble with Sarah in charge of dumping-making so, needless to say we ate heartily leaving just enough room for a bread and butter pudding.

## Day 3: Wainwrights

Sunday promised a long walk, navigated by Tom, to include ten Wainwrights in the North Western Fells — we knew this was going to be tough so started with a cooked English breakfast. After a short drive from the hall to Braithwaite we found ourselves ascending steeply onto a horseshoe-ridge, with eight of the peaks to be climbed during the day. Before too long the ascent was complete to take us onto Grisedale Pike (791m) and great views of the adjacent Whinlatter Forrest Park as well as the rest of

the, mostly snow-topped, route.

We then continued along the first stretch of the ridge to bag Hopegill Head (770m) and Whiteside (707m), the latter providing an excellent view of Crummock Water. We then lost a lot height moving along the toe of the ridgeline followed by another steep ascent up to Grasmoor (852m). Unfortunately, at this height we were well and truly within the clouds, again restricting visibility but not dampening spirits. Continuing along this branch of the horseshoe we ascended Crag Hill (837m) and, with the sun low in the sky, Sail (773m).

While coming down from Sail the path forked — one prong going down into the valley and the other continuing along the ridge. It was beginning to get dark (entre chien et loup we were told the French say) so this was the decision point: head back to the bus or carry on to two more Wainwrights? We agreed we had enough light to safely bag Scar Crag (672m) and Causey Pike (637m) so quickly made tracks. Many of the surrounding villages were illuminated by their street lights which made for a pretty landscape despite the low light levels.

The walk between Causey Pike into the valley felt very peaceful and we had just enough daylight to ascend our final Wainwright of the day, Outside (568m). Unfortunately it was too dark to attempt Barrow (455m) so we proceeded, now in complete darkness, with our headtorches on towards the lights of Braithwaite to collect the minibus.

We arrived back at the hall at about six o'clock shattered, having ascended 1600m during the course of the day.

## Day 4: Rest or Run

Monday morning offered a simple choice — a gentle walk to recover from the previous day or to run 23miles over 11 Wainwrights. Sen-

sibly the vast majority of the group chose the former and headed off towards Conniston Water, dropping off the runners along the way. This is the last we would see of them until the evening.

After the walk we drove into Keswick where the group further split into those who fancied an afternoon shopping and tea drinking, and those who fancied a quick lap of Derwent Water. After stocking up with additional supplies the two groups made their way back to the hall to prepare the much anticipated roast dinner.

At about six thirty Jack and Charlie returned from their run covering Glaramara (783m), Allen Crag (785m), Great End (910m), Esk Pike (885m), Bowfell (902m), Rossett Pike (651m), Pike of Stickle (709m), Loft Crag (680m), Thunacar Knott (723m), and High Raise, (802m) so were unusually quiet for the rest of the evening! The roast beef with all the trimmings, including chestnuts, was served soon after and certainly lived up to expectation and left us all immobile once the Christmas pudding had also been demolished.

## Day 5: Views and Singing



It looks cold. Apart from Pink Hat Man; he looks snuggly.

Tuesday morning started with a drive to a car park near Conniston to tackle another five Wainwrights in the Southern Fells. The walk started with a steep ascent with scrambling sections — the pinnacle set the tone for the rest the day. The sky was near cloudless providing stunning views of Morecambe bay in one direction and snow capped peaks in the other. Strangely, the snow on the fells made them seem much larger and more dramatic, more akin to an Alpine environment, than they actually are.

The route followed another ridge around Levers Water and Low Water. The going was mostly good though very undulating meaning the day was characterised by lots of ascent. First, and after many false summits, we were up Weatherlam (763m) and stopped for lunch in the sun — a rarity this year and made all the sweeter by roast beef sandwiches! Taking every opportunity to skate on the frozen lakes, we made our way towards Swirl How (802m) followed by Brim Fell (796m) and The Old Man of Conniston (803m). Here, it was possible to see both Snowdon, despite it being over 100miles away, and the Isle Of Man.

On the way to the final Wainwright of the day, Dow Crag (778m), the sun started to go down. The reddish-orange sky across the sea was magnificent with the lights on the Isle of Man looking as though the sea were on fire. The offshore windfarm only added to the picture. We descended down an old quarry road looking into this scenery which, I think, had a calming effect on us all.

Taa was in charge of the evening's dinner: a delicious Thai Green Curry. Just after dinner the village carol singers knocked on the hall door. We, of course, let them in and requested "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" followed by "Good King Wenceslas" and sang along with zest! It seemed a fitting event for our last night in the Lakes and left those from cities and abroad slightly bemused.



She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes...

Sport Editors: Oli Benton,  
Margot Pikovsky, Sorcha Cotter  
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# SPORT

# Hockey Womens 1's win again

**Bryony Halcrow** Sports Writer

For the first match this year it was definitely thermal weather as the Ladies' 1s went out to play RUMS in the arctic conditions found at Harlington, on a pitch that was nearly frozen, although this didn't put a damper on our spirits. We were out to get them, as earlier in the season they had beaten us by a fair few goals to very few in return.

RUMS pressed hard from the start and soon after the match began were awarded a penalty corner, but solid defending from Celia, Maria, Emma and Kirsty meant we cleared the ball easily. Play continued with some good linking passes up the right wing to Hazman, resulting in short corners for us, although we were unable to convert. Sorcha was on a roll as she continuously took the ball and dribbled past their defenders, and great play from Kathryn and Anna up front meant we had lots of shots and a few near misses on goal. We worked hard to keep the ball in our possession and in our half of the pitch.

The goal came just before half time, when an unmarked Bryony saw a space in the D and ran in. The ball was passed back to Celia who sent it in and a deflection from Bryony put the ball through the keepers' legs and into the back of the goal. Text-book finish. We were 1-0 up.

After half time, we knew RUMS would be out to attack, but man marking of their key player meant they got more and more frustrated and the ball didn't get through. Defenders Kirsty and Emma kept strong to prevent their forwards from having chances to score, and beautiful distribution from Celia at the

back meant we had more and more chances at their end of the pitch.

Breakaways in the second half meant that Kathryn had some one-on-one situations with the goalie and close chances on goal. We had our captain Gigi back for the last 15 minutes of the game, who worked well linking passes down the right with Maria and Hazman, but strong defending from the RUMS side meant our chances were saved.

With great play from the whole team, the final score was 1-0. Hopefully our winning streak will continue this term, and more goals will be scored. Good luck ladies!



Looks more like golf, minus the silly trousers.



Stirring words from Captain Gigi. Like a modern day William Wallace.



Impenetrable.

# What is Wing Chun?

**Max Tottenham** Wing Chun President

## What is Wing Chun?

Wing Chun is a close quarters hand to hand combat system developed in Southern China which has recently gained popularity due to the martial arts film *Ip Man* released in 2008 which is loosely based on the life of the late grand master Ip Man. Wing Chun has also been made famous by Bruce Lee, who studied Wing Chun as a direct disciple of Ip Man, Lee took many of the principles and concepts behind the martial art into developing his own combat system Jeet Kune Do (JKD).

## Classes

At Imperial College Wing Chun classes are run under the direction of Sifu Andrew Sofos and the Imperial College Wing Chun Society. Sifu Andrew has been running classes at Imperial for 26 years. During class students work towards a grading system set out by Sifu Andrews martial arts academy based in north London. Several of our students just completed their Level 1 grading over Christmas time, and a big congratulations are in order to all of them. Classes start with a quick but intense warm-up, training of the basic stance, punches and kicks before moving on to learn some basic practical self-defence techniques. More tra-

ditional aspects of the martial art are also taught including the first form Sil Nim Tau, and at later ranks, Chi Sao's (Sticky hand exercises) which are used to train Wing Chun practitioners' reactions and condition the arms. At the end of the class we finish off with footwork and some pad work to improve on coordination, concentration and confidence: helping you judge range, distance and power – above all, efficiency of movement. This also ties in with the strong emphasis on improving cardiovascular fitness.

## Seminars and socials

Throughout the year Imperial College Wing Chun society also hosts several

socials including movie nights, trips to china town and group drinks at the bar. This term we hope to have a joint social with some of the other martial arts clubs at Imperial College.

Students also get the chance for discounts on seminars run by Sifu Andrew Sofos at his North London based martial arts academy. Seminars are 5-6 hour long intensive sessions run on one underlying theme, recently several students went on a 'Street Survival' seminar and found it very rewarding.

This term we have a special offer, your first two classes with us are free. There is no obligation to buy membership. Just turn up ready to train, and



Happy Slapping Extreme version

have fun.

Wing Chun conducts classes in the Union Gym:  
Wednesdays 12:00 – 13:30  
Saturdays 14:00 – 16:00



# Carving it up in Val Thorens

**Felix Sport** catches up with Imperial's most successful ski trip yet

**John McGuckin** Sports Writer

By this point most people will have just about recovered from the best week of skiing and partying yet. This was Imperial's biggest ski trip by a long way and did not disappoint!

On the last Friday of term over 200 Imperial students gathered at the Union in eager anticipation of the perfect conditions that awaited them in Val Thorens. Boarding the four coaches, we headed on the short trip to the French Alps; across the channel by ferry and through France. Stopping at the supermarket at the bottom of the mountain to make provisions for the week we were shocked at the ridiculously low drinks prices. Stocking up on five litre petrol canisters of wine, we were set for the week!

Arriving in Val T we were greeted with metres of fresh powder. Snow conditions were amazing throughout the week with so much off-piste on offer. Several of the days had perfect blue skies allowing everyone to make the most of the less accessible powder. Freestyle Captain and self-confessed gangster, Mikkel, demonstrated the proper way to do a cliff drop, landing straight on his ass from 20 foot up. For those more akin to staying on piste, we had a dual slalom race day between ourselves and the other London universities on our trip – ULU, UAL, Greenwich, Ravensbourne and Westminster – needless to say, a team from Imperial took first prize.

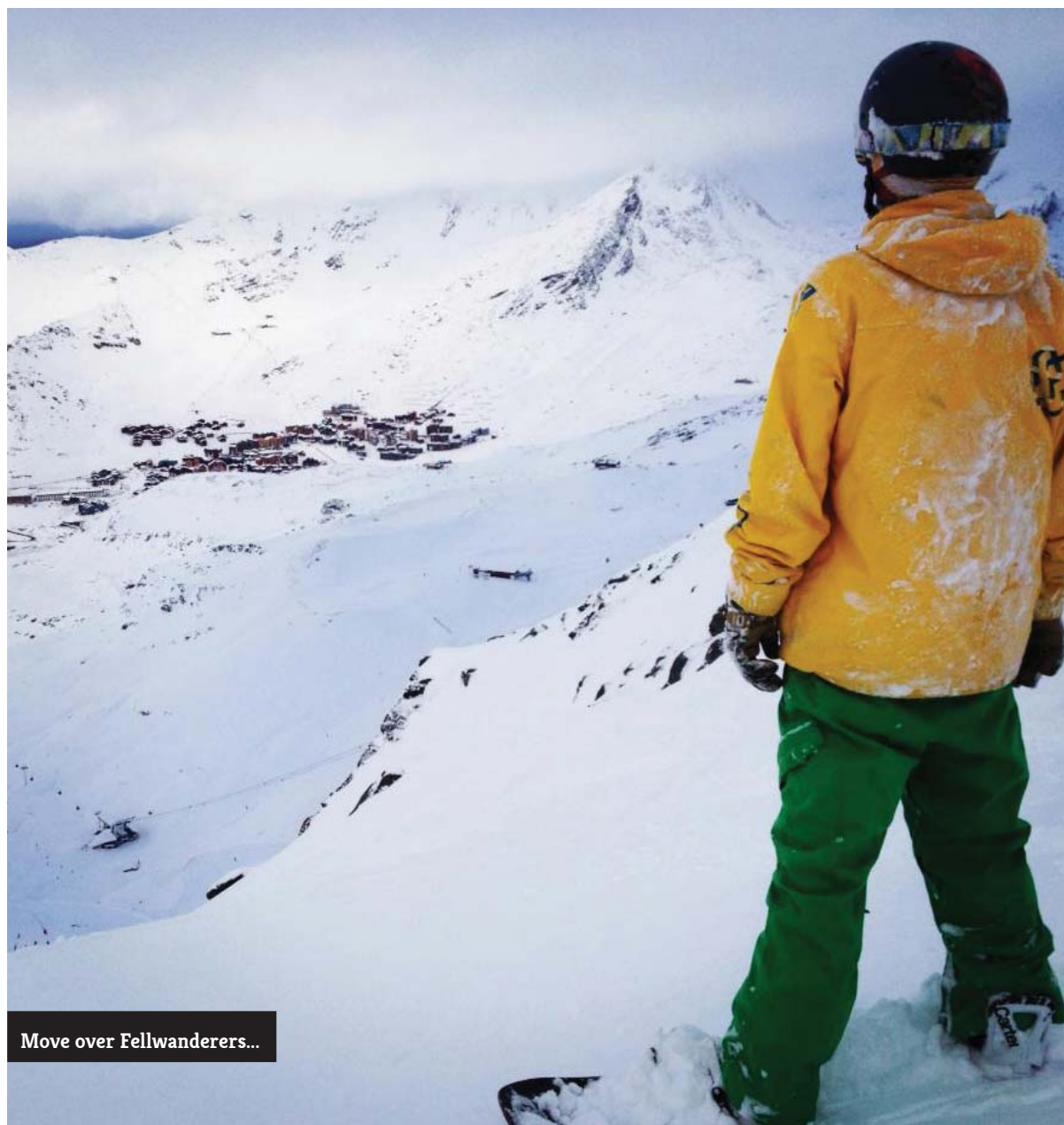
On top of the great snow there was the crazy après-ski. Bar 360 was the place to be after a day's skiing or snowboarding with students partying there

from all of the London SnowOperative universities (the group of snowsports clubs who went on this trip). This was also the venue for the Mountain Meal of meat fondue and plenty of wine. Skiing down from the Mountain Meal allowed people to do funny challenges, such as Michael Parkes riding down on one ski. The après didn't stop there with a different nightclub each night. The highlight has to be the Wednesday night when Danny Byrd of Hospital Records played to a crowd of almost 2000 students.

After such a week, it was sad to say goodbye – to new found love, to new friends and old, and most of all to the unique beauty that is a university ski trip. After a rough head count, we were on our way, exhausted, but in equally high spirits knowing that we had just bared witness to an incredible trip.

A big thank you is needed to Vlad, our trip organiser who worked tirelessly on putting this trip together as well as the rest of the Snowsports committee. Also thanks to travel company NUCO for helping us through it. Lastly, if you came on the trip, thank you for making it the best one yet!

If you missed out or have been left gagging for more, do not fear as we have our Easter Trip to Alpe D'Huez from 22nd-30th March. This is BUSC Main Event with 2500+ UK university students in one resort – with competitions all week if you want another sensational holiday. To book on, visit [www.buscvents.com](http://www.buscvents.com) and select Imperial as your university. As well as this, next year's winter trip should be just as big and so don't leave it to the last minute to book! Any questions – email us at [ski@ic.ac.uk](mailto:ski@ic.ac.uk). As always, Snow Love!



Move over Fellwanderers...



Nice curves.



I believe this is what the call the "lash" part of the trip