

ARTSFEST

What arty things are happening in on campus this week?

7

Cheap as Chips

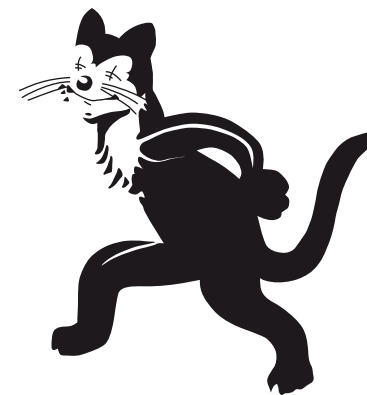
It's national chip week, read all about it!

35

FELIX

"Keep the Cat Free"

21/02/14
Issue 1569
felixonline.co.uk



NekNominations - a fifth reported fatality

Maciej Matuszewski
News Editor

A fifth person has been reported as having died after taking part in NekNomination online drinking game. Twenty year old Nottingham resident Bradley Eames posted a video of himself downing two pints of gin to Facebook. He died a few days, reportedly from alcohol poisoning, though police have indicated that post-mortem toxicology tests were inconclusive.

NekNomination involves individuals posting videos and images of themselves drinking large quantities of alcohol to the internet and then nominating their friends to do the same. The game is claimed to have begun in Australia but has recently found a lot of popularity in the British Isles.

Its critics maintain that it uses peer pressure to force vulnerable people to perform dangerous stunts. Mr Eames' death follows that of London hotel worker Isaac Richardson, Cardiff resident Stephen Brooks and Irish citizens Jonny Byrne and Ross Cummins. Byre, a teenager, is said to have thrown himself into a river as part of his challenge.

The BBC reported that the creators of the NekNomination Facebook page have made efforts to counter the dangerous effects of the game. In a statement they said: "We made the decision a few nights ago to no longer continue to run the page the way it was originally set up. All videos have been removed and we'd like to continue as a Neknomination awareness page, highlighting the dangers surrounding the game." The scandal has also prompted the creation of the 'Random Acts of Kindness Nomination' website, which encourages people to post videos of themselves performing acts of charity.

Immigration Bill has second reading in Lords



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Joe Letts
Editor-in-Chief

The second reading of the Immigration Bill took place in the House of Lords last Monday. The reading stretched over a seven-hour period during which the Peers discussed several aspects of the bill, including a lengthy discussion about the prospective problems facing overseas students due to the bill.

Key opponents to the bill included Lord Patel and Lord Winston, both of whom are Professors that hold university Chancellorships.

During the debate Lord Patel pointed out that: "...international students in higher education contributed £10.2 billion to the UK economy. ...To give some more detailed figures, as regards the total entrants by subject from non-EU countries, in STEM subjects there was a drop in 2011-12 of 8% and a further 2% in 2012-13. These are

official figures".

The Peer also pointed out problems that the introduction of the "health surcharge" would cause for the economy, possibly dissuading skilled migrant workers from traveling to the UK.

Meanwhile Lord King of Bridgewater countered the argument by suggesting that: "it is no good for the country to feel that there is no concern about problems that are coming up over illegal immigration and abuse of the immigration system. It is our responsibility in Parliament to help command public confidence, otherwise we will face a much more serious situation in the future".

In response, Lord Winston gave vocal evidence about his experience as an overseas post-doctoral researcher in Belgium and also spoke about how several of the students he had met while visiting top universities in the USA were "convinced that we are not open for business".

Additionally Baroness Barker pointed out that not only had the

Labour government carried out a consultation into a similar plan to "exclude visitors from free primary care" but also that the research carried out by the government to support the bill "gave the impression that frontline staff in acute health services had come up with systematic observations about migrants and their use of the NHS. In fact, what it revealed was that there was no systematic observation, and that quite often people were simply asked questions on the basis of their appearance or nationality."

Marissa Lewis, Union Deputy President (Welfare) observed the progress of the debate over the course of the evening. Lewis authored the Union's submission of evidence to the Select Committee on Science and Technology's inquiry into the effects the immigration on international students, which was based on a paper brought to Council last December.

The bill is scheduled to go through the Lords Committee stage on March 3, followed by a report stage and third reading before receiving Royal Assent.

THIS ISSUE...

SCIENCE



Attack of the venom-proof ants 6

BOOKS



Exploring the Picocon conference 24

ARTS



What's happening at ArtsFest?

17

EDITOR'S PICKS

GAMES

Future Gaming

This week we take a look at the future of Gaming



COMMENT

Plugtime

Another week with Plugtime, this week it's the LHC.



FILM

Lego Movie

This week we have a review about the new Lego movie. Everything is awesome.



Errata

Last week we printed the wrong version of the left music page. We apologise for the error to both our readers and the author, Stuart Masson.

We also put a puzzling date on the puzzles page :)

What's On?

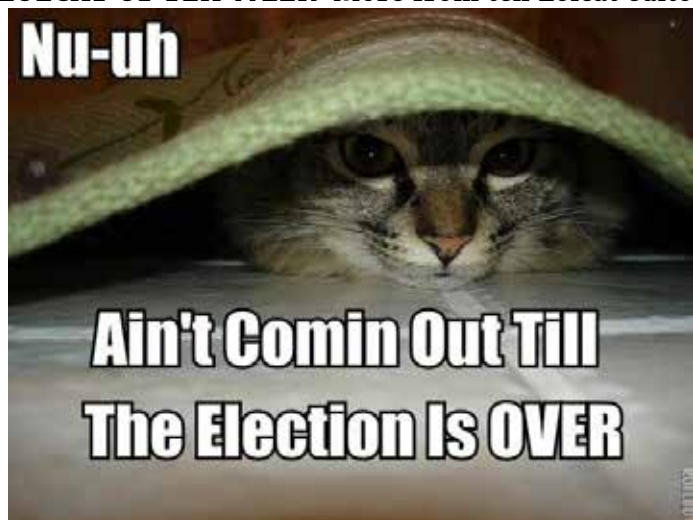
Friday 21st:

Live Indie Bands (AYB and Crystal X) in Metric, also available on icradio.com

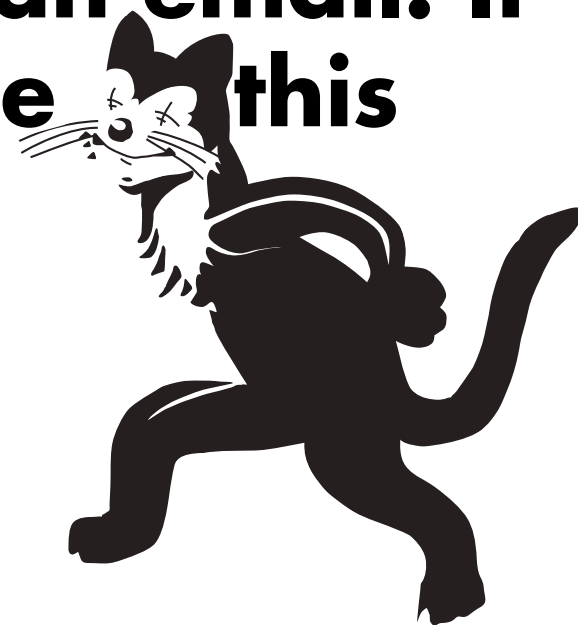
OR

Vocal Evening with MT Soc and A Capella societies from 7PM (part of ArtsFest).

LOLCAT OF THE WEEK: More from teh Lolcat editor



Hey, you! Just because we're in **February**, it doesn't mean you can't **get involved** in Felix! There's still plenty of time, so **pick up a finger** and send us an email. If you had come **this** week, you would have received an **apple pie**.



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NEWS

Office of Fair Trading claims sanctions on students in debt unlawful

Joe Letts
 Editor-in-Chief

After analysing the terms and conditions of over 100 UK Higher Education Institutions, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) concluded that almost 75% included sections that could stop students graduating or progressing to the next year of study if they were in debt to their institution.

The OFT stated that “the blanket use of academic sanctions in such instances, regardless of the circumstances, could breach consumer protection law”.

The circumstances in which students can be sanctioned include owing fines for late library books or childcare services and non-academic debt.

A paper submitted to the Union’s Executive Committee last August revealed that no student at Imperial has been prevented from graduating of progressing because of outstanding academic charges.

College indirectly invests £785,000 in tobacco industry

Nida Mahmud
 News Editor

Earlier this week the London Student revealed that Imperial College has £785,000 indirectly invested in tobacco companies. This conflicts with the extensive cancer research done by Imperial academics.

The investment is split between investment firms, the College has a £505,000 share in British American Tobacco, a £182,000 stake in Imperial Tobacco group and £98,000 in Reynolds American.

We spoke to a College spokesperson who released the following statement about the investments: “It is Imperial College policy to neither undertake research to develop or promote tobacco products nor to directly invest in tobacco companies.”

The College Endowment has a responsibility to optimise investment return to support the College’s academic mission, and it therefore holds some investments in managed funds. The College has no control over the composition of those funds, which change on a continual basis.”

Chemistry & Materials Departments display year on year NSS participation increase

Joe Letts
 Editor-in-Chief

The Chemistry and Materials Departments have shown a marked improvement from the number of final year students who have completed the National Student Survey. At the time of writing, Chemistry had achieved 93.54% participation, 23.9% higher than last year’s final figure. In comparison the department of Materials has seen a smaller gain of 4.46% over last year’s 78.87% figure.

The Department of Earth Science and Engineering (ESE) remains at the top of the leaderboard with another year of full participation from finalists.

On the other hand Biology currently needs over 69% of students to fill out the NSS in order to reach last year’s 80.61% high.

There was some controversy at the start of the session when some students were temporarily unable to fill out the survey because the government had not processed changes to their degree length.

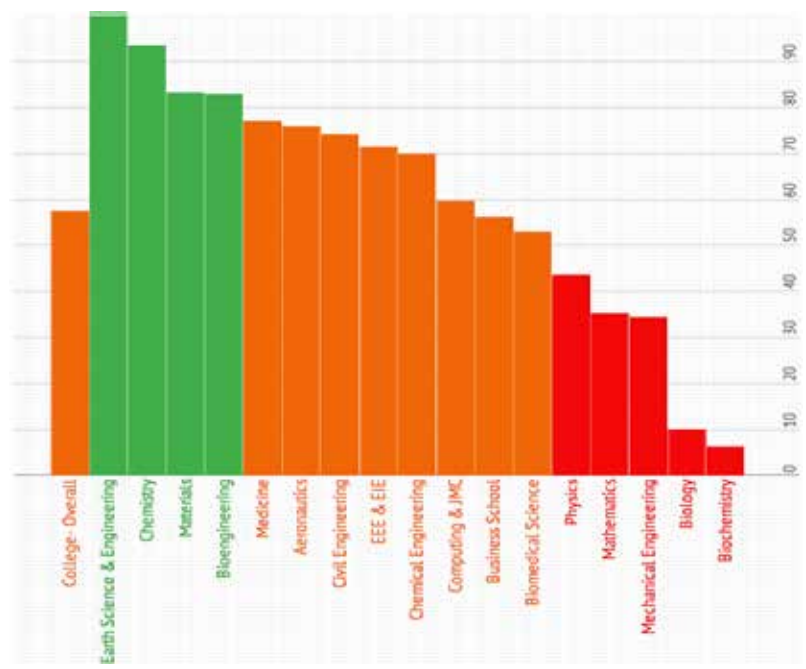
Additionally, some students (including those on year abroad schemes) have been forced to fill out

the NSS a year early since Ipsos MORI has been unable to remove them from the survey.

Nat Kempston, the Union’s Deputy President (Education) told *Felix*: “NSS participation is going really well so far, I am pleased with the progress in the majority of departments. Life Sciences are not promoting the survey until March when they have finished their Final exams so this accounts for their low participation rates. Therefore it is Mech Eng, Maths and Physics that are the departments we need to focus on. This year we have put the graph on Blackboard so students can view participation rates easily, as well as keeping other publicity methods from previous years.”

The Faculty of Natural Sciences are offering £5 for every student who fills in the NSS, which goes to their Dep Soc or towards an end of year party (Maths), and many other departments are offering rewards for participation (Bioengineering are giving out t-shirts!). We will see where departments end up on April 30!”

The National Student Survey, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, started in late January and is set to close on April 30, final years can access the survey at: www.thestudentsurvey.com



Imperial Medic diagnoses Da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man

Joe Letts
 Editor-in-Chief

Imperial surgeon Mr. Hutan Ashrafiyan has recently diagnosed a picture of Leonardo Da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man, saying in an email to the Huffington Post: “I noticed that Leonardo da Vinci’s

image of a man had a feature that may have been pathological.

Notably a lump in the left groin region, For an adult male that Leonardo was depicting, a lump in the groin of this nature is most likely diagnosed as a hernia”. The surgeon then went on to suggest that the drawing could have been based on the cadaver of a man who might have died from a hernia. Mr. Ashrafiyan, a Clinical Lecturer in Surgery has also recently published an academic paper about Arius of Alexandria, the first reported mortality from rectal prolapse.

Union submits portfolio of evidence to College’s Residential Experience Review



IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION
 Everyone in this picture seems to be having a positive experience! Slightly suspicious.

Nida Mahmud
 News Editor

The Residential Experience review was announced by College at the start of the year. The aim of this review is to improve the residential

experience students at Imperial have. The Union were asked to submit evidence for the review, which was bought to Union Council last week and approved for submission.

The Union’s evidence was split into three categories: Undergraduate Halls, Postgraduate Halls and Beyond Halls. A draft was taken to the Union’s Executive Committee for discussion, where the spectrum of information was approved and the Deputy President (Welfare) was asked to write the report.

However, the time frame given to the Sabbatical officers to undertake this work was very short, and they were unable undertake a full student

consultation. Therefore, the evidence was taken from survey data and areas to be investigated were suggested. The review submission document contains a detailed 63 page document in which the Union “highlight[s] evidence from a wide range of sources which are relevant to the wider student experience”.

Some points that were suggested to the panel included reviewing the cleaning provisions in halls, the high cost of rents for postgraduate students living in GradPad and a potential rent guarantor scheme for students not living in Halls.

The Union also explained its main recommendation, which was that “the review group commission full scale and extensive consultation with the student body based upon a specific set of options, all of which are realistic to achieve”.

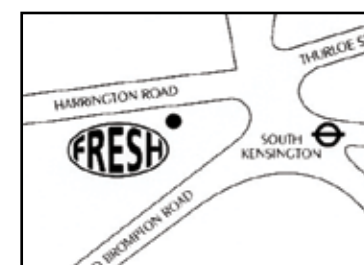
To find out more about the Union’s submission to the panel, download the document at www.imperialcollegeunion.org/rer.

Sponsored Editorial

Student Discounts At Fresh Hairdressers 70m from South Kensington tube



Men’s cuts £22 (normally £35)
All over clipper cuts from £10
Women’s cut and rough dry £28
Women’s cut and salon finish blow-dry £38 (normally £55)
Highlights from only £40



Sorry CASH only!

FRESH hairdressers are offering the best haircuts, prices and service in South Kensington.

Appointments available Tuesday to Saturdays 9.30 to 6.30

Please call **0207 823 8968** to book an appointment and ask for a student discount. Please bring your student ID we look forward to seeing you.

We are only 70 metres from South Kensington station at 15a Harrington road, South Kensington, SW7 3ES 0207 823 8968.

We use the best styling products from Wella, Moroccan Oil, L’Oreal.

Check out our website: www.freshhairdressers.co.uk



Student Volunteering Week is here!

What can **you** do to spread joy in the community?

Rachel Tait

Projects Officer, Imperial Hub

Next week is Student Volunteering Week (SVW), a nationwide celebration of the power of student volunteering. Imperial College London is one of many universities celebrating SVW, with activities coordinated by students from Imperial Hub's Local Action Committee in collaboration with the Union. We're aiming to showcase the diverse positive impact that we can make in our local communities, inspire new or further engagement with social issues, and highlight how easy it is to get involved as a student. The week is organised by students for students, and whether you volunteer weekly, in the holidays, or not at all, there's something for everyone.

For students on Imperial Hub's Local Action Committee, it's exciting that the week has finally arrived. Planning for SVW began back in November

with weekly meetings to decide the aims and put together a programme of events to engage a wide range of their fellow students. They were also committed to showcasing the efforts of current student volunteers and have partnered with a number of student groups to raise awareness of their opportunities throughout the week. You might not realise that there are nearly 3,500 Imperial students who volunteer through the Union or Imperial Hub. From delivering the Union's services and activities to tackling social and environmental issues, these students demonstrate a commitment to going above and beyond for others.

In preparation for the week, the SVW team interviewed Imperial students who volunteer in a range of different projects. Sijia Yu, a first year biologist, is involved in Imperial Hub's Schools Plus programme. She is one of 150 Imperial students who provide 800+ hours of free tuition each term to disadvantaged pupils in local schools and community organisations. She described her experience: "I volunteer in the First

Georgian supplementary school as a Science and Maths tutor. Nearly all the students have Georgian bloodline, most of them cannot speak English very well and can't understand some scientific terms due to the language barrier. I try to use simple words or synonyms to explain a concept when they feel confused, and I have found graphs and videos to be very useful. Two months ago, the school set up wifi, so we are now able to show students the relevant images when they have no idea what a word means. In addition, sometimes I use Russian to assist tuition because most students there speak Russian; it is unusual, but it does work! Nevertheless, all of the volunteers are always trying their very best to help these students."

There is no doubt that the volunteers make a positive impact on the pupils they tutor. A teacher in North Kensington told us, "Our pupils enjoy working with Imperial students because they are passionate about their subjects. Having young tutors means that pupils can relate to them and we really appreciate their time and efforts."

Another student that was interviewed, William Brown, a Chemical Engineering undergrad and chair of tutoring project TEAM Students emphasised the skills you can gain from volunteering. "Volunteers learn at least as much as their pupils. Our volunteers come from many different backgrounds and all have different reasons for joining, but a common theme is the strong desire to help those less fortunate and our project as a whole is a very powerful manifestation of this desire. Tuition teaches patience, professionalism, flexibility and time management skills – all very important for a student's personal development."

Matthew Proctor, a second year physicist who volunteers at the Imperial College Cooperative stall on Thursdays in Sheffield, shared similar views. "I think student volunteering is an excellent opportunity to meet new friends and develop your skills. It gives me the chance to work with a brilliant group of intelligent, interesting, and funny students who are very passionate about their work. It's also fun. With such a tough degree that sometimes gets overwhelming, working on the stall is something I look forward to every week and it's just such an enriching experience that I'd highly recommend to anyone thinking about volunteering."

Off campus, the student group Soup Run provides food, drink and company to local homeless and

vulnerable people. Heather Jeffery, Soup Run Coordinator, explained, "The Soup Run gives Imperial students the opportunity to do something completely different to their studies. Volunteering in the community is personally rewarding and it makes a difference to the lives of those in need."

Maddy Maxwell, a second year Medic who is coordinating SVW through Imperial Hub, said: "We believe that the number of Imperial student volunteers and the impact that they make is underestimated, so we're looking forward to using SVW to showcase the diverse positive impact that we can make in our local communities, inspire new or further engagement with social issues, and highlight how easy it is to get involved as a student both during the week and beyond."

Interacting with your local community outside of the lecture theatre, laboratory or library can be hugely valuable and SVW is all about giving every Imperial student a chance

to try something new. As well as on-campus events, you can get involved in our local boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham, as well as in Westminster, Camden, Hillingdon, Islington, Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Lambeth.

Beyond SVW

The good news is that the fun doesn't stop when the week finishes. You can continue to make the most of your time at Imperial and get to know the community you study and live in. By volunteering, you can make a difference to an issue you care about or ignite a passion you didn't know you had; it will provide you with a wealth of skills outside of your academic life and is a great way to boost your employability. It's flexible, hugely rewarding and gives you the chance to experience a new industry or sector – you can even gain an accreditation for your efforts through the Union's Imperial Plus scheme or Imperial Hub's Social Leadership Award.

Getting involved in SVW is simple...

1. Check out the full programme at www.imperialhub.org/svw or www.imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on
2. Sign up to an event that interests you – remember, no previous experience required!
3. Receive a confirmation email with final event details
4. Go along to the event, meet new people and make a difference
5. Share your photos and experience with us on Facebook or Twitter (#SVW2014)

Top 5 reasons to volunteer

- Take a break from the lab and library.
 - Students improve their grades and skills when they volunteer
- Volunteering is flexible and a great opportunity to gain work experience
 - 76% of HR Executives agreed skilled volunteer experience makes a job candidate more desirable
- Use your knowledge and skills to benefit others
 - Hundreds of Imperial students support local young people facing educational disadvantage each year via Imperial Hub
- Have fun and meet new people
 - Meet people outside of your course and hall who care about the same issues you do
- Gain transferable skills you can evidence in job applications
 - 87% of employers think that volunteering can have a generally positive effect on career progression for people aged 16-25

10 simple good deed suggestions

- Put your spare change in a charity donation box
- Donate food to your local food bank
- Donate old clothes to a charity shop instead of throwing them away
- Take your old magazines to a hospital or doctor's waiting room
- Sign up to be an organ donor
- Pick up litter you see on your walk to campus
- Have a quick shower to save water
- Sign up to the bone marrow register
- Reuse your plastic bags for supermarket shopping
- Offer directions to a tourist who looks lost

Student Volunteering Week 24th Feb - 2nd Mar

Looking for an excuse to do something good?
Sign up online at imperialhub.org/svw

<p>10am-1pm Monday LSE</p> <p>Get fit & make a difference with Good Gym</p> <p>Join students from across London on a run (options from 2-14km) to a community organisation that needs your help.</p>	<p>12-2pm Monday Queen's Lawn</p> <p>Good Deed Day Target Toss</p> <p>Challenge a friend to a game of lawn darts for your chance to win good deeds and SVW prizes</p>
<p>12-2pm everyday Sheffield Foyer</p> <p>SVW stall</p> <p>Meet current volunteers, take part in interactive activities, grab a lollipop and sign up to events</p>	<p>12:30 Mon & Fri, 5:30 Mon, Tue & Thu</p> <p>Get a skills boost with Imperial Plus</p> <p>A range of skills based training workshops will run through the week. *You must be registered for Imperial Plus</p>
<p>ongoing</p> <p>Sign up to the organ donor registry</p> <p>It takes less than a minute, and you could help to save a life! www.tinyurl.com/thankyouforlife</p>	<p>2-4pm Tuesday Kensington Olympia</p> <p>Entertain the Elderly</p> <p>Join in with a zumba session followed by tea and cake at a local community centre</p>
<p>12-1:30pm Wednesday on campus</p> <p>Bike workshop</p> <p>Join the Bike Users' Group on campus for tea, biscuits, bicycle advice and help with repairs</p>	<p>1:30-5pm Wednesday Islington</p> <p>Spruce up a community garden</p> <p>Become an Urban Nature champion at an Islington community garden with London</p>
<p>12:30-5:30pm Wednesday Hillingdon</p> <p>Get out of the city & back to nature</p> <p>Enjoy a fun and active afternoon volunteering at a nature reserve</p>	<p>10am-1pm Thursday Brompton Cemetery</p> <p>Hang out with history</p> <p>Spend a morning gardening at one of Britain's oldest and most distinguished cemeteries.</p>
<p>1-5pm Wednesday Hammersmith</p> <p>Charity shop takeover</p> <p>Join our team of student shopkeepers and spend an afternoon helping at some charity shops in Hammersmith</p>	<p>2-5pm Saturday on campus</p> <p>Be a coding champion</p> <p>Know how to code? Share your passion & skills with local children on campus for a few hours</p>
<p>3-6pm Thursday Sheffield Foyer</p> <p>Food glorious food</p> <p>Spend an afternoon selling fairtrade & organic produce to students with Imperial Cooperative</p>	<p>5pm Sunday</p> <p>Help feed the homeless</p> <p>A rewarding way to end the week. Join Soup Run volunteers to collect food & distribute it to homeless people.</p>
<p>Also...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spare a moment to share a problem - or provide a solution! * Look out for the turquoise balloons! * Questionnaire * Free lollipops 	<p>What does volunteering mean to you?</p> <p>Students from around the UK are blogging about what volunteering means to them, and you can share your story too. www.thesvwblog.wordpress.com</p>

imperialhub.org/svw



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FEATURES

Tomorrow's Media Moguls



INTOUNIVERSITY

Jonny Pratt
STOIC President

Last term two classes of Year 6 students visited Felix and STOIC to show us all who was going to take on our roles in 10 years time. The classes visited the Science Museum and recieved a talk from actors dressed as Eugene Cernan (the last man on the Moon) and Michael Faraday, then came to the Media Centre to film a news story and write for Felix about their experience. You haven't seen happiness until you've seen 10 year olds trying out a green-screen for the first time, and it really highlighted the fantastic facilities we have here at Imperial. The visit was organised by IntoUniversity, a charity which aims to encourage disadvantaged young people to apply for further education.

Science Museum review by Ibrahim and Sadiqul

We were reviewing the Energy section of the Science Museum. The subject of the gallery is Energy. There were activities and educational, interactive games, this makes you interact with the gallery more. It makes adults walk around and look at it. The gallery makes teenagers and university students take part and learn. The gallery teaches you how energy is useful and how to make it. The Science Museum facilities are very good; they have 3D and IMAX cinema, cafes, toilets, shops and a theatre. The thing we enjoyed most was the electric pole that zaps you if you touch it with your fingernail. We also enjoyed meeting Michael Faraday, he showed us the plasma ball, when you turn it on there are zaps of energy, and if you touch it there is one massive shockwave. We don't think anything should be improved in the museum. We recommend the museum to everyone, we think anyone who has been will come back and say "I enjoyed it 100%!" The best bits were definitely the different types of games and it has made us think that all galleries should have games.

Science Museum Review by Mahfuz Ahmed

Today I am going to write a review of the Space section in the Science Museum. It is located on Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London, SW7 2BB. It is a science and technology centre, plus it is free!

What I have experienced at the Science Museum in the Space section is the way the information was presented; they have captions, photographs, diagrams, models, even televisions. I myself think that this is a good way to present information.

This area appeals to adults because it doesn't give lots of information, it gives a good amount of it, to fit in pictures and displays; and it is also much clearer to understand.

This area also appeals to younger people by giving them displays and models to help them understand what they are reading about.

The Earth display has to be the best display in the Apace area because it is the main attraction plus it gives us the most information.

They have extra facilities in the space room like seats, information pads, safety barriers and a background image to create the effect of space. They are very good facilities for both adults and children.

What I enjoyed the most about the Science Museum was the different facts they gave about space, because it helped me to gain knowledge about space.

What I think could be improved is maybe to make it even darker than it already is and hang some planets from the ceiling such as Jupiter and Saturn. That would make it look more realistic.

I would recommend the Science Museum to someone else because there is so much to see and learn about science and technology; for free!

Get Ready for RAG Week!

Maria Goryaeva
ICU Rag Vice Chair

RAG Week 2014 is coming! RAG gives you a unique opportunity to have the time of your life, while doing something good for the world. This year we are supporting three great charities: Caritas Anchor House, a residential

and lifeskills centre in London for single homeless people aged 19 to 65; Breakthrough Breast Cancer, a force of thousands of people across the UK working together with a single-minded ambition to stop women dying from breast cancer; and Practical Action, a charity that uses technology to challenge poverty in developing countries.

Everyone loves a cheeky weekend away, and we're offering you exactly that! 1-2nd March – it's your time to Jailbreak! Your

mission: get as far away from Imperial College Union as possible in 36 hours! The catch? You can't spend a penny doing it! Whether you hitch hike across the channel or head to Heathrow to blag a free flight this will be one of the best weekends of your life! Start getting your team (2-3 people) together now. Make sure you sign up on our website icragweek.com.

For more information and tickets, head over to our website www.icragweek.com, and GET EXCITED!



Our opening event on Monday 24th is not the one to miss! For the second year running we're putting a crane in the middle of campus, but this time we're going higher. The legendary Bungee Jump is not for the faint-hearted – but you've got to face your fears in front of all your friends and take the plunge in the middle of campus all in the name of charity! And if you are not jumping then come along to Queen's Lawn at lunchtime to watch the jumps and munch on Krispy Kremes.



On Tuesday 25th we are hosting Imperial's first ever Man vs Food championship. If a bungee jump is a bit much for you, come try something everyone loves – eating! In the Union Bar, the ultimate culinary challenge will be taking place, a rivalry of the ages... Man vs Food! You will be tasked with eating half a chicken as fast as you can to be crowned Imperial's gastro king/queen! Did we mention that it's Nando's we are talking about here...?



On Wednesday 26th dress in pink and in teams of up to 6, take on the capital for our pink themed collect. Armed with a list of tasks ranging from easy to challenging and normal to outrageous your job is squeeze donations from the unsuspecting general public.

There'll be a prize for the team that completes the most tasks and, more importantly, that raises the most money. There's no need to sign up, just come along!

Remember, on Wednesdays we wear pink!



On Thursday 27th, we will be holding a five-a-side football tournament on Queen's Lawn, with a twist... all the players will be wearing giant bubble suits! No injury faking here, even the most brutal of tackles will just result in you bouncing off one another! Make sure you sign up on our website icragweek.com.



On Friday we are going to ppppaaaarty! As if staying on your feet wasn't difficult enough after a few cheeky drinks, on our bar crawl you're going to have even less control over your legs! Find a friend you don't mind getting a little cosy with because you're going to be tied to them all night! You'll also get a crazy awesome t-shirt + club entry at the end of the night all included – aren't we kind?



Ants in your pants? That's crazy...

Christopher Yates reveals Texas's invasive venom-proof 'crazy ants'

Crazy ants may sound like a Flappy Bird spin-off, but in fact this species of ant is slowly taking over Texas, thanks in part to their ability to neutralise the venom of fire ants.

The red imported fire ant, an invasive species introduced to the USA in the 1930s, has a fearsome bite that causes painful red irritations in humans and is used to kill other insects. Their venom contains various alkaloids, which can lead to allergic reactions in some cases.

Whilst most ant species are unable to displace the fire ants, crazy ants can detoxify their venom, the fire ants' most powerful weapon. They do this using formic acid, which they produce and rub on themselves whenever they are affected by venom.

Researchers found that preventing ants producing formic acid by coating them in nail polish led to venom killing around half of the ants, compared to just 2% when the ants could produce the acid.

Thanks to this acid defence, in 93% of the cases where fire ants and crazy ants are competing for the same food, the crazy ants will be successful. They can even oust fire ants from their nests, giving the crazy ants a ready-made home to enjoy.

Unfortunately, whilst fire ants can leave their mark with a painful bite, they tend to stay in their nests and



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

leave humans undisturbed. Crazy ants, on the other hand, will nest in anything available, including cars or fuse boxes, where they can short-circuit electronics.

Having first arrived in Texas from South America in 2002, crazy ants have spread throughout the state, causing

damages to wildlife and livestock, and annoyance to residents. Thankfully, it should take a while for the crazy ant to completely take over the USA, as they can only spread at a rate of around 200m a year, although this can be accelerated if transported by humans, for example by accidentally hitching a

ride in a car.

Crazy ants aren't the only ants to use formic acid, whose name comes from the Latin *formica*, meaning ant. Some ants spray or inject formic acid as a form of defence, while others even use it as a herbicide. In the Amazon, 'devil's gardens', named because locals

believe they house evil spirits, are areas containing only lemon ant trees. Lemon ants inject formic acid into the leaves of other trees in the area, leading to the leaves dying. The ants can cultivate their preferred trees over areas up to 1,300m², with colonies of over 3 million worker ants.

The pseudoscience shaking the Shroud

James Bezer
Science Writer

Alongside UFOs, homeopathy and all manners of conspiracy theories, the Shroud of Turin has long been known as a perennial source of pseudoscience. It has almost certainly lived up to its well-earned reputation this week. An army of journalists have flooded the internet with stories about a new paper explaining why radiocarbon dating may not have given the "right" answer when aging the religious icon. It already sounds suspicious, doesn't it?

For anyone who doesn't know, the Shroud of Turin is a burial shroud that has the outline of a person imprinted

on it, and is believed by some to have covered Jesus after his crucifixion. In 1988, carbon dating on the shroud concluded that it originated from around the 14th century, considerably later than the accepted lifetime of Christ. This, one might assume, should have been the end of the matter.

Not for Alberto Carpinteri, however. In his paper, published in the journal *Meccanica* (of which he is the editor-in-chief), he suggests that a huge number of neutrons released by an earthquake in 33AD may have disrupted the ratio of carbon isotopes and led to a much more recent estimate of its age.

The idea of a large neutron flux affecting the shroud was first discussed in the letters pages of *Nature* in 1989, but Carpinteri is the first to put forward a possible explanation for how it may have arisen. His theory relies



A 14th century selfie?

on something called "piezonuclear fission", a phenomenon where enormous numbers of neutrons can be released by applying mechanical forces to rocks, supposedly causing iron nuclei to break apart. Carpinteri is definitely a world expert on this: he came up with the idea several years ago and still may well be the only scientist who believes it to be compatible with the laws of physics.

Aside from the suspicion that this paper may partly have been a (remarkably successful) way of getting more publicity for the author's favourite theory, there are more fundamental problems with the idea of neutrons affecting the Shroud. When it was suggested in 1989 by R.E.M. Hedges, one of those who first performed the carbon dating on it, he argued that why wasn't everything else in the region also affected and

why did his team just happen to get an apparently wrong date that corresponded with the earliest historical records of the Shroud?

In the greater scheme of things, stories like this are pretty irrelevant, but they highlight an important issue about science in the media. This story has been covered by several major news organisations including *The Huffington Post*, *The Independent*, *The Telegraph*, *USA Today* and, obviously, *The Daily Mail*. These are all respected news outlets (OK, maybe not *The Mail*...), and yet their journalists still can't be bothered to do a bit of background reading before publishing an article. In this media culture obsessed by headlines and good stories over factual accuracy, how can the lay readers possibly get an informed view of the truth behind any science story?



Editor: **Kartikeya Rana, Jash Rughani**
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POLITICS

Wave of Change in Indian Politics

Kartikeya Rana looks at a new dawn in Indian democracy

Kartikeya Rana
 Politics Editor

Indian politics has gone through the most tumultuous period in the last few years. A greater anger and discontent with the incumbent establishment as well as a growth of severe crimes around the country has led to a growing change in the way politics is conducted in the country. With general elections approaching and serious anger rising, it is only a matter of time until India starts showing signs of a tidal change in its political process.

The Indian population has shown grave discontent against the current political establishment. Over 30% of MLAs (Members of Legislative Assemblies) and MPs (Members of Parliament) have criminal cases pending against them. Furthermore, the Indian parliament is seen to be dysfunctional, with frequent adjournments and no useful bills and legislatures being allowed to pass by the opposition due to a fear of a loss of support. However, the way politics is conducted in the country is gradually changing due to a number of reasons.

India has seen a number of events taking place which have greatly aggravated the disillusionment of the people against the political system. Crime in India has been on a steady rise in recent times with an inactive police unable to solve crimes. This has been partly because of a lack of resources being provided to the police as well as due to rampant corruption within the police itself. Issues of rape, murder and racist attacks have led to a growing sense of vulnerability of the Indian populace. The anger was shown by the people in the state elections which showed the highest turnout in recent years, with an electorate turnout above 60%.

India is a country with a range of cultures, languages, religions, and castes. This has led to major divisions within a broadly secular nation. Riots



GALLERY.ONEINDIA.COM

and other acts of hatred are seen to be a frequent occurrence due to the animosity between different peoples. This has been a source of 'vote-bank' politics wherein political parties support a certain group of people to ensure or bank on a number of votes within a particular region. This leads to divisive legislation and further division between racial groups. This has been the case in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where the ruling party's racial prejudices led to rioting and resultantly displacement of a large number of innocent members of the Muslim minority. The maintenance of this division is used to ensure that such parties remain in power.

India also has a major income inequality between the rich and the poor. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the top 10% of wage-earners in India make 12 times as much as the bottom 10%. A major role in this situation is played by corruption. India has shown a lot of anger and discontent towards the level of corruption in the country. In 2011, an anti-graft movement asking for the establishment of an anti-corruption 'Jan Lokpal' Bill had caught the

imagination of the country. Support for this movement was garnered throughout the country and there was a growing hope of change within a

rather disenchanted population.

The movement was unfortunately unsuccessful and the demands of the protestors were not met. However, a number of people in the forefront of the movement decided to form a political party with a slightly socialist inclination. Even though the party is only a year old, the Aam Aadmi Party, or the 'Common Man Party', has managed to form a minority government by winning the Delhi State Elections. The success in the state elections has given them the confidence to run for National Elections which are to take place this year.

People have shown a lot of confidence towards the AAP due to its stance against corruption. A large number of people from all over the country have decided to join. The idea of having people with a clean profile join Indian politics has led to the reinstating of a lot of hope which had been lost. However, the party has also shown initial signs of a lack of political awareness. The party has a number

of varying opinions which have been aired openly. This has led to slight scepticism on the level of organisation within the party. However, it has also shown that opposing opinion is respected, which is a fresh change for party politics within the country. Furthermore, they have been governing on the streets, which has led to people questioning whether the party knows the difference between administration and activism.

Regardless of all the criticism, however, the party has changed the way politics is conducted within the country. Finally, the major parties are feeling slightly vulnerable and are forced to take some concrete steps to improve the state of the nation. The incumbent government recently passed their own version of the anti-graft bill which had caused the protest in the first place. However, it has been deemed weak and ineffective and has been facing major criticism from all fronts. It will be interesting to see how the chain of events prior to the upcoming general elections plays out.



CNN NEWS

ARTFEST 2014

EVENT LIST

FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY

STRING ENSEMBLE

12:00-14:00
 COLLEGE MAIN ENTRANCE

A CAPELLA & MT SOCIETY

19:30-22:00
 UNION CONCERT HALL

ARTFEST EXHIBITION

ICU Leosc, ICU Photosoc, IC Calligraphy and Oriental painting will be showing their talents in the Blythe gallery artfest exhibition

18:00
 BLYTHE GALLERY 5TH FLOOR SHERFIELD BUILDING

MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY

BIG BAND ON THE QUEEN'S TOWER

13:00-13:30
 QUEEN'S LAWN

WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY

ARTFEST SHOWCASE

Featuring showcases from dance, guitar and gospel societies.

19:00-22:00
 UNION CONCERT HALL

THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY

SCHUMANN DICHTERLIEBE

Benjamin Appl (baritone) and Gary Matthewman (piano) serving you a lunch time bite of Schumann.

13:30-13:45
 READ THEATRE 5TH FLOOR SHERFIELD BUILDING

ARTFEST AFTERPARTY

Celebrate the end of Artfest in Metric with live bands, comedy, dance performances, and a lots more!

19:00-22:00
 METRIC

Union Page

RAG Week!

RAG Week is one of the most exciting weeks of the year. Not only will it be seven days of challenges and fun but it will also make a huge difference to the lives of hundreds of people locally, nationally and worldwide! RAG can't make a difference without you - getting involved in any of the RAG Week 2014 events will help them raise more and more money for their chosen charities! Whether you're spectating, sponsoring or participating, every little helps.

RAG Week 2014 will be raising money for three charities: Caritas Anchor House, Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Practical Action. More information on these charities can be found on the Imperial College RAG Week website.

The events over the week include:

- Monday 24 February, 10:00 - 18:00 - Bungee Jumping at the Queen's Tower
- Tuesday 25 February, 20:00 - Man vs Food in the Union Bar
- Wednesday 26 February, 11:00 - 19:00 - Wear Pink starting at Metric
- Thursday 27 February, 12:00 - 17:00 - Bubble Football in Metric
- Friday 28 February, 21:00 - 3-Legged Bar Crawl in Soho
- Saturday/Sunday 1/2 March - Jailbreak

To find out more about any of our charities or to get involved in any RAG Week 2014 events please visit www.icragweek.com.



Do a good deed



Student Volunteering Week (SVW) is a nationwide celebration of student volunteering. Now in its 13th year, SVW brings together organisations from all sectors to promote and celebrate the volunteering efforts of students across the Universities and Colleges in the UK. SVW 2014 takes place from 24 February to 2 March, and we're running the following activities:

- Good Deed Day – win a good deed! Monday 24 February, 12:00 – 14:00, The Queens Lawn
- Mass Volunteering: London Wildlife Trust Wednesday 26 February, 12:30 – 17:30
- Volunteer Information Stand Monday 24, Tuesday 25 & Thursday 27 February, 12:00 – 14:00, Level 1 & 2 Sherfield building
- Charity Shop Good Deeds Wednesday 26 February, 12:30 – 17:30
- Brompton Cemetery Clean Up Thursday 27 February, 10:00 – 12:30

For more information about the events, find them online at imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on. For more information about Student Volunteering Week, visit imperialhub.org/svw.

imperialcollegeunion.org/volunteering

STI Clinic

Imperial College Union will be hosting a free sexual health clinic run by the Terrence Higgins Trust on Thursday 27 February, from 11:00 until 16:00.

The clinic will take place in the Activities Spaces, Union Building, Beit Quad. Services available include rapid HIV testing, Chlamydia testing, Gonorrhoea testing, condoms, lube and advice.

The clinic welcomes all students regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, study type or country of origin.

Appointments can be booked in advance and a walk-in service is also available. To book an appointment or get more information about the clinic, please contact Zoe Richardson, at z.richardson@imperial.ac.uk.

imperialcollegeunion.org/advice

STUDENT ACADEMIC CHOICE AWARDS

Nominations close Friday 28 February

Eight awards in total will cover all faculties, departments and campuses, as well as all modes of study – Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Doctoral Research. Every student at Imperial will have the chance to recognise the innovation, skill, engagement and energy of the staff they learn with. Nominate as many people as you like in as many categories as you like – if your nominee is shortlisted, you may win a free invite to the SACAs Award Ceremony on Thursday 15 May!

imperialcollegeunion.org/sacas

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COMMENT

Confessions of a GTA: Part 11

The GTA
Anonymous



Presenting as an undergraduate was always horrific. A lot of it had to do with that we (were all given the same project. Having to sit through at least 10 presentations on exactly the same thing, whilst noticing everything the other groups had done better, was not only boring but galling all at once. However, what I thought suspect about the whole thing was the marking. Yes, I saw the nicely prepared marking sheet for the guest markers, but none of them ever filled them out. Somehow too the groups with the flashy presentations without much technical detail always seemed to do best (luckily for me....).

Thus, I was filled with a sense of justice when asked to help asses one of these days. I was going to mark the

heck out of these kids, but what I was concerned about was asking those tricky questions. I mean I never knew where they got them from. How did they know about the agricultural industry in southern Chile? Seriously?

So having jotted down a few things relating to the project, I headed on down to see and hopefully destroy what they had come up with. But again that irritating thing called compassion reared its friendly head. They were after all 1st years and looked scared out of their minds. As the first one started I looked down at my mark sheet to find it was completely useless. Just three boxes with content, style and clarity. How do you asses those things without seeing all of them first? Yet, I was determined to write something for each group so got stuck in, even if most of them there was just a "good".

The thing was they were in general good. Though the familiar boredom did slowly creep back after about six of them, it was not as bad as before. I had not poured my blood, sweat and tears into it for the last few weeks so it



was rather interesting to see what they had done differently. Yes some were more flashy and enjoyable than others, but only one was terrible. This group had tried to source materials from a small Central America country where the material does not actually exist. Having been there and tried to find it myself, I know. Surely that would be on Google? When I questioned them about it, they seemed to think the sustainability of this resource was more important than that it actually existing there already. I think they were planning to impose a new million industry on the poor locals within a week....

These students obviously got marked down immediately, while those with a rather slick presentation that winged it a bit more conservatively got my vote. So the confession this week has to be if you are presenting something, make sure your facts are straight. If you don't know perhaps you should "look into it later at greater detail". Or there will be someone in the audience who will tell you (perhaps very nicely) you are an idiot.

Reconciling science with poetry

Rory Fenton
Columnist



I am sat at a pew in Westminster Abbey, filled with a sense of awe and reverence. Unlike the elderly lady to my right, her hands clasped in silent petition, I am not here for prayer. I am, however, here on a pilgrimage of sorts in an attempt to understand the power and limits of science.

Five steps to my left and I will be stood over what remains of Charles Darwin. Four steps forward and I will come face to face with the death mask of Issac Newton. But it will take a keener eye to spot the object of my pilgrimage. Set neatly in the floor between Newton and Darwin is a small, unremarkable stone square about twice the size of my head. This is the nation's memorial to the greatest British physicist since Newton and the man behind much of the final year of the physics MSci; Paul A. M. Dirac. I have come to pay homage and end up spending a while just sat watching tourists pass the stone. Despite its simplicity this stone square is surely the most effective and beautiful memorial in the Abbey.

Kings, Queens and statesmen have relied on the skill of artists to convey, perhaps fabricate, a sense of their importance and success in life. Dirac's memorial displays the power and beauty of his life's work with just the 6 letters that form his most famous equation; the Dirac Equation. This

is his own handiwork, no one else's. To describe in so precise a form the motion and very existence of all fundamental particles of nature, the same stuff of which we are made, is an act of uncommon genius. For Dirac, however, it may also have been an uncommon act of sacrifice; the dedication of his life.

I have with me, to aid my pilgrimage, a copy of Dirac's Lectures on Quantum Mechanics in which he lays out in just 87 pages the mathematical ideas that lead to his equation. The ordering and logic of Dirac's prose is impressive and carefully chosen. If asked by a student to clarify a point during a lecture he would simply repeat what he had said, word for word, and continue with the lecture. As far as he was concerned, he had already expressed the idea as clearly as it could be stated.

He was just as inexpressive in his personal life, speaking only when necessary and answering with one word sentences. So private was he that many of his closest friends never knew what his middle initials – A. M. – stood for (it's Adrien Maurice). In this sense Dirac embodied his own subject of physics with his life. Direct and to the point, never more than necessary.

Wandering further around the Abbey I find myself in Poets Corner, final resting place of Charles Dickens, Alfred Lord Tennyson and other greats, and can't help but wonder who chose the better path in life. Certainly, there would be some buried in Poets Corner who would be quite hostile to the work of the scientists buried nearby.

The clock strikes four and the

singers of the famous Westminster Boys Choir begin their daily service, their hymns reaching into every nook of the Abbey, exhorting listeners to direct their attention to heavenly matters. "There is no equation for the salvation of your soul," they seem to say, although such arguments would hold little sway with Dirac, an ardent atheist and humanist.

The dead poets' concern, however, would not be heaven but the heart; strangled, they might say, by the constraints of scientific rigour. This argument was most strongly made by William Wordsworth, himself memorialised in the Abbey;

*Sweet is the lore which nature brings
Our meddling intellect
Mishaps the beauteous form of things
We murder to dissect*

Part stanza, part slap, this is a direct attack on those who, like Dirac, dedicate their lives to science. When Dirac uses his equation to dissect the universe, does he also murder it? Is a life lived for science empty of beauty, of true meaning? Was Dirac's?

The question cuts to the very heart of what has been troubling me since the end of my physics degree last year and what brings me here to the Abbey; was all this science worth it? Hidden to most visitors, this debate seems to wage in the Abbey itself. The Romantic poets vs the materialist scientists. Can they be reconciled?

Oscar Wilde, a much too outlandish poet to find himself in the sacred vaults of Westminster Abbey, famously declared, "all art is quite useless". He

argued that it was beautiful precisely because of this uselessness, because it was done for its own sake, not corrupted by practical concern. Perhaps the problem of science, and I know this sounds strange, is precisely the fact that it is quite useful. Often very useful. There was never a disease cured by a novel nor a planet probed by a poem but in being useful, science runs a risk that art does not; that it ceases to be for its own sake. This makes it better at attracting research grants but could explain something of why science is seen as an ultimately unfulfilling pursuit by many.

Can science be rescued? Is it possible to find the beauty of art within science? The Bristolian commemorated by that diamond-shaped stone could have something to teach us. Although quite literal minded and blunt in his approach to life, Dirac's idea of science was of science as an art, with mathematics his brush and his paint.



HUFFINGTONPOST.COM

He taught students always to pursue beauty in their work and would often reject proposed theories on the basis that they weren't beautiful enough. His approach to physics was to play with abstract, pure mathematics and see if any physics popped up. His underlying belief, almost religious in its strength, was that the laws of nature should be beautiful and simple.

Dirac's field, quantum mechanics, is notoriously complicated. Particles are also waves, electrons are said to be in more than one place at a time, even in more than one universe at a time. Obtaining useful results from this often requires crude approximations and simplifications. It seems that at its most fundamental, physics is at its most useless. This may be the spirit in which the heart of science can be rediscovered. Could science pursued for its own sake, the less useful the better, be not just a way to better equations but to rediscover a sense of beauty in the subject?

The choir has finished and I realise I'm at risk of staying for a church service. I perform one quick lap of the Abbey before heading out into the warm evening. I have no definite answers but I wouldn't expect any certainties when trying to understand a quantum physicist like Dirac. Nevertheless, my secular pilgrimage has given me a glimpse of these Two Tribes in silent war. Could Dirac's belief in the beauty of physics and science for its own sake provide a bridge between the two?

My head full of thoughts, I leave Westminster Abbey to its more traditional pilgrims.



Nominations close

2 March

How to stand for a position

- 1 Pick your Position**
Pick the position you want to run for by selecting Positions on the menu in eVoting.
- 2 Click on the Stand button**
Click on the big button on the top right of the webpage and follow the steps.
- 3 Select your Seconder**
If need be, enter the username of someone to support your nomination.



For more information, the election timetable, and information on how to stand, please visit:

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections





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COMMENT

Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2014 – It’s Time to Speak Out

Emily-Jane Cramphorn
Writer

Numbers. To the average Imperial student, they are part of everyday academia, to others they are enthralling and engaging, but for some of us they represent a punitive regime by which we live. Numbers are our self-worth, our being, our everything. Kilos, calories, clothes size. Small numbers are our friends, zero is our deity. We are more common than you think: we have eating disorders.

Eating disorders affect approximately 1.6 million people in the UK yet they are still not understood by the masses. Personally, I know of at least 4 people who suffer, or have suffered, from an eating disorder at Imperial, yet there is no support available or awareness on campus. I struggle to understand why this is the case: Imperial is the perfect breeding ground for eating disorders. It is high pressured and competitive; everybody strives to be the best. Everybody wants to be perfect. Personally, I have found this environment triggering and earlier this year found myself in the grips of anorexia once again.

Having an eating disorder is a terrifying and isolating experience

no matter who you are. Nonetheless, battling an eating disorder alongside the gruelling workload and intense pressure of College life is inconceivably arduous. I simply could not manage both, something had to give. Studying requires concentration and cognitive clarity. Eating disorders, when unmanaged, abduct this. You become nothing more than a hollow shell consumed by consumption. Fortunately, I was able to identify the downwards spiral in which I was caught and with the support of friends and family I chose to embark on the path to recovery. I felt ashamed; I had come to university three years free of treatment. I thought I was recovered, how did I end up back in entrails of anorexia? It was a place I swore never to be again. I realise now that this doesn't matter - what matters is that I identified the problem and I am making positive changes. I am tentatively embracing university life once again. I am not recovered by any means, but I am in control.

I wanted to write this article for Eating Disorder Awareness Week not only to raise awareness but to share my story with others who are suffering. To let them know that they are not alone in this, that if they chose it, there is hope, and to share some advice on how to survive at university with an eating disorder. My first piece of advice is to speak out, do not suffer alone. Telling other people

is an important step in admitting your struggles to yourself. Moreover, recovering alone is impossible - my friends have helped me so much, without them I'd still be in a very dark place. Secondly, think about what you want from university. Having an eating disorder not only affects your grades but it also engulfs the whole student experience. Do you want to look back and regret wasting 'the best years of your life' staying in to avoid calories? My third recommendation is to go to the GP, get professional support. Do not take no for answer. Do not go back when 'you've lost more weight'. Early intervention is key, let the GP and your demons know your problems are just as serious as anybody else's. Furthermore, I strongly suggest speaking to your senior or personal tutor: it helps to remove some of the academic pressure.

Finally, make yourself rules. Sensible ones, healthy ones and stick to them. Having a routine makes food more manageable.

The road to recovery is a long one, it is far from smooth, and there are days when giving up is so appealing. At university there is nobody there to make you eat, to stop you from purging or tell you sit down. You have to take responsibility. You have to make positive changes for yourself. You have to recover because you want to, not because you are being forced. Ultimately, you have to take control.

Another week passes...



Felix
Editor-in-Chief

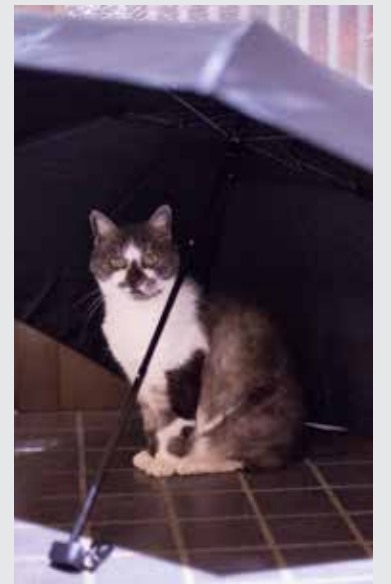
The weather is still horrid. Seriously, you'd have thought that things would have cleared up by now.

Anyway, this week's been an interesting one, with a hugely successful "Rep Week", including the Rep Conference on Wednesday.

We also have another Photo of the Week and more lonely hearts from Catnip :)

If you want to get involved with Felix, don't forget that it's not too late to do so, all you have to do is send us an email (there are email addresses all over the paper) and tell us how you want to get involved.

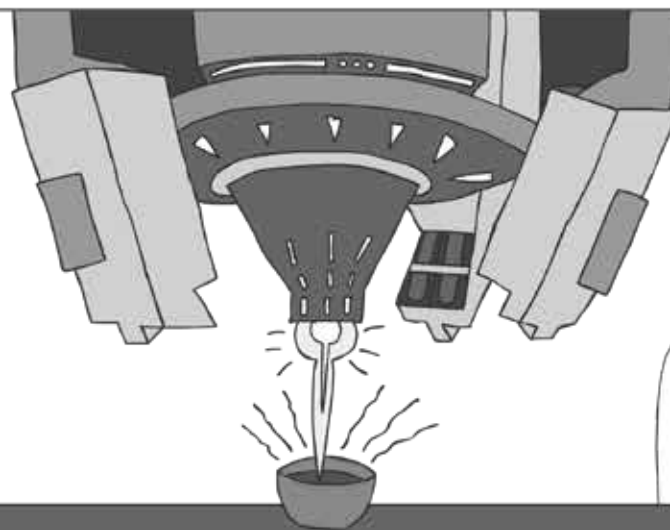
Until next time!



PLUGTIME BY OSCAR FARRELL

JUST ADD WATER!

DO YOU THINK WE'D STILL RECEIVE FUNDING IF THEY FOUND OUT WHAT ALL THE LASERS ARE FOR?



IF YOU CAN THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO REHEAT SOUP, I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT!



(THE REAL REASON THE LHC WAS BUILT)

COMMENT

Editors: Eoghan J. Totten, Tessa Davey
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Communist Manifesto Turns 166

Christy Kelly
Writer



To celebrate the 166th anniversary of the publication of the Communist Manifesto, I shall be writing a three part series on the Manifesto: on its theoretical contents, on its history and impact and on its flaws and its position in Marxist thought. What should never be forgotten about the Manifesto is that it contains a specific political program and its style, brash and powerfully polemical, reflects this. It is also, as Marx and Engels pointed out, in many ways antiquated. Of course, it deserves remembering on account of nothing other than its historical importance; but the Manifesto is more than an interesting historical relic: it retains in broad outline the most profound understanding of the movement and transition of societies in history.

Thus it is as a relevant political text that I shall make this exposition. This justifies, in my view, the exclusion of the final two sections of the book, Socialist and Communist Literature, and Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties. These sections deal with historically specific matters that require discussion but not necessarily representation. This is true to some degree for the second section, but it is here the problems with the Manifesto are concentrated and so shall be presented in the interest of parity.

Bourgeois and Proletarians

If one wanted to express the essence of historical materialism in one line, nobody puts it better than Marx: 'the essence of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle'. Marx then goes on to emphasise that the development of the bourgeoisie has polarised previously complex class societies into the opposition between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Then after a brief description of the actual (economic) development of the bourgeoisie, Marx then links this to politics: 'Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class'. This political advance has not been peaceful: 'The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part', 'it has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors"'. Marx's tone is ambiguous, so while '[the bourgeoisie] has accomplished wonders far

surpassing Egyptian pyramids' it has also substituted 'exploitation, veiled by religious or political illusions, [with] naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.'

Then we come to the first central point of the analysis: 'the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production'. The reason for this lies in the development of the bourgeoisie: 'At a certain stage in the development of [feudal] means of production and exchange ... the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder.' But the very productivity of the bourgeoisie becomes its own downfall, 'the epidemic of over production' leads to more or less periodic crises that beset it which '[put on trial] the existence of the entire bourgeois society'. The crisis can be overcome by the 'inforced destruction of a mass of productive forces' or by the 'conquest of new markets.' Thus 'the need of a constantly expanding market chases the bourgeoisie over the whole face of the globe' and 'it compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production ... it creates a world after its own image.'

Meanwhile, 'in the same proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e. capital, is developed in the same proportion is the proletariat.' This occurs as the lower middle class sinks to the level of the proletariat, outpaced by machinery and out-bought by large industry. The proletariat, 'must sell [itself] piece-meal, [and is] a commodity, like every other article of commerce'. Also, the efficient division of labour and the development of machinery have reduced the dignity of work to a mere mechanical procedure, thus alienating the workers from themselves. With the development of industry and the concentration of the means of production (in factories etc.) the proletariat becomes more numerous and more class-conscious, though things do not always go so smoothly: 'This organisation of the proletarians into a class ... is continually being upset again and again by the competition between the workers.'

However, all revolutionary hope rests in the hands of the proletariat. For the bourgeoisie, the proletariat is the only necessary class because while 'the other classes decay and disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product'. Furthermore, as the 'proletarian is without property' they 'cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation.'

Thus while every previous revolution has 'but established new classes, new conditions of oppression,' 'the proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority.'

Thus in summary: 'Hitherto, every form of society has been based ... on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes.' This antagonism is the dialectic that provides the motor force to history which has led 'either to a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.' The bourgeoisie has distinguished itself as the most revolutionary class to date. However it remains an oppressing class whose very revolutionary tendency leads to an intrinsic instability in the capitalist mode of production. Simultaneously, the industrial proletariat proliferates as the bourgeois mode of production spreads and polarises class antagonism, while it organises and becomes more conscious as it is forced into association through economic centralisation. The bourgeoisie need to exploit the industrial proletariat for their own survival, yet they no less need to force the proletariat into a position where it will develop its class consciousness and resist this exploitation. This immanent contradiction in the bourgeois mode of production will 'inevitably lead to its fall and the victory of the proletariat.'

Proletarians and Communists

The main value of this chapter is that it highlights some of the more sustained failures of Marxism. It is only appropriate to present them here, though detailed discussion will be delayed until my third article. However it also serves to qualify the Marxist relation to property. Many who lack conceptual clarity, both Marxist and non-Marxist, confuse the 'bourgeois socialist' Proudhon's 'Property is theft' with Marxist doctrine. However, Marx is very careful to point out: 'the distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property'. That is, it is not so much property that is theft as the private ownership of the means of production (and exchange). Thus, when 'We Communists' are accused of wanting to abolish 'Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property!', Marx ironically states that 'there is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it'. Similarly, 'You are horrified at our at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is done away with for nine-tenths of the population ... In a word you reproach us with intending to do away your property. Precisely so; that is what we intend.' This conclusion is based on the antagonism between 'capital' and 'wage-labour' which, in the forms presented in the Manifesto lack conceptual clarity. This will be further discussed in my third article.

Two areas where (classical)

Marxism has continually proved deficient are in its relation to women and in its explanation of the national phenomenon. The discussion of the family in this section is ultimately of little interest, roughly taking over the conclusions of Free Love advocates in France and Britain, more thoroughly dealt with in Engels' The Origins of Family, Private Property and the State. However, it is worth remembering that, via Engels, Marxist theory had at least some recognition of the oppression of the greater part of humanity. Meanwhile, the comments in the Manifesto on the nation and nationalism are from a clearly internationalist position which too easily dismisses the efficacy of nationalism as an ideology.

This yields a third, and perhaps more general, deficiency in Marxist theory, the inability to properly explain the role of ideology in the development of history. Though we have in brief the theory of reification: 'the selfish misconception which induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production', we also have the rather too simple: 'What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production changes.' It is claims like these which are at the bottom of many of the accusations of 'economic essentialism' levelled at Marx. This is a real issue which requires discussion, and I shall attempt to do so in my third article.





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MUSIC

Review: Bohren & der Club of Gore

Riaz Agahi looks at the German band's new effort - Piano Nights

After more than twenty years of plugging away with a familiar sound, one that combines jazz, drone, doom and many other genres into an agonisingly slow rhythm, **Bohren & der Club of Gore** released an album earlier this month which does little to change this sound.

Their classic sound has been affectionately referred to as 'a black metal fan's lounge jazz act'. I have to admit I don't quite agree with that, maybe a doom metal fan would be more appropriate than black metal. Both subgenres capture the bleakness of the music, but for my money doom metal is more appropriate, as it describes the quintessential aspect of their music; the glacial pace at which it unfolds.

Piano Nights is the band's eighth

album, and according to the band, their best since 2002's *Black Earth*, which is widely considered to be their opus. I have to add that *Black Earth* is a pretty adequate description of Bohren's sound in general, as (although they more or less preceded this development so it's nothing more than a coincidence) it reminds me of a darker version of *Earth's* recent work. To have this as their best since *Black Earth* of course leaves out, among other albums, *Beileid*, which is one of my favourites and features the familiar and (sometimes) comforting voice of **Mike Patton** in a cover of 'Catch My Heart' by German metal band **Warlock**. If this happens to suggest a sense of humour, forget all about that, because *Piano Nights*, despite what I find to be quite a funny album cover and the album name, is a seriously cultivated direction for the band, one which began with Christopher Clöser's boredom induced jam on a grand piano before a show in Moscow.

The band's studio iterations resulted in the use of a Yamaha electric piano, which I guess leaves a lighter impression on the

listener than the booming register of a grand piano.

The result of the dominant new piano based approach is something that, in my opinion, is less dark than their previous aesthetic, one of the piano melodies even reminds me of **Vince Guaraldi's** 'Christmas Time Is Here.' This may be something of an unflattering comparison, but only serves to underline the new sound, something more light and airy.

Having said that, structurally, *Piano Nights* is really not much different from Bohren and co's previous releases. The music is like a lot of music I review, quite repetitive, often giving the impression that the music is about to stop solely by virtue of the sheer slowness of the music, and the empty air between each drum beat, which must be about 6 bpm.

This is not to say that it lacks a variety of moods. In the course of this slow, meditative journey, the listener encounters both comforting ambient-esque sax tones (although the band disapproves of this label) and more sinister sounding moments.

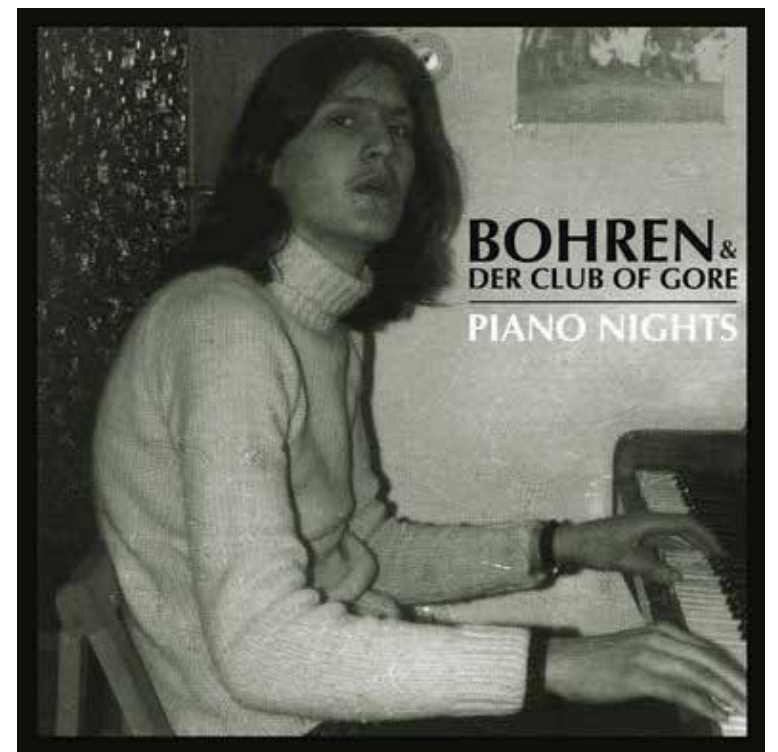
Piano Nights is a brilliant album for chilling out or working to, with its homogenous soundscape that throws out interesting moments of emotion with quite a minimal,

almost invariant backbone.

My main criticism is that the album can get a little monotonous, perhaps Clöser's piano playing isn't versatile enough for such a dominant role in the music, with the result that many of the tracks sound the same. It's possible that this will develop further should they continue to give

piano such a big role in their music.

In spite of this, Bohren & der Club of Gore have produced another great slab of ambient doom jazz, which meanders beautifully throughout the album, giving a piece of work that will please die hard fans and new fans with a love for slow, emotive jazz alike.



Emiel's Guide to Classical Music

Emiel de Lange

Episode VII - Josquin

Josquin des Prez, or Josquin for short, was an artist of mythical proportions. This was partly due to his massive talent, but also partly a result of the changing humanist culture. At the start of his career music was still grouped with geometry and arithmetic in the Quadrivium of taught subjects – something natural, following divine laws.

By the time he died in his home-region of Condé-sur-l'Escaut in Northern France, music was an *Ars poetica*, a poetic art whose beauty lay in the breaking of rules to expressive ends. The composer came to be viewed in a modern sense as a poet of sound, blessed with talents from birth. In the writings of the humanists and theorists who brought about this change, that archetypal composer was Josquin, and he would remain so

for a long time.

Born somewhere between 1840 and 1855, Josquin's biography has proved difficult to piece together. He is first mentioned in 1466 by his true surname of Lebloitte in the will of his uncle who leaves him a plot of land. At this point he was a choir-boy in Picardy and likely studying under our friend Ockeghem.

After working in the service of various Milanese families he became in 1489 a member of the prestigious Papal choir – a recent restoration of the Sistine chapel revealed his signature carved into walls of the cantoria! At the Vatican his style achieved maturity and he had absorbed the light secular music of Milan and fully developed his writing of sacred music. Josquin was the favourite composer of one of

the first music printers, Petrucci, and so his music gained unprecedented distribution, in fact the first volume dedicated entirely to a single composer was printed for Josquin. After he retired in France, his fame throughout Europe steadily grew.

So what is it about his art that inspired such reverence? We can turn to the first 'classic', the first piece of music widely considered to be great and timeless – unsurpassable in what it was. This was a motet called Ave Maria ... Virgo serena, which **P e t r u c c i** printed in his first collection of 1502. It recalls Mary's life and the music and words fit like a glove with

three fingers: 1. The declamation – the fit between note and syllable, 2. The syntax – how each part of the text relates to each part of the music, and 3. The illustration – how the music parallels the meaning of the words. (I have borrowed these from the musicologist Richard Taruskin).

Each of the five stanzas describes a different event in Mary's life and the music poetically illuminates its meaning, giving each stanza a different character. For example, when 'all things in heaven and earth are filled with joy', the texture is filled by all the voices. The 2nd stanza concerns the birth of Mary and

its harmonies are much richer as the imitation occurs at the interval of a fifth rather than the preceding octaves. The stanza on humility is split between two pairs of voices – the sound becomes smaller and sparser, setting up the next stanza which has a full homorhythmic texture and is almost dance-like in its triple meter. This is a work of genius in both its overall conception – the relations between stanzas, and in the smaller textural details which have been crafted down to the syllable. Every parameter of the music is fully under the composers control and crafted to paint the words in sound. I encourage you to listen for yourself!

Josquin explored new territories in music and produced effects which had not yet been heard. Theorists and composers look to his scores and study the way in which he achieved these to this day, but most importantly – his immediate influence on the next generation was staggering and catalysed the innovations which gave rise to our tonal system. For example, the homorhythmic declarations came to be viewed 'vertically' as chords with their own properties rather than a mere intersection between independently moving lines. Next week we will delve into this and explore how his successors took up the mantle.



ARTSFEST Exhibition Blythe Gallery, Sheffield Level 5



Photo of the Week
Photo: Mask making
Credit: Gordon Kam
Email your photo to photosoc@ic.ac.uk



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ARTS

The Blind Astronomer

Is science emotional? **Clara Clark Nevola** interviews theatre maker **Tom Espiner** about the play *Going Dark* to find out

Does the life of a man relate to that of a star? *Going Dark* tells the history of the universe as the story of how we perceive it, creating a deeply human, emotional and immersive piece of theatre.

The play is centred round the life of Max, a planetarium astronomer, who gradually loses his sight due to Retinitis Pigmentosa. His ability to work decreases, his relationship with his young son changes, and his identity as an individual is altered and questioned. *Sound&Fury*, a collaborative theatre company, have created with *Going Dark* a startlingly immersive experience, allowing the audience to enter the heart of the developing Solar System, the mind of a blind man and the emotions of a child.

After its first UK tour last year, *Going Dark* is returning to London with a run at the Science Museum. I interviewed the co-founder of *Sound&Fury*, Tom Espiner, to find out how *Going Dark* came to life and what the link between art and science is, and might become.

How did the idea for the play come about? How did the link between going blind and space discovery emerge?

It's an idea which had been on our minds for a long time. There were several impulses but one of the first ones was a real attraction for the building of a planetarium: it's a tool for education and helps our scientific understanding of the universe, but it's also a sort of secular temple, an intimate environment in which a lot of self-reflection happens. You're confronted with the infinite, the very large, the wonderful.

We were also really interested in the idea of bringing together light, sound and darkness, all key elements of a planetarium and of our own work. Because of our previous interest in darkness we wanted to create a play about the senses and our perceptions, particularly the hindering of visual perception.

We also started to find that there were some interesting parallels between the way in which we, as a human race over millennia, have seen and understood celestial objects, the scale of the universe, and the dynamics of light, with how we relate to what we see in the world around us: a correlation between



EDMUND COLLIER

Going Dark tells the emotionally gripping and visually immersive story of Max, a planetarium astronomer with a young son, who gradually loses his sight.

cosmological understanding and our own understanding of our daily lives as we interact with the world. So: life through the eye and universe through the telescope.

How much of your play is based on scientific research?

It started with late Prof Richard Gregory of the University of Bristol, a neuropsychologist who spent his whole life studying the relationship between the brain and the eye, and optical illusions. He'd come to see one of our previous plays and was really interested in how in the dark we could create images and sensations in our mind's eye.

I also did a residency with

Birmingham Physics and Astronomy department for nine months, speaking to various astronomers and physicists. As I was exploring what they were doing there I became naturally interested in how vision works, and how so much of the universe that we now understand and study does not rely on sight alone, using instrumentation that sees wavelengths that we don't. I guess for anyone who does science that's just par for the course, but it's still a very wonderful thing to explore and present to an audience.

We were funded by the Wellcome Foundation to work with experts in their field: we approached Dr Fitch, a psychiatrist specialising in visual consciousness and the hallucinations

often brought on by loss of sight (Charles Bonnet syndrome), elements which were incorporated in our play. We also spoke to RP Fighting Blindness, who gave us insights into the details of going blind. Research is, and always has been, a major part of our work.

To what extent do you think that the increasing public availability to scientific knowledge is making people blind to its wonders?

We have a plethora of science communicators nowadays: I grew up with Carl Sagan, who for me was one of the best science communicators ever, and of course Brian Cox is all over the place – instilling wonder for anyone who wants to see him on TV.

Initially we thought we could get an astronomer to give a talk at the Young Vic: the scientist as showman is a well-established model and it's great to see that, from Humphrey Davy on, that tradition is alive and well. But we wanted to take a step in a different direction: we wanted a human element. Theatre is, as well as a place to educate, a place of stories and a place of emotions, and we wanted to meet that challenge.

It's very difficult to achieve this, but we wanted to intertwine a compelling story with some good hard core science facts, and finding a way in which they could relate to each other. And when you do that, you draw together audiences which wouldn't usually be together, all in the same room, sharing a story and getting different things out of it.

There's almost a tendency for scientists to become part of a sort of exclusive priesthood: they're in a group of people who, thanks to years of study, can understand things in great detail, and come to see great beauty which often can't be explained to others, as a lot of mathematical knowledge is needed to appreciate it. So it's really important that people try to communicate that by finding the right type of metaphor or language to enlighten us.

Dr Francisco Diego, vice president of the UK Association for Astronomy Education gave one of the post-show talks and said that in our character we had created someone who instilled wonder like the old-school communicators did – a style of science communication which just isn't around as much anymore. Which is a shame: evoking wonder

and excitement about science is a powerful tool.

Could *Going Dark* be a good model for Science Communication in the future? Or was this a one off instance of science reflecting the human story you wanted to convey?

I believe that the story comes first and foremost, and there must be plausibility in the emotional story. I think it's a very good way of bringing science understanding into the public domain, but it's hard to achieve – a balancing act. Audiences are smart and they will pick up on something being didactically rammed down their throat. I do think one should strive to bring art and theatre together with science.

***Going Dark* has been described as “an Imax without the pictures”, as it is an incredibly immersive experience thanks to the sounds and minimal lighting you use. How much does your work rely on advances in technology?**

Ever since we started we've wanted to push the boundaries of the technological elements of theatre – partly because technology is getting better all the time. It has to be used with caution as you can easily overdose; once again, the core elements of a good story are essential. The more refined and delicate you can be with sound and light, the more detail you can bring out.

Some people have described our work as immersive theatre: the sound is spatialised and massive so that the audience is actually plunged sonically into the scene, and we conjure up a sense of place, shared by audience and actors at the same time. Our sound designer, Dan Jones, has really studied how to achieve exactly the right reverb, harnessing the audience's imagination and transporting them to the scenes; all the technology we use is there to serve the story. We would like our audience to think “I was really there”, not to think “that sound technology was excellent!”

Going Dark will be performed at the performance space of the Science Museum from 5th-9th March 2013. Tickets are £20 for adults, £8 for students, and are available from the Science Museum website.

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ARTS

ARTSFEST! The Critic Laughs

Alex Savell
Arts & Ents Board Chair

Yes, the biggest event of the Union's calendar has arrived. And I don't mean the Big Elections.

ArtsFest sees our scientists' paradise turned over to our Artistic under culture for a week of something different.

The festivities this year include lunchtime concerts, an art exhibit, singing, dancing, comedy, colour, noise and fun. This will be at least the 5th ArtsFest; records go back as early as 2010, a time where, as far as ArtsFest was concerned, even the internet didn't exist. But it's been growing and learning every year.

In my tenure as Arts and Ents Chair I've already been impressed by so many talented clubs and societies performances and I really hope as many people as possible will seek out this showcase of what's on offer.

The Blythe Gallery, for those that don't know about it, is squeezed in on level 5 of the Sherfield Building. It's a lovely little arts space where PhotoSoc, LeoSoc and Calligraphy and Oriental Painting are putting on a show with the theme of masks which runs for the whole length of the festival. I try to make a point of heading up there every now and then to see what's about, and to take a moment to notice that not every space at Imperial is used for a blackboard full of equations or some sort of lab. ArtsFest is the perfect opportunity if you've not taken a look before, just drop by any time for a quick break or over lunch.

If you want something a little louder we have plenty to offer you. In one of, in my opinion, the better college decisions of late, we've been given the go ahead to shove IC Big Band out onto the balcony of the Queen's

Tower to blare out a few classics one lunch time (1pm Monday 24th); and, for a slightly classier feeling, try the String Ensemble Concert in the Business School Foyer at lunch (12pm, 21st).

At the Union itself, MTSoc and A Cappella will be showing off some of the highlights of their year so far as well as, if rumours are to be believed, a few special new numbers they've been working on (UCH, 7pm, 21st).

But for me I'm particularly looking forward to the two final nights. On Wednesday the 26th we'll be hosting the ArtsFest Showcase, where dance and musical societies will be putting on an extravaganza. On the 27th in Metric will be the light hearted ArtsFest Afterparty where we will have more dance, music, rock, and much more; hopefully including the newly minted Imperial College Comedy Soc as compères and performers for the evening. Oh, and the bar will be open... but you'll all only be going for the performances, right?

So yes, the clubs in the Arts and Ents board have been busy. I'll probably be getting some hate mail now from the people I haven't mentioned: ICSO and Choir off doing there epic performance of War Requiem at Winchester Cathedral for instance, and the Imperial Fringe Arts Experiment. So look busy, because what other excuse could you possibly have for not coming along? Oh and before you start claiming you'd rather spend your money on Snakebites in 568 everything going on on campus is going to be free, so that's 100% of your hard earned student loan being put towards the universal lubricant of science and the arts.

So from Wednesday the 19th we are going to be going loud or going home all the way through to Thursday 27th of February. Come get involved and make some noise!

Jingjie Cheng
Writer

What: Richard Hamilton
Where: Tate Modern, SE1
When: 13th February - 26th May
Price: £14.50, concessions £12.50

Richard Hamilton. Father of pop art, experimenter of consumer design, right? If that is all you associate with this icon of twentieth century British art, this massive retrospective at the Tate will change your mind. As far as it is even conceivable to encapsulate the works of an artist as prolific and far-reaching as Hamilton into a single exhibition, this showcase does a good job. To most of us, Hamilton is known simply as the "father of pop art", with the figure cut-outs and domestic interior of his iconic 1956 collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* heralding a new era of art that draws on popular culture as inspiration. This exhibition, however, offers us a glimpse into the colossal scope of his work – from his printmaking experiments as a student at the Slade to numerous political paintings to a roomful of Polaroid portraits of himself by other artists, we are introduced to a man who was actively engaged with the world around him and whose sense of adventure shone throughout his career – sometimes irreverently.

It is always interesting to see how an artist's work evolves over time; it reminds us that the creators behind art are human, whose interests and values grow and change. We are given the unique opportunity to observe the development of Hamilton's ideas and techniques from his earliest works in the 1950s to his final painting, completed four days before his death in 2011. Organised chronologically into eighteen rooms, each room shows a distinct theme or period in Hamilton's artistic career.

Of the multitude of artworks on show, his installations are by far the most intriguing. A cheerful jukebox music greets the viewer in a small room dominated by the installation *Fun House*, done in collaboration with architect John Voelcker and artist John McHale for the 1956 exhibition *This is Tomorrow* at the Whitechapel Gallery. Blown-up film stills tower over us while wall-length optical illusions crowd our vision; the sensory overload compounded by a large crowd milling about in the confined space. We are reminded, while looking up at Monroe's iconic pose next to a cameo appearance of Van Gogh's sunflowers, of the aesthetic value of media and everyday objects.

It is for the catalogue of that exhibition that Hamilton created



RICHARD HAMILTON 2005

the collage that is now recognised as the first piece of pop art. For such a significant work, *Just what is it...* is somewhat underwhelming, no larger than a coffee-table book. The work itself is matter-of-fact – the male nude gazes impassively at you, in hand a large phallic lollipop while his domestic background is an uneasy collection of pop culture references. It is hard to believe that this was one of the first works amalgamating ready prints and drawing from consumer brands and pop culture. Yet, the idea of painting over and embellishing ready prints would underlie most of Hamilton's future works.

His fascination with the interior is explored further in the installation *Lobby*, which contains a wall-sized painting inspired by a postcard of a Berlin hotel lobby. The viewer walks into the small room carpeted like in the painting, and sees himself in a pillar covered by mirrors, at once drawing the audience into the uneasy, sterile setting of the hotel lobby and blurring the lines between the viewer and the viewed.

At the end, we get the impression of a man who changed with the times, always eager to try out new techniques. From the cutting and pasting of his first collage to the digital prints of *Maps of Palestine* (2009), which showed the difference in Palestinian land area between the UN Partition Plan and the actual extent of Israel-Palestinian occupation at time of printing, Hamilton was a lifelong experimenter.

Hamilton's irreverence is refreshing. One of my favourite pieces is *The Critic Laughs*, a product he created which mounts a pair of dentures onto an electric toothbrush. The actual product is on display, complete with its case, instruction manual and even a hilarious commercial. Perhaps it is

merely tongue-in-cheek – or perhaps, Hamilton is pointing out the rising commercialism of our times and the creation of useless products that are marketed as essentials. The critic laughs at itself.

Here was an artist who also actively engaged with the society around him. His provocative political paintings span several rooms, with one of the most memorable being that of Tony Blair in cowboy garb, standing over rough terrain with a pistol in each hand – Hamilton's way of protesting against British involvement in the second Gulf War. Not one afraid to hide his strong opinions, Hamilton tackled subjects ranging from a colourful disfiguration of Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party in the 1960s, to his installation *Treatment Room*, a space reminiscent of NHS waiting rooms with Margaret Thatcher's silenced election broadcast of 1983 being shown to a patient bed. Can the people be cured by the image of the ruler, and how powerful are mere words which can be easily muted?

This retrospective also brings us to a deeply personal level with the room "Polaroids and Portraits", which contains a wall filled with Polaroids of Hamilton himself, taken by fellow artists and friends. The artist does not just respond to his environment but interacts with it as well in this unique take on Hamilton's own person. In the same space are Hamilton's portraits of close friends Dieter Roth and Derek Jarman – photorealistic faces touched by abstract, bold strokes.

The retrospective is so vast sometimes it is slightly overwhelming. But it is dense with pieces that reflect the state of art and the world in the past 60 years – a must-see for anyone interested in contemporary art and the life of an extraordinary innovator.



Artsfest 2014, coming soon to a tower near you!

ARTS

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Not such Happy Days...

Clara Clark Nevola

Writer

What: Happy Days
Where: Young Vic, SE1
When: until 8th March
Price: Various

Disclaimer: do not book tickets for this as a February blues pick-me-up. The poster's colourful, the title's promising, but the only comedy you'll get is the bleakest of tragicomedy.

Having said that, if you're of sturdy disposition with an interest in 1960's surrealist theatre, step right up.

To start with, you will be given two hours of one of the most celebrated avant-garde plays. First performed in 1961, Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* seeks to portray the condition of the modern woman. The whole of the two acts are focused entirely on the main character, Winnie, with occasional comments or grunts from her surly, detached, newspaper-reading husband.

Throughout the play Winnie is progressively buried in sand, unable to move, under scorching heat, while her husband, who mainly lives in a hole hidden from the audience, can crawl around. A jarring, ear-splitting

bell rings at intervals, giving Winnie her sleeping and waking times. No explanation is given for this odd set up, and though Winnie refers vaguely to a previous life there is the feeling of being immersed in a timeless, unchanging landscape – the only movement the sand that trickles down on Winnie, slowly burying her alive.

The next bonus of this Young Vic production is Juliet Stevenson, nominated for five Olivier awards and four BAFTAs, screen and theatre actress and a truly fantastic Winnie. It is thanks to her that this surreal, vague outline takes life as a terrifying reality of overwhelming existential panic.

As she sits there, buried in the sand, she prattles away, sounding like a middle-class, 1960's housewife with her constant references to the small mercies in life, her reliance on her handbag and her affectionate and irritated references to her husband. But in her circumstances, these commonplace instances take on an anguishing meaning: the small mercies are meaningless, as she is dying under the heat and the sand, her handbag includes hairbrushes, mirrors and a revolver, her husband sits uncaringly as she panics under the rising tide of sand that covers her.

Her post-war cheeriness is interspersed with rising panic, nonsensical comments and her gradual loss of memory. By the second act, Winnie's strident, forcedly-

cheerful voice has subsided into a resigned drone, and the blare of her waking up bell rings again as again, forcing her to sit up and open her bleary, sleep deprived eyes. *Happy Days* shows a woman being tortured. Physically tortured certainly, but far more gruesomely mentally tortured by her husband's indifference, her

inability to change her condition, her isolation, her loss of memory.

For those willing to find them, there are many metaphors in *Happy Days*: are we all being suppressed by the ever moving sands of time? Are we all being progressively being buried in a hole, relying on our daily routines to survive? Are we all screaming out to

our nearest and dearest, as they sit oblivious?

I won't draw these conclusions for you, but I urge you to go, and see for yourselves.

And if all gets too much, the Young Vic has a really good bar, the Cut. You might need a fortifying drink at the interval to steady yourself.



JOHAN PERSSON

Turandot: finished but flawed

Emiel De Lange

Writer

What: Turandot
Where: Royal Opera House, WC2
When: until 10th March
Price: Various

Puccini's *Turandot* was "the end of the great tradition" of Italian opera. Ever popular, it is the grandest of them all, and yet it is deeply problematic. Set in a mythical China, at its simplest the tale concerns a Prince, Calaf, who wins the heart of the Princess of China, Turandot. However Turandot is proud – a symbol of the feminine of modern times, unwilling to make an object of herself through marriage. She has insulated herself from the world of men, and set a challenge; three riddles must be solved to win her hand, and the price of failure is death. The opera opens with the execution of an unfortunate prince, whose head is displayed with the many other trophies, yet somehow Calaf decides he has fallen in love with



© ROH / TRISTRAM KENTON

the icy Turandot.

Calaf's love for this inaccessible, even frightening, woman is difficult to understand or empathise with. Perhaps it is a narcissistic one – as

a minister tellingly warns him that "Turandot does not exist! Only the Nothingness in which you annihilate yourself!" The insightful and complex psychology of these two characters are

the greatest strengths of this work, and as Calaf passes the riddles we await with great anticipation what musical illumination of the soul will occur for us, as the dismayed cold Turandot is thawed by Calaf's love.

This is the point at which Puccini died of a heart attack, after undergoing cancer therapy in Brussels, and while the libretto was completed, this final, climatic scene was not. Based on his written notes, it is thought that Puccini – ever conscious of his contribution and place at the tail of the Italian tradition – had intended a rapturous transcendence comparable to that of Wagner's *Tristan* or even a mystical transformation a la *Parsifal*. Others have proposed that Puccini was simply not capable of writing this immense psychology into his music, although in his final letters to the librettist he claimed to have the music already formed in his mind. Whatever the case might have been, the impossible task of completing the opera was given to another Italian, named Franco Alfano. The results are, to put it mildly, disappointing, and we must content ourselves with an unambiguously triumphant and simplistic ending which limits the power of this opera

to emotional spectacle rather than piercing brilliance.

Whatever does exist of *Turandot* is presented brilliantly by the Royal Opera House. In this production, which is nearly 30 years old, the full spectacle is unleashed. The stage is beautifully designed with some stunningly vivid imagery, the hundreds of dancers and actors all fabulously costumed and the props give a very convincing 'ancient China' feel. Puccini's mysterious grand score is played with practised and familiar, if perhaps a little careless, ease by the orchestra under Nicola Luisotti. While the cast was generally excellent as is typical, Alfred Kim in the role of Calaf was a little disappointing. Forgivably, he struggled with some of the diction, but his voice lacked charm and seemed as cold as the character of Turandot. The real delight of the evening was Ailyn Perez as Liu, Calaf's adoring servant girl who sacrifices herself for him. Perez sang this role as a sweet, unassuming girl and with great beauty. For those of you who wish, despite its flaws, to see what Puccini's final and grandest opera is all about, you are unlikely to find a much better production than this.

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Charles Stross

Joseph Henderson talks about the popular Picocon 31 guest

I am writing about Charles Stross because of the upcoming Picocon science fiction convention, which he will be attending as one of the Guests of Honour. He has contributed to the Science Fiction and Fantasy field with his novels, his blogging, and his roleplaying work.

Of these three things, the roleplaying work is perhaps the least notable. Stross worked on first edition *Dungeons and Dragons*, and created some of the game's iconic monsters. Drawing from the works of Moorcock and Martin, Stross created the Githyanki: cruel and impious mind-controlling slavers that lurk in underground caves and seek to kill their old racial enemies. The Githyanki are still a part of D&D, and have appeared in the *Neverwinter Nights 2* and *Baldur's Gate II* computer games, but Stross no longer writes for roleplaying games.

"... *Halting State* is suffused with Stross' wonderful imagination ..."

Stross (and various guests) also blog on the popular antipope.org site on the subjects of science fiction, Stross's convention attendance, futurism, and international relations. Stross has also posted an autobiography on his blog, which I will not try to replicate here. Stross can describe his life much better than I can; this article is better used for commentary.

On the topic of international relations, Stross describes himself as "just an interested layman". His opinion, as a layman, is relatively informed and his writing is populated by many links to other parts of the internet.

" [The *Atrocity Archives* are] a very amusing look at modern bureaucracy struggling with magical horror ..."

Futurism is addressed in many articles, mentioning such topics as the singularity, Bitcoin, the internet of things, space colonisation, and a judge who masturbated while sitting in court. Stross manages to discuss futurism with far more attention to evidence, so

the general quality of Stross's writing in these essays is better than in his political essays.

Likewise, when Stross discusses writing, and the publishing industry, he does so as a knowledgeable insider. When Stross makes a statement about publishing or science fiction, he does so in a community that is interested in and follows his words. His articles generate interest, and almost every one of them will have extensive commentary on other blogs.

Of course, Stross's blog might never have grown to such popularity were it not for his very notable writing. I have not read all of his works, so I shall confine my commentary to those that I have. For those who wish to read his works many are available online, and almost all published on paper can be found in the science fiction library in the Beit West Basement.

Charles Stross won the Locus award in 2005 for writing the *Accelerando*, a compilation of nine short stories. Stross's technical skill as a writer was less developed in *Accelerando* than later on, but his ideas are well worth reading.

Over three generations the dysfunctional Macx family lives through the transformation of human identity and society as technology transfers sentience from the natural brain to the synthetic computer. As the series goes on, each generation finds themselves falling behind the more aware and efficient intelligences they create. Stross is not particularly optimistic: people are not necessarily protected from the future, and technology creates a new economy, where posthuman intelligences ruthlessly exploit every resource they can find.

From *Accelerando*, and those other Stross novels that include them, my most vivid memories are the sex scenes. His sex writing is not titillating, but is generally useful for character development. The sex in Stross' novels is often out of the mainstream, and BDSM elements feature heavily. Seeing the characters enjoy unconventional sex gives the reader an interesting exercise in empathy, giving a route to empathy through their private desires.

The *Eschaton* novels involve a space opera setting. Faster than light travel is developed, and can even be used for time travel. However, the "Eschaton", an entity from the transhuman future, acts to prevent violations of continuity that might threaten its own existence.

Nonetheless as colonies with different technology interact, causing huge culture shocks, desperate and ignorant people take risks that put many worlds



Charles Stross – writer, blogger and king of the internet.

in danger. The plot of the novels is like that of a spy thriller as UN agents try to avert catastrophe, while secondary characters describe the culture shock and transformation. Once again, the sex scenes are memorable, but I think they are more like an out of place comedy than important character

development.

The *Halting State* duology are police thrillers, set amongst the near future, post-independence, Scottish police. This isn't a reflection of wishful thinking on the part of Stross for Scottish independence, but an attempt

to create a cool situation to write about. On his blog Stross has complained that far too much in the *Halting State* series seems to be coming true. The novelty of the police using World of Warcraft to spy on criminals lost its lustre to Stross when he found out that the NSA did exactly that, so there will be no more

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BOOKS

sequels.

The novels are much like other police procedurals, but Stross's contributions are not to be underestimated. The first novel, also called *Halting State*, is suffused with Stross' wonderful imagination, with interesting "crimes that don't even exist yet" keeping the reader intellectually engaged.

The sequel, *Rule 34*, is much more disappointing. The novel commits the sin of using 'evil sex' to characterise the villain, which is dull, and relies on this 'evil sex' extensively. *Rule 34* also attracted criticism from Christopher Priest when it was nominated for a Hugo. Priest's criticism was brief and denigrating, so I mention it more for the sake of history than because it is valuable. Naturally the criticism inspired plenty of discussion, and anyone wishing to particularly flatter Stross might wear a t-shirt made in response, which bears the caption: "INTERNET PUPPY NO CAN HAZ NOMS".

Even more contemporary than the *Halting State* duology is the *Laundry* series. The series is a very amusing look at modern bureaucracy struggling to deal with magical horror; a modern take on the Cthulu mythos' theme of "knowledge that is too terrible to tell". The *Laundry* series loves to talk about modern management and office politics, and the struggle of an IT

professional turned into a special agent.

The first novel, *The Atrocity Archives* is a good read if you like the idea of a technical professional griping about bad management and saving the world with a few fantastic creatures thrown in.

The *Laundry* really gets interesting with the second book in the series, *The Jennifer Morgue*. The book is an intelligent and very aware parody of *James Bond* novels. *The Jennifer Morgue* also benefits from social commentary. It questions and challenges the sexual clichés of Fleming's novels and the standards still held in many of the inspired works.

Much more subtle is the racial commentary of *The Jennifer Morgue*. H P Lovecraft is rightly remembered as an excellent horror author, but modern readers often choose to ignore the less desirable underlying themes of his work. Lovecraft was a racist and much of the horror of his work was based on his fear of racial mixing, cultural decay, inherited evils and other discredited concepts.

In Lovecraft's *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (one of his best works), the fishy Deep Ones desire to interbreed with humans. Their children carry the unfortunate racial features of their parents, and eventually mutate into undersea creatures. While some critics have interpreted *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* as being about

Lovecraft's acceptance of racial mixing, and overcoming horror, *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* is still clearly about the horror of being mixed race. To paraphrase George Orwell, while we may dislike racism in Lovecraft's work, and wish it were not there, it would be absurd to deny its existence. *The Jennifer Morgue* also uses the Deep Ones, but the racial criticism is no longer directed against them, but against the prejudice they receive for the circumstances of their birth.

The Jennifer Morgue is followed by *The Fuller Memorandum*. This is much like *The Atrocity Archives*, but in every way better. The alien intelligences are more intriguing, the office politics more dynamic and cutthroat, the action faster and more exciting.

The *Laundry* series has also had several short stories published online. I will not go into these in detail, save to say that *Equoid* is absolutely excellent. If, after reading this, you are interested in Charles Stross then I suggest you get online and read *Equoid*.

At this point there is little left to say. Stross has written many other books, but unfortunately I have either not read them or have nothing to say. This article was written to give a summary outlook of Charles Stross's work, I have nothing to conclude. I hope that I have caught your attention, and I look forward to seeing him at Picocon.

See Charles Stross at Picocon 31

Charles Stross will be joined by Sarah Pinborough and Professor David Southwood on Saturday February 22 at Imperial's annual science fiction and fantasy convention.

Picocon 31 will feature Guest of Honour talks, a panel, silly games, quizzes and the destruction of dodgy merchandise with liquid nitrogen and a giant hammer.

The convention is open to all and registration starts at 10:00 in Beit Quad.

For more information, and to buy tickets, visit:

icsf.org.uk/picocon

Singularity Sky

Tom Rivlin explores one of Charles Stross' most popular novels.

It's hard to decide whether *Singularity Sky* is hard or soft sci-fi. Inherent to the setting of the book is faster-than-light (FTL) travel and an omnipotent, post-singularity AI. However that stuff is all really just a backdrop to incredibly nerdy (and delightful) discussions of spaceship-to-spaceship combat at relativistic velocities, and a gleeful dissection of how FTL travel inherently leads to time travel. (The word "light-cone" is thrown around a lot.)

If that paragraph put you to sleep, this book is not for you (also you're silly). However, if you're the kind of person who watches a space battle in *Star Trek* and goes "why do all the ships stop and stare at each other?" or is annoyed by *Star Wars*' ubiquitous sound in space, then you should travel at sufficient FTL speeds to ensure you've already read the book before starting this review.

It's clear that before a word of the book was written, Stross took the time to think very carefully about how to reconcile FTL travel with time travel, concluding that the only way to make it make any sort of sense is for there

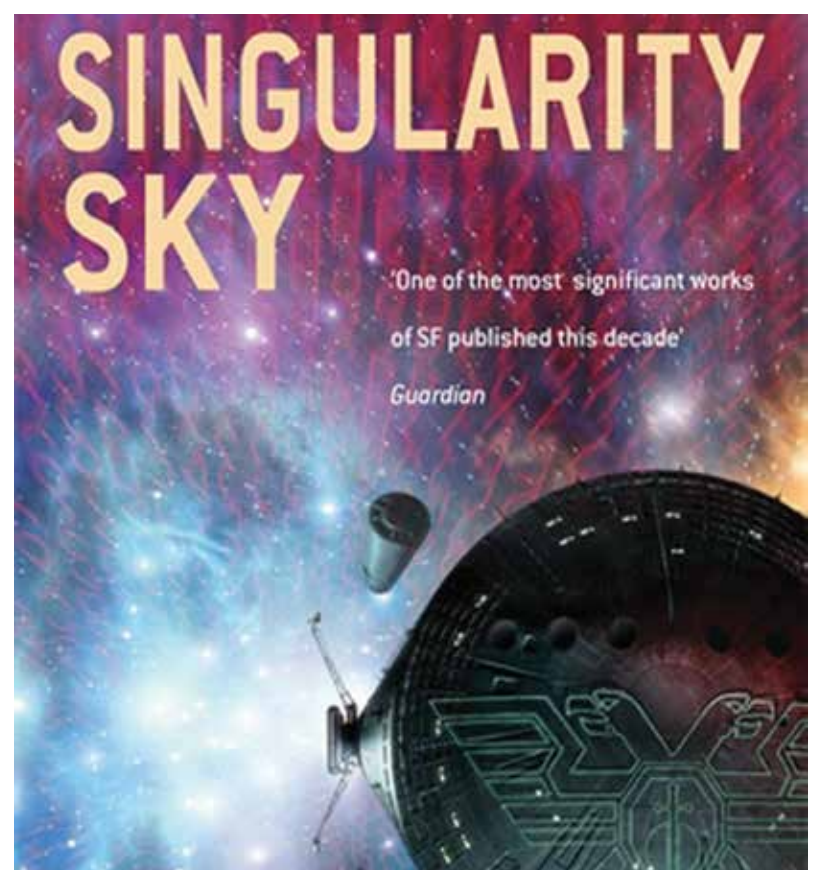
to be an artificial *ban* on messing with causality, as opposed to an inherent *law* of nature. Similarly, he clearly thought very hard about how ship-to-ship combat in space would *actually* happen, and does his best to stay true to that. Of course, the conclusion seems to be that ship-to-ship combat in space is a *terrible idea* and any civilisation who tries it and builds a massive space navy must be *really, really stupid*.

On that note, the story of the book is set in a post-singularity future, where humanity has a galactic diaspora, with many conflicting civilisations. An engineer from Earth is doing routine contract work for a particularly repressive and backwards empire, the New Republic, when he, along with a UN spy, accidentally get caught up in a space battle between the Republic and a mysterious, information-based civilisation called the Festival. The story is light-hearted and fun, and the two main characters have an interesting relationship, but, to me, it was mostly just window-dressing for the fun space battles.

Like all good sci-fi, the book has

some smart things to say about how the technology in it would impact society. In the book, different economic and political systems clash on a galactic scale. Earth's embrace of nanotech which can replicate any object, and its subsequent transition to a scarcity-free economy, is contrasted with the Republic's strict ban on this technology, and its stasis in a good old fashioned 20th century dictatorship. What's most engaging, though, is that neither side is presented as entirely better than the other. Earth's people may have unlimited access to whatever they want, and have far more freedom, but the price for that is terrorism on an unprecedented scale – on Earth, any nutcase with an agenda can unleash the worst kinds of plagues and atomic bombs. And you thought the *Anarchist's Cookbook* was bad.

It's clear we're meant to embrace the singularity in the book ("information wants to be free" is a quote from the book that appears on the cover), but Stross emphasises that the singularity didn't fix all of our problems. Like all technology, it also made more.





Student Picks

Eva Rosenthal picks:

Madame Bovary by *Gustave Flaubert*

Madame Bovary is generally considered to be one of the best novels ever written. This is already an excellent reason to read it, but I'll recommend it anyway.

I am reading it for the third time. Still it morphs into different shapes, carrying with it all the subtlety of Flaubert's characters. The first time I read it, very young (too young perhaps), I was overcome with feeling for the tragedy of Emma Bovary's situation. A beautiful, sensual woman with too much imagination, alone in grey, boring country villages with only the bore-of-a-husband for company. No wonder she takes to romanticism; no wonder she finds herself a couple of lovers; no wonder she commits suicide when everything collapses!

Then I read it again. What mastery Flaubert has over his hideous world, the world of the stupid petite bourgeoisie! Emma Bovary, I realised, was tragic in herself, through her own shallowness, because of her inability to really look at the world. She lives in a world of dreams, unoriginal dreams, the clichéd dreams of Romanticism. Nothing she experiences in life can compare! Flaubert manages to create a rich character, full of life, alive as it were, whilst holding her in utter contempt. I found this fascinating.

This time, I'm struck by what I perceive as an extreme sympathy for the character. Flaubert is criticising, with irony, with half-veiled insults, but also with a wry compassion.

It has changed for me yet again. There are so many truths about life, about oneself and society, to be found in *Madame Bovary*... in so short a text, I can really only say: read it. The rest is filler.



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Tea & Coffee Truths

A short story by **Eoghan Totten**

One day I may look back on my life and realise that my first love was not a person but a place...

Our world is full, bursting and strained like never before. We have the power to suppress disease, pacify hunger, come and go as we so choose. Things have grown, unfurled like ivy tendrils that are infinitely rich and thick. Buildings tower like divine beacons. Men (regrettably) have the power to take a life at the touch of a button. Information flows like a cascading fluid. Men try to stop its flow, to cork the bottle of knowledge...but the seal leaks, the fluid still flows and men and women slake their thirst.

Men leave the fields, pace the cobbles of glimmering cities in the night. They search for life, advancement and hope. Parliaments continue to tick like well-oiled clocks in homage to the Constantinople, Rome and Athens of the past. Theatres fill with budding enthusiasts, challenging notions of culture, civility and a higher state of awareness. Restaurants feed labourers after a hard day's work, numb the pains and fill the stomachs of berated men and women. Police cars roam and race through the labyrinth of streets like guardians, sentinels of order, scuttling beetles in a transient hive. Universities pulsate with knowledge, lighting the way for future generations.

Things move ever so swiftly forward and yet nothing ever changes. We come full circle...and when we realise this the centre may or may not hold.

Maybe time is one discreet event. I see it as a mirror. Perhaps God set us a challenge, taking the mirror and dropping it from a height. Perhaps this is why we continue to strive and to seek. Each civilisation that comes and goes examines the fragments, piece by piece, in an attempt to resolve the pearlescent, glimmering puzzle. We seem to get so far. We fail, slice a finger, lacerate a vein, let some blood, nurse our wounds...we have to start all over again.

We don't want to finish the restoration of this universal mirror. What would come after? After all, there is more fun in seeing infinitely many reflections and mysteries in the jagged fragments. If we were to fix it and seal every fragment back in place, we would see but one reflection. We might not like it.

It's above my head. The glint of those fragments sears my eyes. One day, like a hermit in the sun, I sought solace. I sought shade. It was to be found in a cafe. Standing squat and square with four walls, penned in by victorian brick from above and below, it became my bunker. A glass veranda served to maintain a link between worlds. Cars would dance to and fro as their hums and roars blended with the clamour of cups and plates glancing dark wood



tabletops.

The place appealed to me through its simplicity. My memories receded from memory when I stepped through the door. Young men served with a greeting, a smile, a handshake or pat on the back, providing a lift. I gave due attention to the pure. The light music numbed the senses and caused the strain in my temples, teeth and neck to relax like a slackening sail. Every motion on the clock face seemed worthwhile, nothing wasted.

I would dive deep into intricate novel plots, surfacing late at night. The place allowed me to focus my interests into mental diamonds, concrete my passions into discrete kernels of knowledge. Things seemed possible. The tea and coffee, above all, captured the imagination. Dark and steaming cups of pure white porcelain dotted the tables. People paused, flared their nostrils and raised the warmth to their lips. Some would even close their eyes, at ease.

One can see why ancient cultures revered the act of tea drinking as a ceremony, a rite of passage. It is an simple act but steeped in symbolism. By stopping, pausing and drinking all other things seemed to stem from that moment. Groups gathered to play chess. Long lost friends held one another's gaze across tables, the gulf between them peppered with the fragrant steam of hot drinks. Men and women donned their finest clothes; jumpers of wool, scarves of silk, well-made shoe-soles

slapped the marble floors.

Despite the calm there was still room for obscurity. In the cafe, as beyond its doors, one still felt lost at times, overwhelmed...but at least there was a platform, sure footing to stand on. It was my breastplate, my armour, a shield from relentless missiles of reality.

One night I withdrew my philosophy notes from my bag. I calmly read over pages of Adorno and Horkheimer, the edges furled and crippled.

"characterise enlightenment as... liberation from fear of the unknown...by acquisition of genuine knowledge."

In that instant the cafe assumed a voice. Chairs scraped the floor, old men bellowed and children giggled and all the while white china clicked, sang in harmony, reverberating off mellowed walls. It spoke to me.

Let go. Become a free and spontaneous being. Pause. Breathe the air. Don't fix the broken mirror. Stop seeking more. Pocket instead a fragment of glass, plane its edges, distill it of all its coarseness and carry it with you until the end of your days.

I turned back to my coffee, took a sip and smiled. In my mind I saw some ancient monk of another time and place. With one skilled, steady hand he painted a fay, fine tree in full blossom on faded parchment: It had but a few branches. The monk stopped, placed his brush on the ground.

He turned to his steaming tea and drank.



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FILM

Best films of 2013

Peter Brook

Treasured Writer

- 5. *Nebraska*
- 4. *Kings of Summer*
- 3. *Gravity*
- 2. *Django, Unchained*
- 1. *The Act Of Killing*



Director Joshua Oppenheimer shows us that documentary making isn't just about fly on the wall people watching and talking heads. He throws himself, and us, right into the fray with the most unlikeable, disgusting and villainous humans imaginable and yet he finds humanity in them.

The film is the story of the Indonesian Genocide told from the point of some of the men who perpetrated it and who have gone legally unpunished.

They are then asked to reenact the murders they perpetrated in the style of their favourite Hollywood movies. When they start looking at the tapes they reflect for the first time on what they have done. It seems to be the first time these men start to understand what they have done and shows that though they have gone unpunished by courts the toll it has taken on their psyche is massive.

These men are not portrayed with sympathy, but I think it's a movie that starts to ask questions about what motivates people and how normal people can end up committing the worst kind of crimes. When we filed out the Panton Street Odeon everyone was in silence, it was haunting. I felt torn between such anger and such sadness and the film sat with me for weeks. I still find myself churning over what it contained and what it means. Apologies for not knowing who this quote is paraphrased from, but basically "It's a horrifying film, but you don't get to not see it."

Could you love her?

Janan Sathiendran

Writer

Her

Director: Spike Jonze
Writer: Spike Jonze
Starring: Joaquin Phoenix, Rooney Mara, Amy Adams, Olivia Wilde
Runtime: 126 minutes
Certification: 15



There's a reason that films nowadays are rarely about love, and why love is usually just a side-plot in a story that tackles broader problems. It's because love stories are so easy to get wrong - it's too easy to drop in a bad clichéd line in the dialogue, and too easy to resolve a plot strand in an obvious way. Sometimes we'll enjoy seeing what we expected to see, because sometimes it's just pleasing that way. But most of the time, we're left wondering why all the dramatic tension was built up in the first place.

[Spoilers follow]

With that in mind, *Her* is brilliant. It's funny, sad, and with an eyebrow-raising premise, it really makes you think. Directed by Spike Jonze (*Being John Malkovich*), the film tells the story of Theodore (Joaquin Phoenix), a lonely man who falls in love with an operating system...who returns his affection and falls in love with him too. Though not explicitly stated, it's apparent the film is set in a not-so-distant future, given that it features a society who have created, and become very dependent on, technology more advanced than what we currently interact with. This OS that Theodore becomes enamoured with can be more accurately described as a new artificial intelligence system, 'Samantha,' played by Scarlett Johansson. Samantha doesn't have a face, or a body (which she frequently complains about), so we and Theodore never see her; we only hear her sweet, sultry voice.

Spike Jonze, in his solo screenwriting debut, has created a love story so beautiful that at times we forget that Samantha isn't a physical person. Since the premise allows for her to develop emotions and desires just like any ordinary human, Samantha is essentially a whole consciousness trapped in a machine. She's lines of code struggling to accept that they're lines of code. This ability of artificial intelligence is usually described as 'simulation of human emotion' - the



reason being that Samantha isn't feeling emotion - she's simulating the feeling of emotion. But then, can't it be argued that we do exactly the same thing? The brain is nothing more than parts - lobes - communicating via nervous signals the same way electronic components do through wires - right? So human emotion is nothing more than a simulation resulting from the brain's electrical activity, isn't it?

But I digress. The bond Theodore forms with Samantha is so strong and real, we're forced to repeatedly remind ourselves that, however genuine her emotions are, Samantha is still just software, and this is what sustains the sad, troubling undertone that exists throughout the film. A film that makes you fall for a character without a face or a body, in a world that's otherwise exactly like ours. A film that makes you question the nature of relationships and what it means to be human.

In this way, *Her* is also a subtle analysis of the human condition. For example, [SPOILERS] Theodore writes personal love letters for a living. He's an employee at a company who provide a service to people who struggle to express and communicate their feelings. The film's opening shot is of Theodore speaking in a sweet, romantic way; it's touching, until we realise he's reading one of his letters. It's a darkly funny scene, but it's also quite unsettling, and it made me question

what genuine expression of emotion really is. But you might find yourself thinking about it differently.

The film features a relatively small, but wonderful cast, with no subpar performances. Joaquin Phoenix plays Theodore brilliantly, allowing us to truly empathise with his character, while Amy Adams plays his longtime friend, and Rooney Mara plays his estranged wife. And then there's Samantha, who was initially voiced by Samantha Morton during filming, but then recast to Scarlett Johansson in post-production. The recast resulted in some alterations to the script and new scenes had to be shot, but in my opinion, it was the best decision Jonze made. Johansson is brilliant in her role, showing off an ability to portray a variety of emotions varying in strength, through simple nuances in her voice. Plus, her voice has a great natural, sweet, flirty quality that allows the audience to really admire her as a genuine personality, and thus forgive Theodore for falling in love with a computer.

Given the bizarre premise, this film could've easily turned out bad, so it's really a statement to Jonze's ingenuity that *Her* is now in the running for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay at this year's Academy Awards. It's funny when it needs to be, it's sweet and sad, and it's deeper than I'd ever expected.

Best films of 2013

Fred Fyles

Treasured Writer

- 10. *The Great Beauty*
- 9. *Fill the Void*
- 8. *Dans La Maison*
- 7. *Leviathan*
- 6. *Nebraska*
- 5. *Only God Forgives*
- 4. *The Act of Killing*
- 3. *Blancanieves*
- 2. *Frances Ha*
- 1. *Blue is the Warmest Colour*



When I was writing this list, I found it difficult to cast my mind back to 2013. With the past month seeing the release of films such as *12 Years a Slave*, *Inside Llewyn Davis*, and *The Wolf of Wall Street*, 2014 has gone off with a bang that can make last year's output seem slight in comparison. However, I haven't yet seen a film that can match the emotional intensity of Abdellatif Kechiche's *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, a three-hour long romantic epic, detailing all the minutiae of first love. It earned its share of acclaim and controversy, with the lengthy sex scenes coming under fire by some critics, but at the heart of the film we have two absolutely mind-numbingly fantastic performances from Lea Seydoux and newcomer Adele Exarchopoulos, who manage to express all the pain and joy that love can bring. Kechiche crafts the film with an intimate and naturalistic feel that belies its lengthy running time; *Blue is the Warmest Colour* is a landmark film, and completely deserves its spot at the top of my list.



Best films of 2013

John Park

Amy-lover

10. *Blue Jasmine*
9. *Nebraska*
8. *Philomena*
7. *Zero Dark Thirty*
6. *Django Unchained*
5. *Lincoln*
4. *Gravity*
3. *Before Midnight*
2. *Cloud Atlas*
1. *American Hustle*

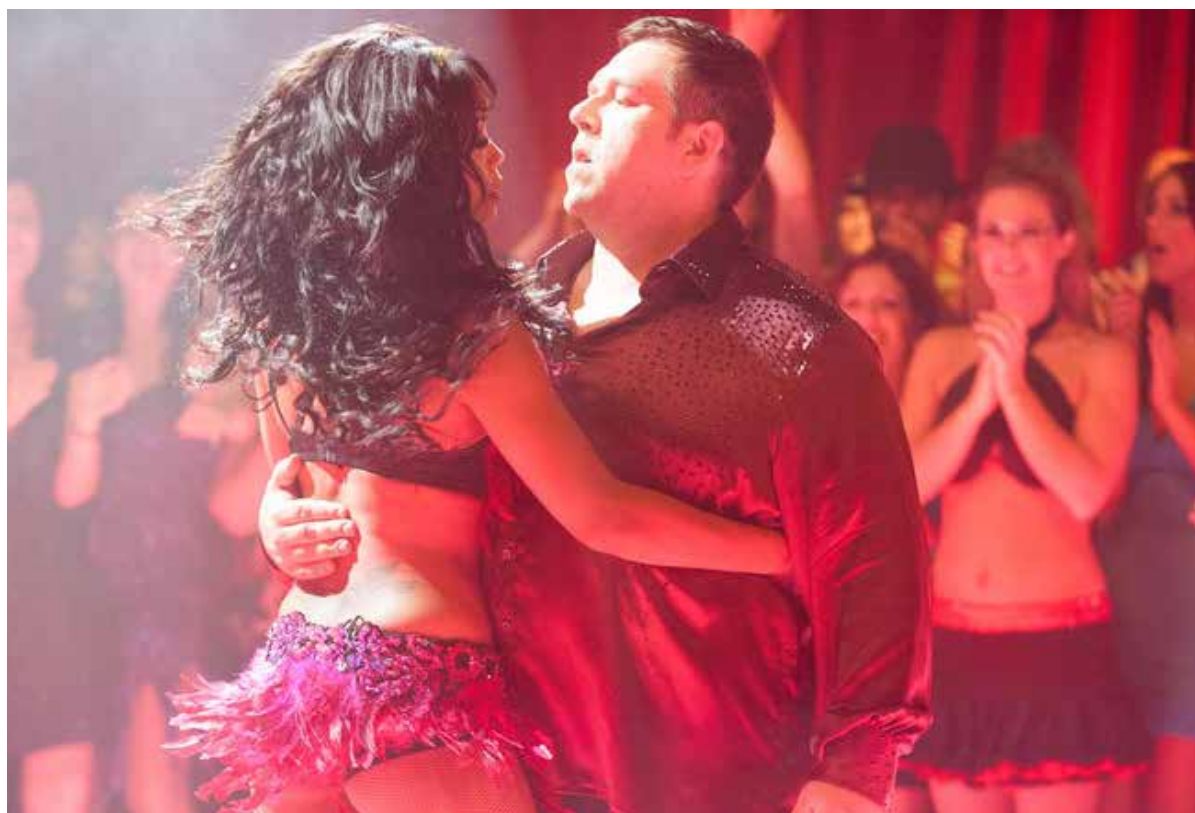


Getting an Academy Award nomination in each acting category (Best Leading Actor, Best Leading Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress) is an honour that does not come around very often, but David O. Russell has reeled in such award-worthy performances, a year after he managed the same with *Silver Linings Playbook*.

Based on the 1970s ABSCAM sting operation that took down several corrupt members of the Congress who were accepting bribes, *American Hustle* is a riotously funny, brilliantly paced, and a sassy, smart heist film with a killer sound track that gets everything right.

It's sold as a comedy, and really that's the main appeal, but behind every character there is something deeper and more profound to say, which is where the talented cast comes in to shine. Even Jeremy Renner, who isn't getting any individual recognition for his performance, is a triumph, along with all of his award-winning co-stars.

Getting hot in here



Jack Steadman

Treasured Writer

Cuban Fury

Director: James Griffiths
Writer: Jon Brown
Starring: Nick Frost, Chris O'Dowd, Rashida Jones, Ian McShane
Runtime: 98 minutes
Certification: 15



Nick Frost finally gets his first lead role in a film. That's pretty much the main point of *Cuban Fury*, and easily the strongest reason to either see it or hear of it. Hence why I said it first. No point in wasting words, really. Which I'm totally not. Honest. Maybe a little bit. Over-extended joke aside, seeing Frost finally take stage is definitely the best thing about *Cuban Fury*. It's got a strong central trio, all with backgrounds in some of the best comedies from either side of the Atlantic (*IT Crowd* for Chris O'Dowd, *Parks and Recreation* – quite possibly the greatest show about government not to feature Malcolm Tucker (which is a stupidly long way of saying 'best political satire outside of *The Thick of It*') – for Rashida Jones, and the *Cornetto Trilogy* for Frost).

Unfortunately, none of the three really feel like they're being played to their respective strengths. O'Dowd's new position as Hollywood's favourite

Irishman (*Thor* is a huge step-up from *The IT Crowd* whichever way you look at it) combined with (what can only be read as) a need to avoid type-casting leaves him playing an utter asshole, in sharp contrast to his previous self-absorbed but harmless selves, and it means some of *Cuban Fury*'s humour has an oddly nasty streak in his digs at Frost's adorable Bruce. Some of his quips are mildly amusing, but they're mostly just mean and (while it's obviously intended to make us dislike him) can't help but briefly alter the overriding sense of positivity into something... less positive. Jones, meanwhile, gets handed her mostly straight role from Parks, where she plays off against the ever-amazing Amy Poehler, except she... doesn't really get anyone to play off. She feels kind of wasted, to be honest. Just a pretty love interest who can dance.

Which does bring us rather neatly on to *Cuban Fury*'s strongest element besides the existence of Frost (who also feels wasted, for the record – he came up with the idea in a drunken email to a producer, and on paper it's great, but without Simon Pegg or the usual absurdly high quantities of genius that go into their scripts to work with he feels a little undercut by the weak script he's given here) – the dancing. It's great. Smartly shot to disguise the use of body doubles at various points (although there are moments where it's quite clearly not the various actors involved), it's the source of all the best moments in the film – the roof-top dance-off between Frost and O'Dowd is the film's highlight, by far, and the final competition scenes are a visual treat – but for a film built around the concept there's surprisingly little

dancing. Which is a bit disappointing, really. It'd have been quite nice to see something that wasn't just another bloody *Step Up* film. Which are great if you like dancing, but terrible if you like pretty much anything else that a film needs to be even bearable. Like acting. Or a story (unless you count 'DANCING' as a story in which case you are either a) an idiot b) overly obsessed with dancing c) someone who doesn't know what 'story' actually means or d) just trying to wind me up, in which case: fair play to you. Just don't do it again, because you're only making yourself look silly).

"A bit disappointing, really" essentially sums up *Cuban Fury*. The supporting cast are almost wasted – Olivia Coleman appears, disappears, then pops up again later without really getting a chance to make an impression, Rory Kinnear is just kind of there sometimes, and while Kayvan Novak is a great new discovery when you realise his character mostly consists of openly embracing a stereotype the jokes start to fall somewhat flat. Which, again, sort of sums up *Cuban Fury*. It's a film that means so well, and has such a great cast, that it can't help but make you smile, meaning it manages the dubious feat of somehow being funny without being funny. It feels very much like a missed opportunity, but one that's still probably worth a watch if you're looking for a harmless, smile-inducing rom-com. It's far politer than *That Awkward Moment*, and it's far from being as terrible as the majority of rom-coms (a genre with more than its fair share of utter trash), but it's no (*500 Days of Summer* or *Don Jon*). Which is a shame, really. It could have been so much more.

Best films of 2013

Katy Bettany

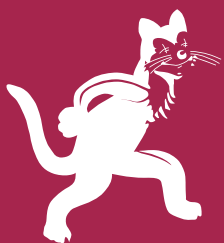
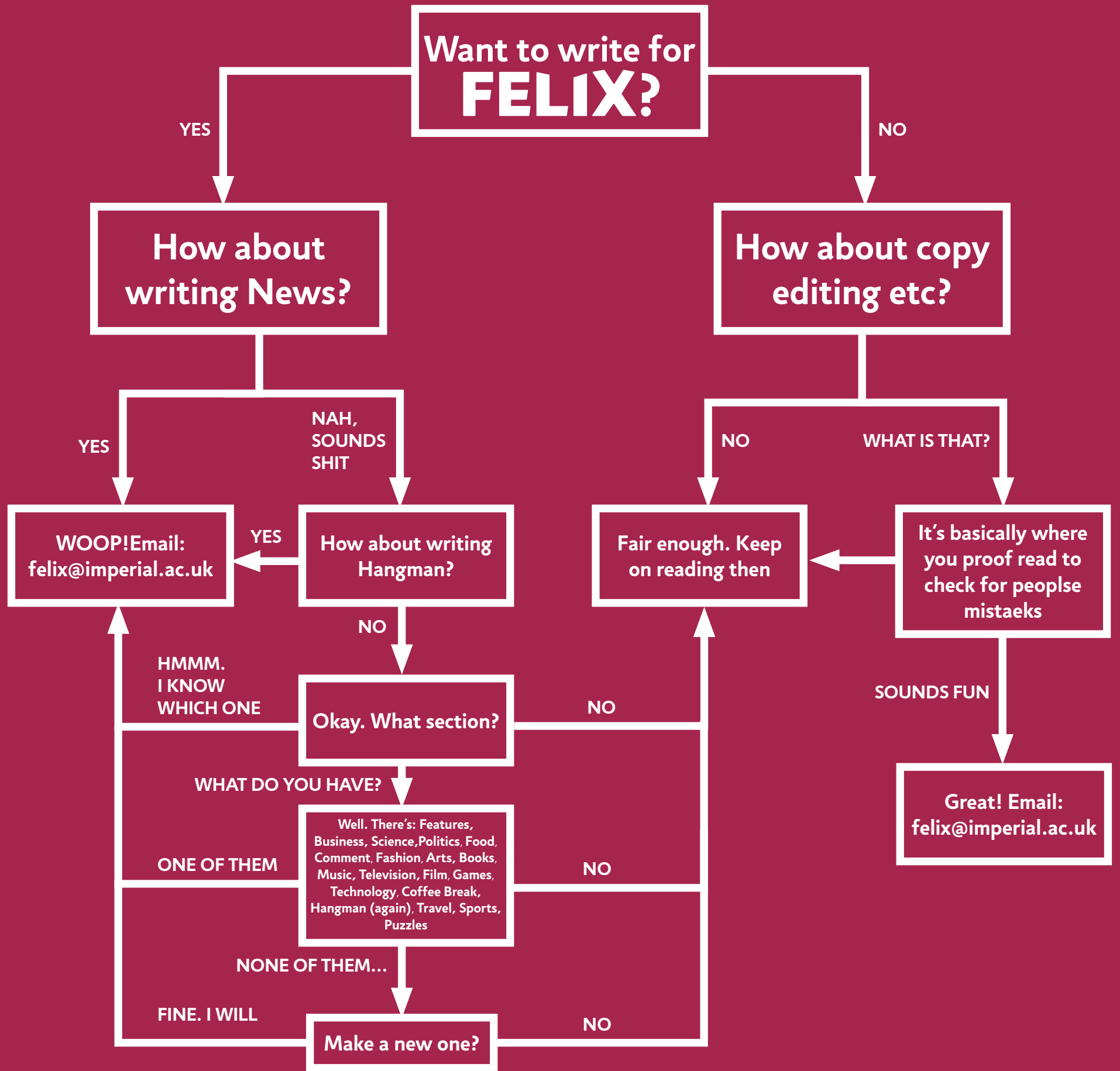
Leo-lover

10. *The Heat*
9. *The Great Gatsby*
8. *Zero Dark Thirty*
7. *Catching Fire*
6. *Despicable Me 2*
5. *Les Misérables*
4. *Cloud Atlas*
3. *Gravity*
2. *American Hustle*
1. *Django Unchained*



I don't usually enjoy westerns but *Django Unchained* was simply awesome. Director Quentin Tarantino (*Pulp Fiction*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Kill Bill*, *Inglourious Basterds*) has truly outdone himself getting someone like me to enjoy such a film. I usually go for the girly, often vom-inducing films, as evidenced by some of the more embarrassing entries on my list (*Les Mis*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Heat* etc) and yet *Django* is the one that stays with me after all this time (this was released way back in January 2013).

It's a 165-minute long epic of a freed slave on a mission to rescue his wife. Packed with excellent performances (from Jamie Foxx, Christoph Waltz and of course, my fav Leonardo DiCaprio), wonderfully written wordy script, and an unforgettable action sequence to wrap it all up, this was an easy decision.



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Best film of all time? 2014 BAFTA Winners

Peter Brook

Treasured Writer

Citizen Kane follows the story of a journalist trying to piece together the life of Charles Foster Kane and try to figure out what his final word, "Rosebud", meant. It has been critically acclaimed and has often been labelled the best film of all time by many.

If one has never seen the film before; it is difficult to view it without thinking "Am I enjoying this enough considering it's the best film of all time?!" Moments when the film lulls a little you begin to wonder whether you are just not getting it. These things are hard not to think about. On top of this there are so many tropes and lines of dialogue that have been parodied and pastiche'd in modern cinema it can be difficult to concentrate. Whether the musical number that has been parodied by *The Simpsons* or the famous ending which pops up just about damn everywhere.

I have to say despite these reservations I did very much enjoy the film, but probably laughed a few more times than Welles intended due to a weird anachronistic call-back humour from the parodies.

Though worry if I didn't enjoy would I ever say? Could it all be a giant case of the Emperor's new clothing? Am I

deceiving myself? Did the critic James Agate get it right in 1941 when he said: "I thought the photography quite good, but nothing to write to Moscow about, the acting middling, and the whole thing a little dull."

Are we watching this movie for the same reasons that people feel compelled to queue for a few hours to see Mona Lisa in the Louvre? Just because we've been told it's the best. They are both highlights in their art form, but do people enjoy them or just want to be able to say "Been there, done that?"

I think it is problematic to try and hold one film up as "The Best", as it does a disservice to many other films that might be enjoyed as much or have just as much merit in their era. It also acts as a distraction from the enjoyment of the film, though it is always difficult to recommend films without leading the person viewing to think about them in a certain way. Sometimes the best films are the ones which you knew nothing about before starting. My first memory of *The Shining* was channel-hopping and seeing a movie starting and thinking "that'll do". Only to totally blown away by it. Maybe there just needs to be more ways to access good film blindly.

It would be great if Netflix were to introduce a random classic movie button, it might help me finally help me get over this problem. (Can I patent that...?)



Outstanding Film: *12 Years a Slave*



Outstanding British Film: *Gravity*



Best Actor: Chiwetel Ejiofor (*12 Years a Slave*)



Best Actress: Cate Blanchett (*Blue Jasmine*)



Best Director: Alfonso Cuarón (*Gravity*)



Best Supporting Actor: Barkhad Abdi (*Captain Phillips*)



Best Supporting Actress: Jennifer Lawrence (*American Hustle*)

Best Documentary: *The Act of Killing*

Best Animated Film: *Frozen*

Best Sound: *Gravity*

Best Make Up/Hair: *American Hustle*

Best Original Music: *Gravity*

Best Costume Design: *The Great Gatsby*

Best Production Design: *The Great Gatsby*

Best Editing: *Rush*

Best Cinematography: *Gravity*

Best Original Screenplay: *American Hustle*

Best Adapted Screenplay: *Philomena*

EE Rising Star Award: Will Poulter

Best Special Effects: *Gravity*

Best Foreign Language Film: *The Great Beauty*

Academy Fellowship: Helen Mirren

Best British Short Film: *Room 8*

Best British Short Animated Film: *Sleeping with the Fishes*

Best Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer: Kieran Evans



Imperial Cinema

The best BLOCKbuster



The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug

It's the end of an era! We've come to the finish of our spring term line-up but before you sob into your library café coffees remember that the spring all-nighter is coming! With all things Oscar as our theme and a remarkably strong caliber of films to choose from, trust me this is not something you want to be missing...

The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug should need no introduction but in case you've been living under a rock since before the age of middle earth, I'm going to be giving you one anyway:

Bilbo Baggins is on a mad mission to help the company of dwarves reclaim the Lonely Mountain and its bountiful treasures from Smaug-an ancient and evil dragon. This results in them spending a lot of their time being chased by a variety of orcs who are not particularly fond of their plans. Meanwhile, leading on from the previous film, Bilbo has managed to acquire the mystical ring that is the source of all the problems to come and he begins to feel its corrupting influence.

The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug: 25th February (Tuesday) and 27th February (Thursday) at 19:00

Become a member for cheaper tickets for the rest of the year: www.imperialcinema.co.uk



Ellen Mathieson

Writer

The Lego Movie

Director: Phil Lord, Christopher Miller

Writer: Dan Hageman, Kevin Hageman, Phil Lord, Christopher Miller

Starring: (voices) Will Arnett, Elizabeth Banks, Will Ferrell, Will Forte, Dave Franco, Morgan Freeman, Jonah Hill, Liam Neeson, Chris Pratt, Cobie Smulders, Channing Tatum

Runtime: 100 minutes

Certification: U



Two of my favourite things in the entire world are Lego and films. It is probably for this reason that the idea of a Lego movie had me worried. Learning that Phil Lord and Christopher Miller - the creative geniuses behind *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* and *21 Jump Street* - were making it, went some way to reassure me, but going into the cinema I still had no idea what to expect. And what I got was so much better than anything I could have hoped for.

The film opens in a Lego volcano filled with Lego lava and Lego rocks (sensing a theme here?) where President Business (Will Ferrell) is stealing the Kragle from Vitruvius (Morgan Freeman). With this strange object, President Business has the ability to destroy the universe. But it's okay, because there is a totally-true-because-it-rhymes prophesy about the existence of the most important person

ever, the "Special One with face of yellow" who is destined to save the world.

Now we meet a construction worker called Emmet (Chris Pratt) who, like everyone else, spends his entire life following the instructions written by President Business. His life suddenly changes when he accidentally runs into the beautiful Wyldstyle (she's got a boyfriend though, and it's super serious) and discovers a mysterious brick known as the Piece of Resistance. With this in hand, Emmet must team up with an eclectic group of Master Builders including Princess Unikitty, Metalbeard, Benny the astronaut and Batman to save the day. But to do this they will have to infiltrate President Business' tower, a building with every kind of protection imaginable. Sharks. Lasers. Sharks with lasers. Will our team of heroes be able to stop the villain in time? I guess you'll have to watch to find out.

Not only is the story both entertaining and engaging, the animation style is utterly gorgeous. Everything is made out of Lego. And I mean everything. The buildings, the cars, the water, the food and of course the people. The directors also manage to bring together a broad range of characters from a ridiculous number of franchises and weave them into a cohesive whole. How many other films will get to watch that include conversations between Gandalf and Dumbledore, or C3PO and Batman? Somehow these bit parts manage to never feel forced or unnecessary, injecting humour into the script without bogging it down with too many people. For those of you who collect the Lego minifigures, be on the lookout for your favourites as many of them have cameos if not speaking roles.

Overall, I cannot begin to express how much I loved this film. It was silly and colourful and touching all at the same time. Even if cartoon films aren't usually the sort of thing you go for because you are much too grown up for 'kids' films, I implore you try this one. It isn't a kids film. It's a film for everyone, and everyone should see it. Why? To quote the theme song: "everything is awesome!"



TELEVISION

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Benefits Britain and the ethics of TV-making Grace Rahman asks whether a live debate was necessary

As a self-confessed fan of *Benefits Street*, I was confused at the break in the series two weeks back, which was followed by an announcement that Channel 4 was capitalising further on the few weeks of column inches the show had earned them by staging a debate on benefits.

It promised to feature the not very guilty looking programme makers, journalists with middle class axes to grind and politicians with pre-prepared sound bites of their own. It was being recorded a whole month after *Newsnight* had quizzed a doe-eyed producer, LBC had got resident 'White Dee' to participate in a call-in with an unprepared Nick Clegg, and

everyone else and their uncle had stopped talking about it. Presumably this was because the possibility of a second series has been quashed by the fact that the show's biggest characters now get "between 50 and 100 knocks on the door a day" and the guy trying to sell cups of detergent for 50p door to door only gets asked for photographs nowadays.

The show was preceded by a half an hour long *Benefits Street: The Last Word*, a lazy but vaguely interesting refresher showing some of the characters' best bits as well as a chance to see their new post-fame haircuts. Throughout this week, awkward adverts featuring James Turner Street residents invited us to share our thoughts using #BenefitsBritain,

reminding us that a debate was on the horizon. It began, quite uncomfortably, straight off the back of the last instalment of the docu-soap.

Richard Bacon looked excited; he had a post-watershed hour and a studio audience rife with opinion. He wasn't a Blue Peter presenter anymore, he was Matthew Wright, Jeremy Kyle and Paxman combined. He pre-emptively warned us of fruity language and rowdy debate. There were cross-armed, unimpressed looking James Turner Street residents in one corner, who seemed happy to be represented by White Dee (who went as just Dee this evening, as the other one hadn't made an appearance) sitting across the room from the very journalists who had condemned them. At this point, the show had promise.

Things began tempestuously with journalist Allison Pearson (under pressure from a hysterical Bacon) being forced to repeat the ridiculous implication of her article: that Dee just seemed too cheerful onscreen to have depression. This coupled with a mention of her horrendous 'Mick Philpott, a good reason to cut benefits' piece for *The Daily Telegraph* seemed all too much, and wily tweeters noticed that 45 minutes in she had disappeared from the front row. Maybe she had somewhere to be. You get the sense that Katy Hopkins wouldn't have been so shy and (literally) retiring.

To Pearson's credit, she had

questioned the usual lack of female panellists. On an initial glance, the left was better represented, with the Tories having to resort to their secret weapon, a rare state-educated MP: ex-fireman Mike Penning. The show really fell down with Bacon though, who took 45 minutes to warm up to the idea of controlling such a passionate panel. There was heckling from the back, incoherent rants from the self-made CEOs of *The Big Issue* and *Pimlico Plumbers* (whose mullet was more distracting than the F-bomb he dropped) and a lot of it made for quite uncomfortable viewing (in true middle class fashion I often had to mute the TV and rely on Zoe Williams' live blogging of the event for *The Guardian*).

But, unsurprisingly, the debate didn't focus on the most interesting point, and the one that anyone had any real chance of getting to the heart of in an hour: whether or not the production company had acted responsibly in its treatment and portrayal of residents of James Turner Street, and how aware they were of the furore the program would create. Understandably, to make a representative series they had to shoot for 18 months or so, but as *Benefits Street's* detractors and some appearing on the debate pointed out, a lot of positive footage seemed to have been left out. None of the recurring faces were in work, and between them had admitted to armed robbery,

benefit fraud and stealing from an employer. According to White Dee 10% of the street were employed, but perhaps their sound bites weren't as shocking, or their storylines less easy to edit into five episodes. These residents certainly weren't in the debate's audience.

I'm not going to offer my vague, oft-repeated opinions on the social security system in the UK, but I am writing this show off a limp finale to a divisive but thoroughly watchable series. The debate should have at least attempted to address the ethics behind production or been handled better by Bacon. A quote from Charlie Brooker's 'Weekly Wipe' was featured in the media reaction segment (I'm sure to his amusement), and was probably the most sensible thing said on the matter. Although the producers argue that they were portraying members of a community, often helping each other, they still chose to call it the provocative title of *Benefits Street*, with the connotations that conjured even prior to watching.

As the show winds down, Bacon asks what I too have been pondering: has any good come of this? One woman sensibly claims that it's unveiled levels of poverty in this country which some viewers may have been unaware of, but then a second starts arguing against democracy. Yikes. *8 out of 10 Cats* can't come quickly enough.



CHANNEL 4

Star Cops: A sci-fi golden oldie

Maciej Matuszewski
Contributor

First let me say – no, it's not as bad as its name suggests. In fact it's nothing like its name suggest. The show itself jokes about how bad a name it is in its very first episode. *Star Cops* is not some cheap police action-drama carelessly transplanted into a space setting. Instead, it is a very intelligent, brilliantly written piece of television, and one of the most unique examples of the SF genre that has ever graced our screens.

The action takes place in the near future of 2027, when space travel has become almost commonplace and humanity has constructed several orbital space stations, as well as permanent bases on the Moon and Mars. However, the spread of humanity through the solar system has brought with it the spread of crime, necessitating the formation of the International Space Police Force

(ISPF). *Star Cops* follows the inaugural commander of this organisation, Nathan Spring, and his staff as they deal with the problems of building the ISPF from an underfunded semi-professional group into a credible police force.

The real strength of the show is its writing. Series creator Chris Boucher had a great deal of experience of working on both science fiction and crime dramas, including the popular *Blake's 7* and *Bergerac*, and both his experience and innate skill show through in every episode. The show's plots are all interesting and well-thought out, cleverly exploring both the new forms that crime might take in outer space as well as the international tensions that might arise from different nations competing in space. The political intrigue is one of the highlights of the show – with Spring having to play diplomat as much as detective and pretty much every superpower being shown as being brutally ruthless in what it is prepared to do to achieve its goals. *Star*

Cops is special in being one of the few television shows out there to even flirt with the idea of hard science fiction – trying to keep the science as plausible as possible and carefully considering the potential consequences of technological advancement.

The show's characters are also very well realised. No one is presented in terms of absolutes – everyone has a rich and complex personality and most have rigorously developed back-stories – in short, they seem like real people. This is greatly helped by the well-written, intelligent dialogue and some very good performances, particularly from David Calder, portraying Nathan Spring. Spring in particular is a very interesting character – intelligent yet often brusque and socially awkward – a temperament explained by his tragic back-story. Much of the show focuses on his often turbulent relationship with his staff, not helped by their many personal and professional shortcomings, and with him trying to get over his past.

The show was produced in the late



BBC

1980s and, while the special effects do look somewhat dated, they retain much of their effectiveness. It is immediately visible that a lot of time and effort was put in the creative team to make the show look as good as possible. The model work is both imaginative and realistic and special mention must be given to the ambitious weightlessness special effects – achieved through wire work and trick camera angles. This is especially impressive given that even most modern science fiction

shows tend not to bother with this, preferring instead the cheap cop out of 'artificial gravity'.

Star Cops was an excellent show and far ahead of its time. Always enjoyable, and often powerful, viewing – it was a crime that it was cancelled after only nine episodes. While DVDs of the show are rather difficult to find, many episodes are available to view online and the full box set is available from the Union's Sci-Fi library. I strongly recommend that you check it out.

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Future of Social Media

Keeping us glued to our screens, and how to monetize it

Osama Awara
Technology Editor

When you hear the term social media, what comes to mind? Facebook? Twitter? Or perhaps even that embarrassing video you were tagged in by your friends last night. Of the modern age of technology, social media has perhaps had the most profound effect on our lives, reaching out with its addictive grip to almost everyone with a smart device. Social media sure has come a long way, from the forums and chat rooms of the 90s where people used to retreat to from their daily lives, hiding under their



avatars and fantasy names, to the less private Facebook and Twitter where people you may have met but barely spoken to, can know more of your life than you think. People used to believe that with the invention of the mobile phone, human communication was at its finest, how wrong they were,

but who's to say that even now we are at our peak in terms of keeping in touch with each other? Social media still has a long road ahead, with its future promising, but there is still a mostly unseen dark side of it that has been seen creeping into society, from privacy breaches to cyber-bullying. We can expect to see a lot more changes in social media, from new platforms to more regulations on internet communication or maybe even cross platform communication.

Advertising is a big part of social media, with most platforms making their profits from it. Big brands and companies have had to adapt to a new 'phenomena' of advertising, no longer being able to solely rely on the old fashioned 'in your face' TV advertising. Companies have to be tactful, they need to play the game right and come up with unexpected, imaginative ways to get the user's attention, or face having their ads swatted away into the abyss of news feeds and selfies. One example of such innovation is that of Frijj's, a milkshake brand, where they created a game for one of its products, requiring players to watch funny YouTube videos without laughing. Using facial recognition technology, the game was able to recognise when the player laughed and give them a record of how long they lasted and allow them to share their times and challenge friends on Twitter or Facebook. This kind of outlandish advertising paid off for Frijj, attracting around 140,000 people in the first few weeks, illustrating the power of advertising through a social medium. The future of social media will certainly in part be shaped by advertising, as many platforms such as Facebook will adapt in the best way to deliver adverts to its users without affecting their experience.

Of course nothing in this world is perfect and a thing such as social media can never be flawless, despite having the potential to do so much good. On the surface, the downfalls of social

websites include procrastination, with many people now finding themselves spending hours in front of their screens, busying themselves with their virtual social life, carefully choosing the pictures to upload to their profile, or working their brain hard to come up with a witty post. The more sinister aspects of social media include cyber bullying. So many times now we are hearing stories on the news of young kids being driven to suicide due to the uncontrollable nature of cyber-bullying. Many vulnerable young children, who make profiles on social platforms, copying their friends and class mates, are unaware of what may befall them. Those who already receive bullying at school, come back home to face a new front of abuse and can no longer even seek refuge in their own homes. We can expect to see a lot more regulation when it comes to social media.

Take Facebook for example, there is already an option to report someone who has been posting inappropriate content or abuse towards someone, but this may not be enough to tackle what seems to be an epidemic. Many anonymous apps such as 'secret' are starting to make it big; this time providing users with anonymity. Social networks such as 'secret' may seem innocent at first allowing a teenager to confess their heartaches to the world, but this may be turned into a tool to slander or abuse someone under a cover.

An interesting proposal for the future of social media could be cross platform communication. Say someone has accounts on multiple mediums from Twitter and MySpace to Google+ and YouTube, but tends to only use one of them a lot more than others or wants to communicate with someone else on a different platform but does not want to create a new account for it. A new frontier for the development of social media could be the implementation of an effective and secure standard for communication

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The future of social media will certainly in part, be shaped by advertising as many platforms such as Facebook will adapt in the best way to deliver adverts to its users without affecting their experience.
”



between social networks. This would provide for a truly innovative way to reach out to other people and internet communities you otherwise would not be able to. It would however, alter the risk landscape, and if one platform is hacked or maliciously attacked, the consequences of this could potentially ripple to other platforms and have devastating effects.

The News Bubble

General news from around the tech world, so you can keep up to date with the newest, weirdest and most futuristic things around

Twitch plays Pokémon

If you have been on the Internet anytime in the last week, you will have been bombarded by strange headlines and blogs including the words, twitch, Pokémon and Helix among many others. Well what all these things are raving about is: Twitch plays Pokémon. Twitch is a site that allows for live streaming, most notably for Dota 2 or League of Legends competitions. However some ingenious individual, who remains anonymous, has created a great social experiment by allowing the watchers of the channel to control the character in the Pokémon game. They do this by typing the button into the chat, which is then relayed to the game.

At the time of writing Red, the protagonist of the game, was stuck at route 12. Furthermore he has released several Pokémon including his starter, Charmeleon. Oh and also, somehow this experiment has spawned the cult of the Helix, which seems to worship the Helix Fossil....

All in all, after 6 days of playing the community has not really achieved much, getting 4 badges, catching 12 Pokémon and generally just walking around in circles.

What this playthrough has shown is that humanity does not really work well as a whole. Trolls and idiots alike seem to congregate and try to ruin the game for others. On a more subtle note, does this show that democracy is a system that is fundamentally flawed, and as a result anarchy must rule? Tune in next week for more interesting philosophical questions!

Maximilian Eggl
Yong Wen Chua
Osama Awara

Technology Editors



DayZ Stories



Maximilian Egg
Games Editor

The DayZ standalone has been released, and given the amazing stories that occur in that game, I decided to make a kind of series out of it! So here it goes:

Episode 2.2: Anna's Friend

After having met that strange man I decided to stay low for next few hours. However before I could even say "stay low" I heard yet another voice shouting something.

"Hey man, I'm heading over to cherno. I don't have any food or anything can you help me out?" a very Scottish accent said.

From my obviously useless cover I eyed this guy up. He sounded sane enough, and didn't look that crazy either. Maybe my I had finally found a friend! Warily I stepped out.

"Sure I have some food, what do you have to offer me for it?"

"Well, I can always offer you your life."

He said it so incredibly calmly and eerily that it sent chills down my spine. Before he could react, I ran at him and hit him in the head with my axe. He immediately dropped. I whacked him in the head again, just to make sure he was really dead. I had now killed someone. I turned and left, not even looting the mangled corpse that lay bleeding behind me. However on second I decided I would hide and see if anything interesting happened. I found myself a better bush than last time, and waited it out. Twenty minutes later, another man ran towards the body. He looked at the corpse, then turned to the sky.

"I will find you, you bitch!!!", he screamed.

Very worried he had seen me I crouched down low. Soon however it became apparent that he had just vented his anger. As I saw him looking for me from my hiding spot, I smiled and thought: Can't wait till you do.

Gaming in the Future

What are things that may affect future gamers?

Maximilian Egg
Games Editor

Gaming is something I hold very dearly. I will defend my love with tooth and nail. Furthermore I like the status quo. I like the way I buy, play and interact with games, and in fact I could say that I am actually missing the past a bit. However I can see that gaming is changing, and maybe not always for the best. So here I list the 4 main things that will influence gaming in the foreseeable future:

DLC

There are the good type of DLCs and the bad type of DLCs. I shall focus on the bad type: the one that forces you to pay if you want to have a complete game. The picture below says it all. Back in the day, when I bought my first Rome total war (yes again with that game), I remember that the expansion packs actually added entirely new content. No with the second Rome, the DLC just unlock factions that are already available in the game. This trend of needing to monetize a game by forcing users to pay at several different instances, just to extend the lifetime of a game, is infuriating. I mean, I am not going to buy a car and then need to pay an extra £100 to be able to use the radio. This type of business model is found nowhere else in the world, and justifiably so. However with the profit margins of Game makers shrinking and shrinking, they will persist with this model. So expect more and more DLC heavy/episodic type games.

ORIGINAL GAME



1999

EXPANSION PACK



30\$



30\$

ORIGINAL GAME



2005

EXPANSION PACK



40\$

ORIGINAL GAME



NOW

DLC 15\$

DLC 15\$

DLC 15\$

DLC 15\$

Mobiles

No, this is not about mobile gaming. That is a topic that deserves gaming article all for its own. Here we are going to look at the implications of what it means for hard-core gaming if you have the addition of a second screen. The case study I will present the case of Battlefield 4 (Yes, that game again as well). The addition of a tablet in the game process as a general type character is very interesting and adds an entire dimension to the gameplay. However very few other games have implemented such a feature. Why not? It is quite enjoyable to be able to just play with your mates without having to actually to always interact directly. This method of introducing different ways of playing the same game not only extends the lifetime of the game itself as well as encouraging new players to try it out. Furthermore as mobile computing becomes more and more powerful, it seems that the logical conclusion will be major games will migrate to solely occupy this medium. However is it really? The way we interact with games e.g. with keyboard/mouse or controller. Even though you are distinct from the game, the level of immersion is still limited. Is this possible if you are going to be touching the screen all the time? Every time you bring that finger between yourself and the game, you are reminded that you aren't in the game. For now, and the foreseeable future I think that laptops/desktops and consoles will dominate the hard-core gaming market.



In-game purchases

This is the one item on this list that makes me feel quite a bit trepidation about what the future of gaming may become. I hate hate hate in game purchases. They just seem a cheap gimmick for me where the game creator is trying to rip us off, especially if I paid a significant amount of money for said game. I mean, I understand the concept: some people have time but no money and some people have money and time. Both are currencies that can be traded for in items. However when the items you need to progress are only available through monetary means this is when I get annoyed. Sadly this method of making money seems to be working, and won't disappear. I really just hope that game makers still keep in mind who really plays their games, cues to get copies and raves to others about it.

Virtual Reality

This has been the dream of every gamer since birth. How epic would it be to actually run through a game, see what your character sees through their eyes, and just be so immersed in your game that you could swear it was reality. The imminent release of the Oculus Rift has turned those dreams into something of a hope that viable virtual reality will happen in our generation. This Kickstarter funded device, which is pretty much a 'mask' over your face, which projects two slightly different images for each eye. This creates the illusion that you are actually viewing the world from the perspective of the game. So the visual aspect is now sorted. What is with movement and touch? Well Kickstarter comes to the rescue again! The Virtuix Omni, which is pretty much a glorified treadmill. However it is also so much more than that. It records your movement, so when you step in reality, your in-game character will copy that. These two things combined seem to signal the advent of virtual reality. More than anything, this is what gamers are demanding from the future. Also, then exercising will be made so much interesting and exciting. I mean taking a run around Skyrim, exploring the caves and mountains of this fantasy world beat London, surrounded by cars and grey rain, every single day of the year. The two big hurdles are, firstly how much will the big gaming companies invest in this untested and potentially very expensive technology. Without the support of the game studios, no one will ever want any virtual reality gadget if they can't play anything on it. Secondly, how much will these devices cost the average gamer? If they are priced out of ever owning one, then they will be doomed to fail.



Editor: Carol Ann Cheah,
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FOOD

Keep Calm And Eat Chips

Felix Food tells you all about the crispy potatoes pieces

Oh chips, glorious chips. The humble deep fried potato strips have been one of the most accessible and consumed foods across the world. It also provides a great subject for banter when stealing your friends' chips becomes the top priority in the pub. As we near the end of the National Chip Week, it is perhaps time to take a deeper look into the world of chips.

Where did it come from?

To really understand the history of chips, we need to look into the "mother hen" – potatoes. It is believed that potatoes originated in the Andes of South America around 8000 years ago. The Spanish conquistadors brought the vegetable back to Europe in 1536 and it was first grown in London in 1597.

The idea of deep frying chips was from France or Belgium. One of the stories is that it was invented by street vendors on the Pont Neuf bridge in Paris in 1789, just before the French revolution. The chips became a fundamental part of the American fast food thanks to Thomas Jefferson, who served them in the White House during his time in office between 1801 and 1809, making it trendy at the time.

In Britain, the first chips were fried in around 1860 in Oldham, which is also where the first Fish and Chip shop opened for business. British chips are cut much thicker and, since the surface to volume ratio is lower, they have a lower fat content. So next time when

you feel like something greasy, go for chunky chips; they're less bad for you!

Are they really potatoes?

Well, supposedly, yes. Traditionally (and still in practice by some restaurants) chips are fried twice, once to cook the potatoes and again to give it the crisp texture and golden colour. Quite often most of us will find frying a bit too much of a hassle, so that's where frozen chips come in.

Sold in most supermarkets nowadays, it is estimated that 80% of households in the UK buy frozen chips as a substitute to making them from scratch. These oven chips are sliced, dried and par-fried so that they are crisp on the outside but remain raw on the inside. This means the cooking process is a lot shorter and more convenient for a weeknight meal. Most fast food outlets and some pubs and takeaways have seen this as a way to increase efficiency between order and plate and to minimise cost – for example, McDonald's replaced fresh cut potatoes with frozen fries in 1967; others followed suit not soon after that.

Unlike "powdered mashed potatoes", there is no evidence so far that there are chips on the market that are made from reformed potato starch, or other ingredients that are totally unrelated, perhaps because it has to stay in the chip shape and therefore reducing the incentive for doing so. However, there are reports that Burger King started spraying a coat of starch to keep the chips hot and crispy for longer.

Homemade healthier chips

So one evening, we felt a crave of burgers and chips, so we made some! If you feel like doing something simple this weekend and don't feel like buying pre-made "stuff" off the shelf, here is a quick recipe to cook.

Ingredients (for 1-2):

- 1 small onion
- 250g beef mince
- 1 egg
- 4 potatoes (depends how big your appetite is!)

For the burger, dice the onion and mix it with the beef and egg. Then divide the mixture into two. With slightly wet hands, roll the mixtures into balls sized around a tennis ball. Set in the palm of your hand and gently squeeze down to flatten into patties around 3cm thick. Make sure both burgers are the same thickness so they cook evenly. Pan fry for around 5 minutes on both sides – depends how well done you like it.

As for chips, chop the potatoes into chip shape and boil for 3-5 minutes. It doesn't really matter what potatoes you use, but desiree potatoes are recommended since they have a firmer and creamier texture – in this case, we just got a baking potato from the local supermarket. Drain them and shake them out onto a roasting pan, drizzle with oil and season well. We added a bit of curry powder to spice things up a bit, you can add any herbs and spices if you wish! Put it in the oven at 200



MICHAEL YAT KIT CHUNG

degrees for about half an hour, or until golden brown and crisp. Don't forget to turn them at least twice to make sure they are crispy all the way round!

Safety First!

If you do decide to fry chips this weekend, please remember never fill the pan over a third full with oil or fat, and never be tempted to cook with a chip pan after consuming alcohol.

Also, don't leave the pan alone with the heat on, and be sure to cool down the pan if the oil starts smoking.

If it does catch on fire, don't panic, don't take risks and don't move the pan. Never throw water or use a fire extinguisher on a hot fat fire and, only if it is safe to do so, turn off the heat. Leave the kitchen, close the door behind you, tell everyone else in the home to get out. Don't go back inside for any reason and call 999.

In other news... Bananas and Food Porn



DR SCOTT NEWNEY

Will it blend was probably one of the most popular channels on YouTube – but will it post? Well someone found out by posting a banana to his friend.

Gavine Morton, a tap dance teacher, decided to play the joke "just to make people that saw the banana smile". He even wrote "Do not bend" on the banana to ensure

the fruit was delivered in one piece.

Since the correct postage was paid, Royal Mail did deliver the banana across Scotland. The banana was slightly too big for the letter box so luckily someone was at the house and no awkward red slip was left. The banana did survive its 81-mile journey, just a little bruised but still edible!



GETTY IMAGES

Are you a keen Instagrammer who takes photos of your dish whenever you eat out? Well if you do that in a posh French restaurant, the head chef might storm out of the kitchen shouting angrily.

Gilles Goujon and Alexandre Gauthier, both respected chefs with Michelin stars, argue that

it is poor etiquette to do so and posting photos online "takes away the surprise and a bit of intellectual properties". Alexandre even added a "no camera" logo on his menu.

But not all chefs have the same view, some see this as an opportunity for free publicity, while others provide food photography classes with the meal.

Cooked for your flatmates this weekend?

Tasted some amazing food?

**Tweet or Instagram:
#FelixFood**

CLUBS & SOCS

Editor: **Nida Mahmud**
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Discover Islam Week!

Free dinner? Free cake? Islam? If you found yourself saying yes to one or more of the aforementioned, then carry on reading!

Jawaad Farooq

Do you ever wonder why we are here? Does it make sense that everything around us has a purposeful order to it and we are the anomalies? Will our lives ever matter in the grand scheme of things, or are we just material beings, that can feel pleasure because of chemicals in the brain? 'Who' is it that actually feels?

If these questions resonate with you, then it will be worth finding out the answers Islam gives. Discover Islam week will be taking place from the 24th-28th February. This week is your chance to find out about the fundamental questions pertaining to our existence, clear up any misconceptions, and indulge in lots of exotic foods for free.

Throughout the week there will be exhibitions in Sherfield and SAF on Islam and approachable volunteers at hand to discuss and clarify any

questions you have. Speakers from all around the world will be travelling to Imperial to give exciting talks, which will undoubtedly provide a platform for a myriad of intellectual discussions. The talks will kick off on Tuesday 29th with 'The Pursuit of Happiness' and on Thursday 27th the talk will discuss 'Is Life Just a Game?'. The week will conclude on the Friday with an open Q&A 'Discover over Dinner' session, there will be two renowned guest speakers and of course, a free dinner with a mix of Indian and Arab cuisine! And it gets better – you can share your opinions and discuss these topics in length with a number of friendly volunteers.

"And we did not create the heavens and the earth and that between them in play." Quran {44:38}

Islam is simple. It is a religion with over 1.6 billion followers (yes a staggering 25% of the population is Muslim) and 5000 Brits convert to Islam every year. We are here for a purpose and life is a journey where you fulfil that purpose. Our soul needs

nourishment just the way our body does. Yet we spend our lives perfecting this material body, chasing material possessions, and not recognising the spiritual side to our beings. Perfection is not just inward, but outward in our actions and deeds. Islam asks us to dedicate our lives to the service of humanity, which in itself is an act of worship. Islam is a philosophy and religion and offers moral, economic, social and judicial systems for the betterment of the human condition. And Muhammad was not just a Prophet, but was revolutionary, a statesman, a negotiator, a military tactician, a spiritual guide, a husband, a father, lover and most importantly a human like you and me. Islam is a holistic way of life, not just a superficial doctrine.

Regardless of your perceptions, the only way to truly know for sure is to find out. We most humbly invite you to take part in Discover Islam Week; most assuredly, it will be a life changing opportunity not to be missed!

6 EVENTS ACROSS 7 DAYS

100'S OF DOUGHNUTS

JUMP 200FT

BUBBLE FOOTBALL

WEEK Rag 2014

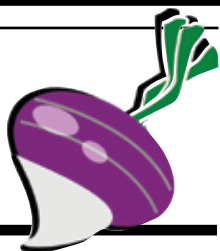
HANGMAN

hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk



the turnip

Hangman's Finest College News Source



Tony Blair Actually Really Nice Guy

Loves To Give Friends Caring Advice

Following the news this week that Tony Blair sent a kind email of advice to Rebekah Brooks mere six days before she was arrested, this paper must conclude that he's just a really nice guy.



Blair giving out more friendly and compassionate advice to his faithful friend, Rebekah Brooks. Credit: PA

Telling his friend that "it will pass" and to "tough up" the former Prime Minister took time in his busy schedule back in 2011 to dispense some helpful and caring advice.

week have softened many people's objections to the man who took us into Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003.

"Definitely sleeping pills" the kindly former leader of the country added as advice to his both his long-term friends before their subsequent - and ongoing - stressful ordeals.

"I mean this just goes to show that, at heart, he's just a really nice, God-fearing man" said one passer-by.

Whilst many mistrusted and did not believe the ex-Prime Minister to be a nice guy by the time he left office in 2007, the stunning revelations this

The current Prime Minister, David Cameron added "I used to think he was a bit of a dick, but I know I think he's just a nice guy trying to make his way in the world"

ELECTIONS ACTUALLY PRETTY SMALL FOR 2014



You In Line To Be Next Fulham Manager

Club Appoints 3rd Manager of The Season



Magath on the way out? Credit: Getty

The appointment this week for Fulham FC's 3rd manager of the season, Felix Magath, has resulted in rumours confirmed by our sources that you may well be in line for the manager job before the end of the season.

Whilst Magath is expected to be in charge until the end of the season, Hangman's contacts within the club have confirmed that the German is likely to be out of the door by the end of the season at which point you will be approached for the job of guiding the side out of the Championship. You will, however, be forced to take Joe Kinnear as your assistant.



ARIES

This week you spend your entire time watching Twitch Plays Pokémon. As you try to explain the Helix Fossil to the hot girl at the bar you realise that you might need to rethink your priorities. Oh well, at least a pint is in easy reach.



TAURUS

This week you realise that horoscopes might be true when you are gored by a bull. You spend the week in hospital cursing your parents for not having more sex in June so it could have at least been a fish attacking you instead.



GEMINI

This week the Felix editor asks you to write the horoscopes. You realise that you are not amusing enough to actually do it properly, and hope that no-one notices the decline in quality as you run out of ideas.



CANCER

This week you drunkenly run for every position in the Big Elections. You'll probably fail your exams as you spend the entire revision period campaigning, but that doesn't matter if you're a Sabb, right?



LEO

This week you have your recurring dream of a wardrobe with the key in falling on you again. When you wake up it turns out you just fell asleep during sex and your boyfriend has just put a bit of weight on.



VIRGO

This week your friend sets you up on a blind date. It turns out that she has green, scaly skin, breathes fire and doesn't drink. But at least she's not a Geologist, right?



LIBRA

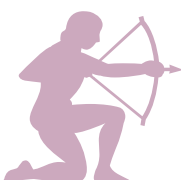
This week you realise that you have so little chance of getting laid that you decided to post a lonely hearts in Catnip. Unfortunately everyone thinks that they are all made up and you get no response. You realise that there is no way you can go on, and so drown your sorrows in Metric instead.



SCORPIO

This week you decide to order food at 0300 from your room in Beit. The delivery driver arrives at 0400 but can't find Beit, Imperial, Exhibition Road or Hyde Park. You resign yourself to walking down to the station to collect your cold Kebab, glaring at the solitary motorists driving by.

This is depressing enough, so you win the lottery. One can dream.



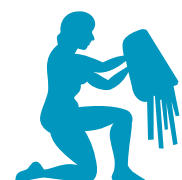
SAGITTARIUS

This week the latest job you applied for gets back to you. It isn't good. The idea of doing a Masters at Imperial is much too soul depressing. Going to UCL isn't too much of a betrayal, right?



CAPRICORN

This week after having filled in the Sex Survey you are inspired to have sex on Queen's Lawn. Unfortunately a security guard catches you mid act and you have to run to Gloucester Road with your pants clutched to your crotch. At least the people on the tube still avoid your eye.



AQUARIUS

This week you are hungry enough to order cheesy fries in 568. When the cold congealed mess arrives you swear off union food for good. Or at least until this time next week.



PISCES

This week you procrastinate doing your lab report by switching on the Sochi Olympics. Six hours of curling later, you've lost your voice from shouting your expert advice at the screen but are no closer to finishing the work.

Ask Annie, your friendly Agony Aunt

Agony Aunt Annie Whiteley is the woman who fought for women's cloakroom facilities at Imperial, and thus is qualified to solve all your problems.



Help! I'm in the second year of my PhD, and I'm at a point where I really hate waking up in the morning because I know I have to come into college and work on it. I never get any productive work done, and I'm depressed all the time outside college. I hate my PhD, but I don't want to quit this far in. What can I do?

Despondent in Dagenham

This is a really common problem for second year PhD students. During such a long project, it's really easy to lose track of why you're doing it. It's best to take time to reassess your reasons for doing a PhD, and why you chose that project in the first place. Spend time with your friends, take a break from the monotony, and hopefully after a while you'll be refreshed and ready to get back into it. If you're really struggling after taking some time out, talk to your supervisor about it; they might be able to make suggestions on how to change the structure of your project to help you back into it.

Help! My friends used to be really sociable and fun, but now we've hit third year, no-one ever wants to go out anymore. I understand that we've got a lot of work to do, but I need to take a break and do something fun to de-stress a little bit! How can I convince them to break the cycle of spending every night at home?

Bored in Brockley

I don't understand why you need your friends to come out with you. Let your buddies stew in their lab report and head down to the union bar. Chances are you are likely to bump into someone you know, or at least find a group drunk enough to accept you into their ranks. So stop trying to change other people and expecting your friends to hang out with you. Though of course, once they see you going out, they might want to join in the fun and come with you anyway!

Help, I'm dating an American girl and I'm worried about her reaction when she sees my uncircumcised penis. I'm too shy to mention it to her, but I don't want her to be surprised when she discovers it. Should I mention it to her in advance?

Uncut in Uxbridge

If she wants your D, she's not gonna care about its shape or form. If you're really worried about it, try and bring it up humorously in advance, so she's not shocked. Americans often have a belief that it's far less clean to be uncircumcised, but if you explain to her and reassure her that either way can be just as hygienic, that should alleviate any nerves that she has. Plus you should always remember, pigs in blankets is the best way to eat meat, ever.

Help! I've been seeing someone for a month or so, and we text a lot and spend a lot of time together, sleeping together a couple of nights a week. Whenever I try to talk to her about our relationship, she always changes the subject. I know that she's really into me, how can I convince her to put a label on it?

Undefined in Upminster

While at first it might seem like if you just wait, your status will become apparent, if it's got to the point where it's bothering you, you need to talk to her. She's probably avoiding it because she's worried that it might be awkward, or even that she might be rejected. Unfortunately, you just have to be really blunt, and just bring it up. If you're as into each other as you think you are, hopefully it won't be a very long conversation!

Help! My friend and I slept together (as a one-off), and we didn't use a condom because I'm on the pill. At the time I wasn't worried, because he's never seemed like the type to sleep around. However, since then, I've heard that he's been sleeping around, and now I'm worried that I might have caught something. Should I be worried?

Risky in Ruislip

It's always best to get checked after you have unprotected sex with someone, because you can never tell from a person what they might be carrying. If this person had unprotected (from STIs) sex with you in this context, you can reasonably assume that they will have had unprotected sex with others. This only increases the risk to you, so it's really important that you make sure that you get tested before you have unprotected sex with any further partners.

Annie's advice that Imperial sorely needs

Why you shouldn't get back with your ex (usually)

1. You broke up for a reason

At some point, you broke up. At that point, whether it was in the heat of the moment, or a slow, considered decision, you realised that you would be better off apart. Now you've been broken up for a while, you're lonely and you miss them, and you want to get back together. This doesn't remove the validity of the decision, and being broken up for a while won't fix the problems that you were having before. You decided that these problems were more than you could bear, you'll only be making yourself miserable if you go back on that decision now.

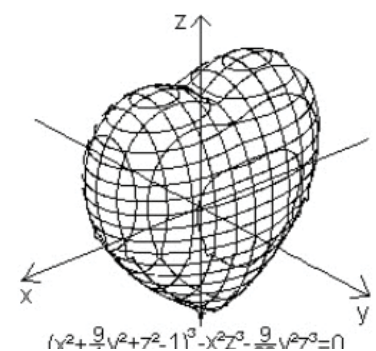
2. Do you want to be that person?

If you get back together, everyone will assume that you've begged and grovelled until your ex would take you back (regardless of who broke up with whom, or what happened). This is degrading and humiliating, and really not something that you want. You might think that you're willing to deal with that now, but when you look back, you'll regret it.

3. Why not try someone else?

There are seven billion people in the world, why are you settling for just one, and one that at some point you decided wasn't good enough? Romantically speaking, if they've broken your heart, they're not The One, and you should move on until you find them. Or if you're more scientific, statistically speaking, there's bound to be someone better, who's not shit. So don't do it, yeah?

What important advice should Annie dish out next week? Email any ideas to the address below!



Send Annie your problems and suggestions at catnip.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Annie's Lonely Hearts

Feeling lonely? We all know that it's hard to meet people at Imperial, so Aunt Annie wants to make it a bit easier for you. If you're looking for a special someone, missed a connection, or want to let someone know how you feel, send a message to catnip.felix@imperial.ac.uk and maybe you'll find a match here.

Responses to the lonely

"Passably tall, ginger technician might be willing to dye his hair blonde for last week's unsatisfied female. Unsure of how to 'ride' a woman, but presume this is similar to bikes? Already spends hours alone in the West Basement and ecstatic to find someone who shares passion for absolute solitude."

"To the V, I also really want to see the Lego movie but lack company, I will pay for popcorn.

(Name supplied)"

Electic, kooky individual with a unique sense of style WLTM love-starved angel/demon with a fondness for union food, who regularly frequents the union gift shop. Hipsters need not apply.

Romantic seeks chess enthusiast for daytime discussions on games and all things technical. A passion for football and a certain landlocked country is beneficial. I could show you how to (check)mate.

Atractive female seeks a certain average height Mechanical Engineering final year with a penchant for grey coats. I've seen your videos, and I'd like to see more. Let me give you a Metric Moment ;)

See something you like? Send us an email and we'll pass it on. Let Annie help you get lucky in love.

**Want to write for Felix on Varsity day? Contact us now!**

Premier League Predictions

James White
Football Columnist**Chelsea vs. Everton**
(BT Sport 1, Saturday 12:45pm)

Everton remain in the hunt for Champions League football but a few lacklustre performances of late have jeopardised their chances. Roberto Martinez's men have had longer to prepare but without Romelu Lukaku, they lack that all-important cutting edge. With recent draws against West Brom and West Ham, Jose Mourinho has already spurned two chances to open up a gap at the top of the table, and he will allow no room for complacency here.

2-1

Crystal Palace vs. Man United
(Sky Sports 1, Saturday 5:30pm)

In some ways, David Moyes will be relieved to have a spell of games away from Old Trafford, as his position always seems to come under much more scrutiny when the champions drop points at the Theatre of Dreams. However, United come up against a

rejuvenated Eagles side who have won their last three games at Selhurst Park, and a win here could see the Eagles rise as high as 10th. That might be asking a bit much of Tony Pulis' men but United may struggle to see this over the line.

1-1

Liverpool vs. Swansea
(Sky Sports 1, Sunday 1:30pm)

The Swans look to have regained some belief under Garry Monk and will not give the Reds as easy a ride as they enjoyed in the corresponding fixture last season, which finished 5-0 to the hosts. That said, the Sturridge-Suarez-Sterling attacking threesome looks unstoppable at the moment. Michel Vorm has not kept an away clean sheet since September and I don't see things improving for him here.

3-1

Best of the rest (Saturday 3pm unless otherwise stated)**Newcastle vs. Aston Villa**
(Sky Sports 1, Sunday 1:30pm)

Villa's record at St James' Park is atrocious but the Magpies are on their

summer holidays three months early and with their outstanding away form, Paul Lambert will see this as a brilliant opportunity to return to the top half.

1-2

Norwich vs. Tottenham
(Sky Sports 1, Sunday 4pm)

Spurs have won 7 of their last 8 away games and are hot on Liverpool's heels in the battle for Champions League football. The Canaries have deserved more from recent games and will give it their all but are not in the same league.

0-2

Arsenal vs. Sunderland

The Gunners might be starting to run out of steam after a torrid run of fixtures which culminated with a gargantuan clash against Bayern Munich on Wednesday night. Gus Poyet's Black Cats will look to extend their exceptional run of away form and could spring a surprise.

1-1

Cardiff vs. Hull

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's appointment



MIKE HEWITT/GETTY IMAGES

has yet to work out for the Bluebirds, who sit just 1 place off rock bottom. A few weeks back, the Tigers looked to be on a glass slope with slippers on but Steve Bruce has stopped the rot with 4 points from 6 and they can make it 5 from 9 here.

1-1

Man City vs. Stoke

The Citizens looked so indomitable until their defeat to Chelsea that recent Premier League results can only be a blip. The Potters simply do not do away wins and Manuel Pellegrini's men will surely return to winning ways.

2-0

West Brom vs. Fulham

Cottagers owner Shahid Khan pressed the panic button in sacking Rene Meulensteen last weekend and Felix Magath starts with a relegation six-pointer. After their draw versus Chelsea, I fancy the Baggies to go on a bit of a run, starting with 3 points here.

2-0

West Ham vs. Southampton

Three 2-0 wins in a row have seen the Hammers rise from 19th to 10th but they will struggle to make it four against a Saints side playing with real flair of late.

1-1

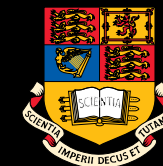
Imperial College London

VARSITY

12.03.14

58 TEAMS 29 MATCHES

11 SPORTS 1 WINNER

**ICSM vs. IC**

#impvarsity

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