



Felix

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November 28th 2014



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Medical Rugby team appeal rejected after Union sanctions leave them broke

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This week's issue...

felix@imperial.ac.uk

Felix Editor || Philippa Skett

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What's on this week:

Union General Meeting: deciding on the Higher Education Funding Policy.

18:30 onwards, Monday 1st, December, Lecture theatre 1 in Blakett

It needs 200 people to attend to meet quorum. Please attend otherwise it'll be a bit awkward. We'll be discussing the Higher Education Funding policy, and every person who attends can have a say on the matter.

Entry is free, obviously. Democracy is free too.

SKETT'S BOX OF SHAME

Apologies for a mistake in Issue 1589:

-We said last week that the London Forum for Science on Policy "Can Education Fix Britain's Youth Drinking Problem?" came with free drinks. Awkward. Apologies.

Two sides to the same issue

This week, we have a smorgasbord of content to keep you busy in the library café as you chow down on a jacket potato or three, depending on how many hours you are spending within the library doing end of term coursework. There may be three weeks left still, but it seems work always begins to pile on at this time of year.

In the news this week, we've looked at the aftereffects of the sanctions held against the Imperial Medicals: the rugby team of ICSM who smashed a coach window whilst on tour. Despite vowing never to put the rugby team of either IC or ICSM on the front page again, here we are, the third time in nine weeks. It is an interesting case with opposing opinions held by those involved. When we initially pursued the story, we did not expect such lengthy and in-depth responses from George Cross, the Captain of the Medicals

THIS WEEK'S EDITORIAL

and Tom Wheeler, one of the people who approved of the sanctions in the first place. However, they show how there are two sides to every story so we have printed both in their entirety, so you can make your own minds up on the matter.

We also have the more cheerful news of the International A Cappella competition making its way into our Great Hall in January. Although I have sadly been told Fat Amy will not be making an appearance, I have been reassured everything else will basically be like the last twenty minutes of the film Pitch Perfect. I've put you on the front page guys: I expect front row tickets in return!

After the success of our Science last week, the section is still going

strong, with a great interview with Imperial's own LSD expert Dr Robin Carhart-Harris alongside their usual news pieces. We have a great spread of Games this week which is catching up with Arts, and Arts again have blown it out the water with their topic this week being transformation.

If none of that is of interest, we have our usual puzzles, offensive horoscopes and our Fresher is having issues with his latest squeeze. If that isn't enough, we also have a double centrefold spread, although we like to think we are a bit better than Playboy and you pick us up for the articles too.

There is only two issues left, but still plenty of time to get involved. We are looking to expand our news reporter team, so if you fancy getting some journalism experience and seeing the office in all its festive glory, drop us a lone at felix@imperial.ac.uk. We have just invested in an office biscuit tin and everything.



The simultaneously best and worst advertising we have seen all week: props to you ACC, and good luck with your Geeks and Freaks Bar Night next Wednesday at the Union. Do that 2007 Word Art proud.



We are looking to expand our news reporter base: fancy joining us?

Email: felix@imperial.ac.uk

and let us know!

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News

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News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah and Kunal Wagle

This year's University Challenge team finalised

Philippa Skett reports as the final team is chosen following weeks of quizzes

The University Challenge team has been finalised after an extensive selection process. The new team consists of 5 male students and was selected after passing several rounds of quizzes and a final trial stage.

The team consists of three undergraduate students and two PhD students. Ben Fernando, a third year physics student and Captain of last year's team, has made a reappearance alongside James Bezer, a third year physics student (and one of Felix's esteemed Science Editors).

New to the team is Ashwin Braude, a fourth year physics student, and Onur Teymur, who is working on a PhD in statistics. Also joining them is Patrick Dunn, who is a physics student, also currently working on his doctorate.

The selection process started a few weeks ago, with quizzes held by Imperial College Union in conjunction with Quiz Soc. The

60-question test culled down 100 hopefuls to 16, who had a call-back for the evening of Friday 21st November.

The final trial was a mock-up of teams being questioned, Jeremy Paxman style, and observed by Imperial College Union President Tom Wheeler and Student Trustee Thomas Lim.

The 16 students were judged on how they interacted as a team and total scores were also taken into consideration before the panel decided on the final five.

The team will now have another interview with the producers of the show in January where they will be asked more questions, and in the last weekend in February filming will commence in the Granada studios in Manchester.

28 teams make it to the televised finals.

Last year the team was knocked out at the January stage, so did not make it onto the screens of households

across the country. The series is due to air during the second half of August.

Imperial College London has won the popular quiz show in previous years; they beat London School of

Economics to the title in 1996, and again in 2001, beating St John's College, Oxford.



Photo: Emily Maunder

College to investigate circumstances surrounding Professor's death

PHILLIPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

A professor from the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Stefan Grimm, was found dead in September of this year in Northwood, Middlesex.

Several colleagues of Professor Grimm spoke to the Times Higher Education (THE) and described how he was under a lot of pressure at work. They also said that he had been placed under a performance review, and had been unsuccessful in a number of grant applications.

They told THE that Professor Grimm had felt let down by Imperial, and was not supported in the months leading up to his death.

A College investigation is ongoing into Professor Grimm's death, although no conclusions have been drawn as of yet. The college is conducting reviews of the circumstances surrounding the incident as a whole, including

addressing policies and procedures relevant to the case. The review will be done by the Director of Human Resources at Imperial, accompanied by the Senior Consul, Professor Richard Thompson.

Any findings will then be reported to a group of senior college staff, led by the provost, who will then put into place any recommendations deemed suitable.

An Imperial College London spokesperson told Felix that: "Stefan Grimm was a valued member of the Faculty of Medicine and news of his death at the end of September came as a great shock to colleagues. The College has been in touch with his family since his death to offer our deepest condolences.

"At a time when family, friends, colleagues and students are still coming to terms with a death, it is important to undertake any reviews in a manner that respects these sensitivities, and that does not create a more difficult or challenging environment for those people."

Imperial College returns to top of the Research Council Grants Table

KUNAL WAGLE
SECTION EDITOR

Imperial College has returned to the top of the league table for research council income for the year 2013-14. It is the fourth time in the last five years that the College has topped the table, having been in third place for the year 2012-2013.

In this edition of the league table, Imperial was awarded £114 million, an increase of £11 million on 2012-13. This meant that the College was one of only ten institutions that saw an increase of more than £10 million.

University College London (UCL), who were last year's leaders, saw their value of awards fall by 42 percent. Cambridge saw their value diminish by 45 percent, as it fell to fifth in the rankings.

Donal Bradley, Vice-Provost (Research), said that he was "delighted to see the dedication and hard work of our staff paying off in what remains a difficult funding climate".

Imperial was successful in only 29 percent of its applications, which, when compared to other Universities in the top ten, is quite low. However, this means that Imperial's value of awards was significantly higher than other Universities in the list.

Overall, the number of applications went down from the College by 19

percent – the third largest decline in the table. On the whole there has been a large decline in the number of applications. There were nine percent fewer applications overall in 2013-14, with only seven institutions actually submitting more applications than in the previous year.

Despite the drop in numbers of applications, the success rate has also dropped across the board. Only

seven out of the top 27 institutions have seen their success rates increase. Imperial's rate is unchanged from 2012-13.

Behind Imperial in this year's table were Oxford, who had £94 million, UCL with £78 million and Manchester with £58 million. Cambridge, Bristol, Edinburgh, King's College London, Southampton and Nottingham complete the top ten.

Institution	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Amount	SR (%)	Amount	SR (%)	Amount	SR (%)
Imperial College London	77	31	103	29	114	29
University of Oxford	64	33	85	32	94	36
University College London	71	34	135	33	78	27
University of Manchester	40	34	64	30	58	32
University of Cambridge	56	37	104	34	57	30
University of Bristol	37	34	55	34	54	33
University of Edinburgh	67	34	72	33	51	29
King's College London	27	28	26	25	40	34
University of Southampton	40	33	27	32	34	34
University of Nottingham	23	36	46	26	33	23

Amount: cash awarded (£m); SR: success rate by number of applications. Source: research councils

Table: Times Higher Education

News

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News Editors ||| Carol Ann Cheah and Kunal Wagle

Medicals Rugby team left broke after

Philippa Skett investigates the financial state of the team after the punishments received for smashed coach window on tour

Imperial Medicals Rugby Football Club, one of the rugby teams suspended earlier this term for smashing a coach window, appealed against the sanctions placed against them last week.

However, their appeal was rejected, and they could now be facing extreme financial difficulty as a club. With the costs incurred from the coach damage, fines for missing matches and the loss of earnings from the Reynolds Bop they can no longer run, they may be out of action by the next academic year.

The sanctions involved included banning the whole club from socialising, and also having to forfeit several key games. Those involved with the incident will also have to take part in Union community service.

The appeal was escalated past Imperial College Union President Tom Wheeler through to the chair of the Union Trustee Board, Dame Julia Higgins, but was then rejected.

It was rejected on the grounds that they thought the original sanctions to be justified enough; they had no desire to modify them further and considered them an appropriate measure to stop such behaviour in the future.

The appeal, backed by the Imperial College School of Medicine Student Union (ICSMU) President, Dariush Hassanzadeh-Baboli, was made via email on the 17th of November, and authored by George Cross, the Club Captain of the Medicals team. His extended statement on the matter is below. The appeal was rejected the following day.

Cross appealed specifically against the social ban element of their punishment, as the sanctions levied against the club currently prevent them hosting the Reynolds bar's Christmas Bop. Traditionally, the bigger sports clubs with greater financial pressures, such as the Medicals Rugby team, run the Christmas Bop, which are very popular and often attended by both medic and non-medical students.

Running the Bop would have hopefully recovered some of the costs lost, although it seems doubtful it would be able to recuperate all of the costs from the coach incident. They have already missed several matches, and incurred fines as a result, and have also had to cover the costs of the coach damages and loss of earnings of the coach company.



Last year's Imperial Medicals team celebrate their JPR Williams Cup victory at the Stoop Photo: Ian Gillett

Said Cross in his appeal: "It will be an opportunity where we can prove our responsibility as a club and showcase the fact we can be sober at events as we will be responsible for stewarding."

They also challenged details that were taken in the minutes by the Governance committee. Although Cross stated in the appeal that "My committee was and continues to be embarrassed by the situation," they took issue with the fact that

the committee stated that the club is "resigned" to the drinking culture within the club.

Cross outlined that "before sanctions were imposed by the Union, the club had begun to address this issue already, by creating a series of documents including a 'Club Alcohol Policy,' 'Tour Etiquette,' and 'Statement of Aims and Objectives.'"

The appeal, made by email, also featured a letter from Dariush to Dame Julia Higgins. In it he stated

that he was "Concerned that the Governance Committee did not take into account the financial ramifications the sanctions would have on the club." He pointed out that with the costs to repair the coach, the British University & College Sport league fines the team having to pay for missing games and also the loss of earnings from being unable to host the bop, the team will be "financially deficit within two years."

He also compared the sanctions

against Imperial Medicals against those that were held against Imperial College Union Rugby Football Club, usually known as ACC (Athletics Club Committee) rugby. These too were suspended from playing and socialising due to the ruling of the governance committee in response to the incident involving team players stripping on tube platforms, which took place towards the end of October.

Dariush highlighted that despite

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er Union sanctions put in place

George Cross gives his side of the story



GEORGE CROSS
ICMRFC CLUB CAPTAIN

We as a club fully understand the severity of the two incidents that we have been implicated in. We do not condone activities that cause offence to members of the public nor activities that can lead to potential damage.

We also do not instil a culture of excessive drinking of alcohol within our club.

When these two allegations were placed against the club, my committee and myself enforced internal club sanctions. For those

involved in the Heston incident, all players in the third team were banned from social activities for two months. For those involved in the coach incident, we enforced a club-wide ban on socialising to end mid December. We also introduced a club Alcohol Policy, and a Tour Etiquette Document.

These addressed the perceived drinking culture that surrounds rugby and they also show that we are addressing the perceived drinking culture surrounding rugby. Both these internal sanctions and these documents have shown the extent of our co-operation with the Union, College Tutors and Faculty and was our attempt to try and deal with these situations as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Although we understand the sanctions we feel that the Governance Committee overlooked the financial implications the

sanctions would have on the club. Our club is currently not sitting on steady financial footing.

This is not helped by the fact that Imperial College Union, who claim to treat both clubs for all college students and medic-centred clubs on equal footing, give the medic rugby team 37% less grant compared to IC Rugby; Both IC and us have 3 teams, both our First XV compete in the BUCS 1A league.

We always exceed our membership targets and we bring home more silverware for the university and enter more competitions as well as earning Sport Imperial more BUCS points. Somehow the Union have "justified" this large disparity in their budgeting system and they then also deemed their financial sanctions towards our club appropriate in light of this.

These sanctions will enforce a

£10,000 loss to the club, which will render the club financially defunct by the end of the 2015/16 season.

I feel that if the Governance Committee were aware the extent the financial implications would effect the club, it could call into question whether Imperial College Union have an alternative motive as to shut down ICSM clubs, to seek a merger; a rumour that has hung over our heads for the past few years.

Another point that is particularly annoying is that we feel incorrect minutes from a previous meeting were passed on to the Governance Committee due to a clerical issue, without our knowledge. The minutes were in the revision process, but the finalised version of the correct minutes never reached the Governance committee. We feel this may have impacted the decision made concerning our sanctions,

and therefore feel they may be disproportionate to what actually happened.

I personally also felt uncomfortable by the way I was treated by some of the senior authority figures involved with the process, who acted in ways I thought were inappropriate bordering on aggressive in meetings I had with them. I approached Tom Wheeler about these issues I had, and he was unable to rectify them, stating he was: "[the authority figure] was frustrated that he was struggling to get to an answer [from Cross]." I felt this was reprehensible given I had been so co-operative throughout the whole process.

I do not feel that the welfare of myself nor my implicated committee members has been addressed by anyone senior at Imperial, except for Dariush.

The Union President responds...



TOM WHEELER
ICU PRESIDENT

I disagree that ICSMRFC "[does] not instil a culture of excessive drinking" as this directly contradicts with the fact that a bottle of Port was listed on the Tour's kit list because it is "more efficient" to drink port. I do not believe that the actions taken by ICSMRFC

'addressed' the culture, but I do fully support the Club for taking its first steps towards doing so.

On the complicated subject of Union Subsidy of ICSMRFC compared with ICURFC, the fact of the matter is that they budgeted for significantly different expected costs in the CSPB Budgeting process. ICURFC spends considerably more on Instructors, Ground Hire and Travel Expenditure and had 17.4% more members at the end of last year.

On the point regarding a "£10,000 loss to the club" it must be stated that the Club caused significant damage to a Coach, which led to significant repair cost. The final invoice came to

just over £7,200, of which roughly £1000 was due to non-window related repairs (including cleaning vomit from toilets). The remainder of the "£10,000 loss" is the opportunity loss of ICSMRFC being banned from social activity until 1 January 2015. It was deemed by the Governance Committee that allowing the Club to host a Social event (from which it profits ~£2,000) after the Club failed to behave properly during previous Social Activity was not acceptable.

The conversation referred to as "inappropriate bordering on aggressive" demonstrated the Chair of the Governance Committee's frustration with Cross and his

teammate's assessment of the window immediately after it was damaged. Some of those present on the coach at the time decided that the window was only fractured, and did not pose a risk to other road users, and therefore did not tell the driver, demonstrating very poor judgement.

The most frustrating point raised by George Cross in his statement is that the decision "could call into question whether Imperial College Union have an alternative motive as to shut down ICSM clubs". This is thoroughly absurd. The Union only ever works to ensure that all members who want to participate in Union activity, can.

Whether the activity is organised by a Club that falls within the ACC (ICURFC) or a Constituent Union such as CGC, ICSM, or RSM is irrelevant to us.

Throughout this process, we have offered to sit down with the club and discuss the financial situation that they are in, and offer support where it is needed with a view to ensure activities are not curtailed past their banned period. This support can take the form of allowing the club to use an overdraft, for example. We were fully aware of the implications of the sanctions at the point of passing them.

better co-operation from the Medical rugby players than ICURFC, whose captain is now facing a vote of no-confidence from Imperial College Union Council, the Medical team sanctions may have more adverse effects than those of the sanctions suffered by ICURFC.

Dariush stated in his support of the appeal that the rulings against the Medicals will "financially cripple, and possibly disband, a club who have admitted their mistakes, have been

co-operative and have shown their eagerness to change to ensure similar events do not occur in the future."

Felix spoke to Dariush to expand upon the issue further. He explained that, with the Medical team unable to acquire sponsorship as easily as ICURFC, and still having similar costs in running as a team, the financial costs of the incident could stifle the clubs ability to pay for training, transport and facility hire. "For a team to function at

such a high level, the overheads are expensive. They can probably cover their expenditure for next term, but in the next academic year they will struggle."

Currently, the Imperial Medicals have £7,439.01 in their SGI, and £2,724.96 in grant money. So far, the money to pay for the coach repairs and to cover the loss of earnings by the coach company (it was off the road for seven days) has been deducted from their funds, but the

£5,000 offered up as a "gesture" by the team captain has yet to be deducted.

Fines for having to skip BUCS matches come to around £600, which they are yet to pay, and the loss of an expected £2000 from the Christmas Bop means that financially the club will be nearing the ends of their funds very soon. Over the past seven years, ICURFC had an income of around £45,000 from sponsorship alone, whilst the Medical team

only acquired around £3,000. Said Dariush, "People just don't want to sponsor students who will end up working for the NHS. There is no incentive there for them to do so, so they struggle to acquire funds."

Dariush concluded: "ICSMSU will do anything to ensure the Medicals can continue functioning, like they ICSMSU would do for any club facing unprecedented financial issues. However in reality for the club to continue it will be a struggle."

News

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Blackboard crashes during test

Thomas Lim reports as 450 students are left “confused and frustrated”

Last Thursday 450 students were left confused and frustrated after Blackboard crashed during a Business Economics online. The test was scheduled to start at 18:00, and within ten minutes, students started reporting issues with their tests, such as images and formulae not loading as expected. Shortly afterwards, Blackboard went down.

Course Lecturer Dr Ralf Martin emailed students immediately afterwards, telling them he was “super furious”. He told students they had received “multiple assurances” that Blackboard would be able to handle the number of students running the test simultaneously. Dr Martin made his opinions very clear to students, telling them in another email “I can only speculate that their [College ICT’s] server is so badly managed that it cannot handle 450 students.”

Speaking to Felix about the incident, he said, “I wasn’t personally promised that someone from ICT would be present but it took them a long time to respond, we still haven’t had a formal response. We couldn’t reach anybody until several days after.”

Dr Martin was also unimpressed with apparent issues with Web Browser compatibility, citing other tests that had issues due to students using Google Chrome instead of Firefox or Internet Explorer, leading him to tell students, “Chrome is not some weird exotic browser. Almost every lecture I would spend saying not to use chrome but maybe that was not the reason.” The lack of contact from ICT with Dr Martin has left him confused and still trying to understand why it had failed. He speculated that smaller courses have used Blackboard successfully with Chrome, so it was more likely an issue with the total number of students taking the test.

In an email to Directors of Undergraduate Studies who have students enrolled on the course, Edina Hamzic-Maguire of the Business School told colleagues that the outage did in fact not register on College ICT systems. The Business School were also told by ICT that the “test will be recorded in the team calendar and someone may be available out of hours to trouble shoot”. When it came to the evening, a phone call to ICT was made, but it went straight to a standard out of hours message. ICT later told the Business School that no staff were available to be on standby past 18:00.

Students found the cancellation and subsequent rescheduling of



Photo: Karsten Seipp

the test inconvenient, one saying, “It is extremely inconvenient for me as I both have interviews and a funeral abroad in the coming weeks, meaning that I will not have much time at all to refresh everything which I studied for the test.” and another adding “It’s all very well saying that all we did is “study the material of a module you signed up for,” but the fact is that if there hadn’t been the blackboard test I would not have chosen to prioritise my time towards this module. The fact that I did so at the detriment of my other modules, job applications, and extra-curricular activities, only to find the test cancelled, is extremely inconvenient.”

The Business School have received praise for taking students’ views into account when deciding how best to proceed, something most students believe is unique to the Business School. “The business school have done a good job in considering what’s best for students. An online survey for the best way to deal with the situation is something most departments wouldn’t do, and giving two different dates to do a test isn’t something I’ve heard of before.”

An Imperial College Spokesperson was keen to point out Blackboard’s track record of reliability, issuing the statement: “The College regrets that an online Business Economics test scheduled for the evening of

13 November had to be terminated due to a technical problem with Blackboard – the College’s virtual learning environment – through which the test was being administered. Affected students were polled on when the test should be re-run and, to minimise inconvenience, two alternative dates will be offered.

“Advance checks showed no issues with Blackboard, which has proven a reliable system for the College, with 99.99% service availability between Oct 2013 and Oct 2014. Unfortunately on this occasion, an unforeseen problem occurred.

“ICT is working closely with the Business School and the supplier

of Blackboard Learn to determine the cause of the issue and to reduce the risk of a future outage to the e-Learning System. The College is grateful for the input of affected students who have been invited to share what they experienced when attempting to use the system during the test.”

Planning for the test to be done again is underway. In order to reduce the stress and inconvenience to students, two different times will be available: one before Christmas, and the other after.

The Business School have decided not to use Blackboard for the retests, instead load testing alternative software.

News

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Imperial: Prepare to get Pitch-Slapped

Ben Howitt on the International singing competition to be hosted at Imperial

Imperial College A Cappella Society has been chosen to host the UK semi-finals of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA), presented by Varsity Vocals. The competition, now in its 20th year, was featured in the 2012 film *Pitch Perfect*, which introduced the world to the now widely known ‘Cups’. The sequel has been confirmed for release in 2015.

On January 24th, 2015, eight a cappella groups from UK universities will compete to win a place at the International Final, to be held in New York City.

This is the first time that there has been a round held outside of the USA, although video entry has been allowed since 2012. The event will be organised by Matthew Shirer, the ICCA Overseas Producer at Varsity Vocals.

Although the A Cappella Society is hosting the event, Varsity Vocals initially contacted the individual groups separately regarding the use of the Great Hall. There were some issues with getting the space for a reasonable price, with Henry Harrod, the A Cappella Society Chair, describing the situation as “pretty heated in that respect”.

Following close to four weeks of negotiation on the price, Henry was on the phone to Varsity Vocals to cancel the College’s participation in the event, when Campus Services offered a discount.

“As I was sitting there, I got the email through from Charles [Gallagher, Head of Hospitality and Events], at the very last minute, and... ICCA’s accepted over the phone.”

Three of the eight groups competing are London-based. **Imperielles**, **The Scopes** and **The Techtonics** all perform regularly and have previously competed in The Voice Festival UK (VFUK), the UK version of ICCA, The Techtonics reaching the final in 2014. This will be the first time that Imperielles and The Scopes have competed at a national competition.

All the King’s Men, from King’s College London, round out the London-based groups, with four further groups coming from Birmingham, Durham, and Exeter. All of the teams perform regularly, including visits to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and many have placed in national competitions.

Entries to the competition were by video audition, to be submitted by 15th November. A successful audition would give a place in the College-hosted semi final, at the hefty



price tag of £200 – double that of an entry to VFUK.

The three groups who chose to enter filmed their audition videos in the recently renovated West Basement studio, with Media groups assisting with lighting and sound. Henry acknowledged “teething problems”, with this being one of the first times the Studio had been used in anger, but pointed out that all three groups that auditioned had been selected to compete. **Take Note**, the society’s other all-female barbershop group, chose not to enter.

The Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) and the Deputy President (Finance & Services) have already confirmed their attendance at the event, and other major figures on campus will be invited, including Charles Gallagher, the campus official who sent the eleventh hour email that saved the event.

The event will also feature a guest performance from Birmingham University’s **Sons of Pitches**, who competed at the 2013 ICCA Final in New York.

They have since gone semi-professional, having released their debut EP, *Not Too Shabby* in December 2013. Despite this, they continue to compete, singing against The Techtonics in the VFUK final last year.

A Cappella Society was founded in November 2010 and now comprises four groups, with two more in the works. Each of the groups has a different style, and all maintain a set to be performed over the year. Multiple groups are working



The Scopes performing at Summer Ball 2014 (bottom) and Imperielles (top) Photo: Imperielles/ Ben Lester

on recording releases, with The Techtonics aiming to release a single close to Christmas, and an album in August 2015.

All of the groups have expressed their excitement, with Peter Noden (The Techtonics Chair) describing it as “the opportunity to perform and meet with the best of the British and global a cappella communities”.

A representative from The Scopes said:

“We’re so honoured to be competing in the first ever UK ICCA’s Semi-Final and it being held at Imperial was just an added bonus! We can’t wait to see the other groups perform and to show the judges and the local crowd what we’ve been working on!”

The movement of A Cappella to the UK has been a slow one, but the addition of a true international competition is a big step in the right direction.

We here at Felix wish the competing groups the very best of luck, and hope that the competition is appropriately aca-awesome.

News

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News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah and Kunal Wagle

RAG holds successful charity bike auction

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

RAG held their charity bike auction last Thursday, raising an impressive £4,500 after selling roughly 30 bikes.

The auction took place on the steps leading up to Queen's Tower, and was attended by around 150 students. Half of the funds raised will go to the Bike Users Group (BUG), a student club that oversees students who cycle on a regular basis.

The other half went to RAG's main charities, twenty20, Kids UK and Lively Minds.

RAG also had police present to mark bikes to track them if stolen, and mechanics there to check over the bikes themselves. The bikes, sourced

from those left on campus over the summer, came in various shapes, sizes, and states, but many went for prices below their actual face value.

The auctioneer was Neil Mosley, head of Sport Imperial and apparent owner of a megaphone.

RAG have also announced their charities for their upcoming RAG week; they will be raising money for Tiny Tickers, Mines Advisory Group and St Mungo's Broadway.

RAG Chair Ben Fernando said of the day: "An absolutely amazing day that raised a huge amount of money for our chosen causes.

"We're proud it went so smoothly and that so many people were able to become more environmentally friendly through the purchase of a cheap bicycle.

"We look forward to more successful bike auctions!"



Prospective buyers take a look at the bikes on offer Photo: Amy Whistlecroft

World News: Ferguson unrest calms on Thanksgiving

Kunal Wagle discusses the two nights of protests in the St Louis suburb in Missouri

The St Louis suburb of Ferguson was calm on Thanksgiving morning, after two nights of protests. The suburb has been unsettled since 9th August when police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed civilian Michael Brown. Mr Wilson, who shot Brown six or seven times said that he "feared for his life". Witnesses, however, claimed that Mr Brown, who was not armed, had his hands up when the first shots were fired.

On Tuesday a jury chose not to charge Mr Wilson for the killing and as a result clear the police officer of any wrongdoing. This sparked protests in Ferguson, which were peaceful. The protests, which consisted of an estimated 100 people marching through the streets, were conducted in the snow. It is believed that the bad weather may have had an effect on the number of people protesting.

Police Officer Wilson said afterwards on television that he had "a clean conscience" over the shooting. This statement was branded as "disrespectful" by Mr Brown's mother, who went on to add that she does not believe the policeman's account of what happened that night.

Mr Brown's father said that prosecutors had "crucified" his son in a character assassination. He then requested that all protesters remain peaceful.

Meanwhile, in California, protests turned violent in Oakland and Los Angeles. More than 100 people were arrested in demonstrations, most of

them from Los Angeles.

The police have since released a statement saying that protestors had vandalised buildings in Oakland

and had refused to disperse in Los Angeles.

In Portland, Oregon police were forced to use pepper spray and make

arrests after the transport system was blocked by over 300 protestors.

The state governor for Missouri Jay Nixon said that he would not try to

present the case to a new jury.

However, the US Justice Department has launched a federal investigation.



Police gather after the news of the grand jury's decision broke Photo: Charlie Riedel/Associated Press

Comment

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Comment Editor || Tessa Davey

Attending University can be a risky business

George Butcher discusses how to determine the value of education



GEORGE BUTCHER
COMMENT WRITER

I was sat in a job interview, nervously trying to justify my existence to a stranger and I was asked “Why did you chose to study at Imperial?”. I think I managed to persuade him it wasn’t because Cambridge had rejected me and that it was in fact, “Imperial’s academic rigour and forward thinking ethos”. If I’m honest I applied because it was top of the league tables and I came because I managed to get the grades.

But how do aspiring students choose universities? This is the question a recent report by *Which?* tried to answer. It’s important because with fees at £9000 per annum, sixth form students are expected to make rational consumer decisions and commit to spending around £45,000 on a degree. All this before you’re legally allowed to take out a normal loan.

I’m fortunate. I’m very confident that my £3,450 per year fees are a worthy investment. Simply comparing the mean Imperial graduate salary with the median UK salary is enough to show that. But that isn’t always the case. The *Which?* survey (which didn’t mention Imperial specifically) found 3 in 10 undergraduates thought their experience was poor value and that 35% said they are “unlikely to have attended university faced with higher fees”.

The risk that a course is a waste of time and money is not just borne by the student. It’s a loan you’ll only pay back if you earn enough money, so the risk is also with tax payers, who are the very people we tried to reduce the burden on by introducing fees in the first place.

In fact, the government now loses 45p of every £1 it lends to students. Last year the student loans

"3 in 10 undergrads thought their education was poor value"



Last year the student loans company paid out £12.5 billion Photo: Mid-Cheshire College

company paid out £12.5 billion in loans to students and that’s set to rise. The higher education sector is haemorrhaging money.

If you arrive at a university and find that your lectures aren’t quite worth the £50 each you’re paying, you’re stuck. There’s no chance to transfer to another university – you just have to start again and pay another set of fees. If you drop out completely you have to pay back the fees, but you’re not even a graduate. In most industries the consumer is protected by a regulator. If you buy a broken car, you get it replaced or refunded. But if you get a useless course, you’re stuck with it; no refunds apart from extreme situations. The universities bear a very small amount of risk in the game, it’s the students and the government who take the risk. The exact opposite of normal business

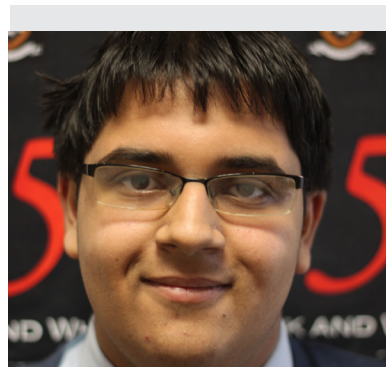
"It's the students and the government who take the risk"

where the shareholders risk their investment if the customers leave.

If students are to be consumers, then we need the protection and rights that come with that. This should be one of the benefits of the tuition fee system but it has yet to happen. Why? Because if a course can’t keep its students happy, and they all leave with refunds, that course won’t be open for long. The good departments will flourish but the poor departments will close. It’s creative destruction capitalism – students got their brunt of the deal when the fees trebled. Now universities have to face the reality of the economic market too, and something tells me they won’t like it either.

The transition of the tuition fee model won’t be complete till departments who don’t pay for themselves have to close.

BT is moving back into mobile. Panic stations?



KUNAL WAGLE
COMMENT WRITER

On Monday Spanish newspapers reported that BT were in talks with Telefonica over a potential takeover of O2. It later emerged that BT are also discussing the purchase of EE from French company Orange S.A. and German company Deutsche Telekom. But what would this mean for us? Should we be worried, or excited?

The move from BT shows clear intent to enter the mobile market. Since spinning off O2 in 2001 (then called BT Cellnet), BT has often regretted not being in the mobile market. They have made attempts to slowly move back in through deals

with O2 and EE over the past couple of years.

With this deal (whoever it may come from) BT will suddenly have a market share of more than 29% (EE actually has 33% at the moment), and a platform from which to launch a new ‘Quad-Play’ service. Quad-Play is a package currently on sale in Europe that offers Internet, television, landline and mobile in one bundle. It has proved to be popular in Europe but is largely unproven in the United Kingdom. Virgin Media attempted it, but with limited success.

So, what does this mean for us? Should we be worried about rising

prices as a result? At the moment analysts are split, with some saying that prices will increase, whilst some believe that it will, in fact, decrease. Early indications would suggest that if Quad-Play is something that you are interested in then this is great news, as bundles in Europe have been sold at significant discounts.

The other side of the coin, though, is BT’s costs. Having spent more than £2.5 billion to upgrade its fibre optic networks and £2 billion on television rights in sport, BT have a lot of money to make up. The estimated £10 billion that will be needed to complete the takeover

will not help matters either. When BT last spent this much, our line rental costs went up by a significant amount. Expect similar things to happen if you choose not to go with Quad-Play.

The other intriguing point that stems from this is whether other companies will follow suit. Vodafone have already been touted to form a partnership with BSKyB if BT’s move proves successful, and it is also thought that TalkTalk will be looking for a partner.

One thing is for sure though – many will watch BT’s next moves with fascination and intrigue.

Features

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Features Editor | VACANT

Xuan Chen visits **HYPER JAPAN** and meets some of the stars behind the convention

The biannual gathering of dedicated Japanese markets and exhibitors took place two weekends ago, and managed an exhibition which was a verifiable smorgasbord of Japanese culture.

Exhibitions like these are a clarion call for like-minded small and medium business owners to come together in one place to show themselves to curious wanderers. The self-styled *HYPER JAPAN* Christmas Market succeeds brilliantly in creating a thematic atmosphere, presenting not just the Japanese products, but stages and performance areas which emblazon every single aspect of Japanese culture, from idiosyncratic fusion bands to traditional Japanese tea ceremonies and dance theatre. *HYPER JAPAN* boldly claims that it is the best depiction of Japanese culture outside of Japan, and as an outsider to the event whilst knowing a fair amount about the country, I am utterly bought by their claim.

The event takes place in Olympia National, near Hammersmith and West Kensington. The bottom floor has an array of delicious smelling food stalls, all selling Japanese dishes and slightly bigger businesses along with a huge stage at one end, whilst the top floor seemed to be reserved for independent shop-owners and a smaller display area where martial arts and other demonstrations were carried out.

From any point in the exhibition hall, whatever was coming from the speakers beside the stage could be heard, and the stage could be seen from any point on the top floor, which mean that you never missed a thing – and never had to push your way through crowds or fight for seats

to see what was going on. Between performances, J-POP (Japanese pop music) greatly enhanced the ambience of the whole event.

Cosplay, or dressing up as fictional characters found in anime, manga, video games, films, etc is a noticeable theme in the convention. Contests were on for the best costumes but I only recognised Hatsune Miku, a “humanoid persona voiced by a singing synthesizer application” after watching a quasi-3D performance in a side room of her songs. Sounds pretty weird to someone passing by, but I greatly admire the Japanese creative spirit and Hatsune Miku has turned out to be a massive marketing success for the company behind her.

Although cosplay is one of the loci of the event as one of the pillars of modern Japanese culture, it is not by far the main one. In fact, one of the major successes of the convention overall was the fact that there wasn’t a single, individual focus; rather, a smooth amalgamation of all aspects of Japanese culture presented in tandem which are consciously recognisable but simply flow together and feel natural.

On the upper floor, there are a group of retro arcade machines and Japanese video game consoles, including a Dance Dance Revolution on which I witnessed meteoric competition which redefined my definition of “pro gamer”.

In contrast, downstairs belonged to big Japanese video game developers such as Square Enix and Capcom which promoted their latest products and merchandise.

Soon the crowd was gathered around a sushi stand, and I managed to find myself witnessing a tuna cutting display. The show

“HYPER JAPAN boldly claims that it is the best depiction of Japanese culture outside of Japan.”



Two girls cosplaying at *HYPER JAPAN*. Photo: Xuan Chen

culminated with the tuna mercilessly dichotomised by a five-foot long sword. I can testify that this smooth-filleted tuna beats John West with regards to taste and texture by formerly unimaginable amounts.

By far the most enjoyable was the sampling of all the *sake*, whisky, and *umeshu* alcohols for sale. The exhibitors were generous with their samples and light-headed gratification led me to purchase a bottle of *Choya Umesu*, a delicious citrus-smelling and flavour wine. Ume is a sweet Asiatic fruit which is described as somewhere between an apricot and a plum.

The stage is full with back-to-back displays of sake mixing, technodelic performances, karaoke, and an

incredibly diverse, ballpark outline of every imaginable and unimaginable aspect of Japanese culture. However, one performer’s story stood out as particularly galvanising. I snuck backstage to get a cheeky interview in after the performance had ended.

Her name is Diana Garnett, an American singer who shot to fame last year by winning *Song for Japan*, described as the Japanese equivalent to *The Voice*, *Britain’s Got Talent*, and the *X-Factor* all rolled into one.

“I’ve wanted to become a singer in Japan since I was seven,” Diana tells me. “My dad watched a lot of anime so I had exposure to Japanese music and I wanted to be a performer before I’d figured out all the details, like how far Japan is from Washington DC.”

“HYPER JAPAN showcased a strikingly extraordinary cultural event.”

Features

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Features Editor || VACANT



Her bubbly personality and cheerful demeanour brings smiles to the English audience.

Chasing your dream through twenty years of hard work and perseverance paints a clear image of the undeterrable heart beneath the easy smiles. Diana first moved to Japan at the age of sixteen, a daunting prospect enough for anyone wishing to move to a country with 0.07% native English speakers. On her third and most recent visit to Japan, Diana also became an English teacher, instructing schoolchildren around middle school age. I asked her about the motivation behind her singing – a fervent and passionate intensity which can be felt during her renditions.

“As a schoolteacher, I often get kids coming up to me when they’re young with their dreams of becoming Pokémon masters, superheroes, and famous ice skaters along with all sorts of wonderful things. But then they grow up and settle into their perceived reality of just being able to live as an office worker somewhere. It’s heart-breaking. I sing for my fans and anyone who happens to be listening, in the hopes that they’ll be brave enough to follow their heart once again.”

Fundamental differences in the construction of sentences, such as omission of articles and subjects, all contribute to the difficulty of learning English as a native Japanese speaker. Diana’s songs are all in

Japanese only; is the language barrier a problem this way?

“The focus of the songs is not the language, but the sound and music,” Diana tells me. Japanese is naturally a very lyrical and expressive language due to its liquid consonants and this makes it still remarkably communicative even to a non-speaker like me. As a musician myself, Diana and I concur by bringing up the indisputable fact that music is the true universal language of expression.

The realisation of a dream may not necessarily come as a single, cathartic, watershed moment. Diana continues to work on her music and she starts by collaborating with Joe Inoue, announcing their work on December 1st. Joe is an American-born Japanese

pop artist whose gained prominence through his song ‘Closer’ being used for the opening song of the anime series Naruto. Joe is well-known for playing all the instruments in the backing track when he records a new song – in fact, his Facebook page description includes the line “Plays all instruments.” I manage to get a few words with him too, after he agreed to marry a fan in the audience. It remains to be seen if he is as true to his word as he is dedicated to the red bean ice cream he claims he loves – “it’s delicious and healthy,” he claims, right before Diana quips back “it’s not healthy, it’s ice cream.”

Joe was born to Japanese immigrants in California, and learnt Japanese from reading manga and

watching anime, despite growing up in Los Angeles. “I had to teach myself,” he tells me, “but the comics are definitely the number one Japanese textbook.” As well as playing all the instruments in all of his songs and composing all of them himself, almost all of his song lyrics are in Japanese too. It’s Joe’s first time in Europe and he expresses confusion at the reason why the audience weren’t receptive to his American-style jokes about boobs and such on stage. I tell him that they’re just being polite.

HYPER JAPAN showcased a strikingly extraordinary cultural event, with a very strong inspirational aftertaste. The message is clear. Pursue your dream, and you’ll end up living it.

Science

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Science Editor || James Bezer & Lauren Ratcliffe

Dr Robin Carhart-Harris talks about LSD and the Psychedelic state

Lauren Ratcliffe interviews Imperial researcher and learns how and why LSD could be used to treat depression and addictions

Complete understanding behind the powerful effects of psychedelics on the mind has remained a mystery for many decades. Over 60 years has passed since the first discovery of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and since then surprisingly little concrete knowledge of its effects on the brain has been established.

Legal restrictions and long-held preconceptions surrounding psychedelics have hampered the progression of research into these elusive compounds. Dr Robin Carhart-Harris of Imperial College University is one of a few scientists on the pursuit to bring a more scientific approach to modern psychedelic research and has found evidence to indicate that psychedelics are more than just a faded hippie emblem.

I met up with him in his offices in Hammersmith and discussed, among other things, the rise and fall of LSD in the scientific and public domain, theories behind hallucinations, near-death experiences and his research in using LSD to understand the inner workings of the mind.

"Psychedelics are more than just a faded hippie emblem."



American counterculture against the Vietnam war
Photo: Robert Altman

LSD DISCOVERY

To fully understand where science is today we must take a brief look at its past. The discovery of LSD's unique effects arose accidentally by Albert Hofmann during the 1930s.

Then a 37 year old medicinal chemist at the pharmaceutical company Sandoz in Basel, Hofmann began isolating active components of medicinal plants, one of which was ergot - a parasitic fungus that grows in rye and used back then to reduce maternal bleeding during childbirth.

During this pursuit in April 1943, he inadvertently exposed himself to LSD, an ergotamine derivative, and came home one day to find himself tripping balls, or as he puts it: "I perceived an uninterrupted stream of fantastic pictures, extraordinary shapes with intense kaleidoscopic play of colours."

CONTROVERSY

Soon after this quirky discovery, further scientific research established that LSD could lower ego defences and potentially allow access to the unconscious mind, revealing it as a potential tool to use in conjunction with psychotherapy treatments.

Between the 1950s and mid-1960s over 1,000 clinical papers and several dozen books were published alongside six international conferences on LSD-assisted psychotherapy. However, what Hofmann could never have foretold was the progression of LSD from medical remedy to recreational drug.

When, after more than ten years of uninterrupted scientific research, the drug began to take on a more public profile as sensationalist newspaper reports on LSD's curious effects opened the doors to public experimentation.

One figure that spearheaded this transition was Dr Timothy Leary, a known apostle of LSD, who held a vision that progressively diverted from scientific research and moved towards the dangerous game of social and psychological revolution.

People began taking LSD for pleasure and popularity of the drug

grew almost synonymously with the hippie movement, taken as a way to get in touch with the self, other people and the environment, or to quote Leary: "Turn on, tune in, drop out."

In 1966, due to bad publicity and political concerns, the authorities took direct action against LSD and made it illegal in the United States. What shortly followed was the implementation of the UK Misuse of Drugs Act in 1973, classing LSD under Schedule I, which by definition assumes it has little or no therapeutic value.

SUGGESTIBILITY

Since then, the story has stayed much the same and drug policies more or less haven't changed since the 1970s. In the Centre for Neuropsychopharmacology at Imperial College, however, Dr Robin Carhart-Harris is pioneering investigations into LSD with results that suggest a change is long overdue as current drug laws suffocate the progression of neuroscience research. By piling up strong evidence-based scientific knowledge on LSD's effects on the brain, Carhart-Harris is bringing a refreshingly scientific approach to this weird and wonderful drug.

With a background in psychology and psychoanalysis at Bournemouth University, Carhart-Harris later moved to the University of Bristol to continue a PhD in psychopharmacology and is now a research associate at Imperial College's Hammersmith campus, where I found him one fresh October morning. With an infectious enthusiasm for his work and a clear, careful way of speaking, Carhart-Harris describes his progression from psychology to psychedelic research when, during his undergraduate years, his studies failed to satisfy his deep curiosity in wanting to understand the human condition. "[Psychoanalysis] doesn't have much grounding in a scientific approach... it was more going around the edges and not getting to the core of what is really interesting and juicy," he explains.

What truly changed the game,



Dr Robin Carhart-Harris is bringing LSD research back to the 21st century

"...deep curiosity in wanting to understand the human condition."

however, was his discovery of the book 'Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research' by Czech psychiatrist, Stanislav Grof, who worked on LSD in the 60s and 70s. "I read it in a day, was blown away and then thought this is really what I want to do, understand LSD in the mind and put some real meat on psychoanalysis," he says.

Carhart-Harris' research uses LSD as a way to manipulate the mind and understand what

Science

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Science Editor

James Bezer & Lauren Ratcliffe



1st Century with his scientific approach Photo: Independent

processes are underlying common psychopathologies. "It is under appreciated by mainstream psychology and cognitive neuroscience quite how important and useful psychedelic drugs can be for explaining the mind," Carhart-Harris says.

"Psychedelics are powerful scientific tools, in order to understand any phenomenon, a powerful strategy is to perturb the phenomenon, which LSD does."

"...new things can be learnt whilst old things are unlearnt."

A recently published study of his investigates the effect of LSD on imaginative suggestibility; he would read out a script asking volunteers to imagine, with eyes closed, a succession of sensory experiences, like eating a juicy orange or smelling freshly cut grass. "[Volunteers] fall into a fantasy state where they are imagining what I am suggesting," he says.

When they asked participants to rate the vividness of the experience, the extreme being it was just like reality, the participants of the study that had the LSD treatment rated it as significantly more vivid compared to control. Without needing hypnosis or any authoritarian commands, LSD induced a state of plasticity in the volunteers' perception of the world, indicating big potential for use in psychotherapy.

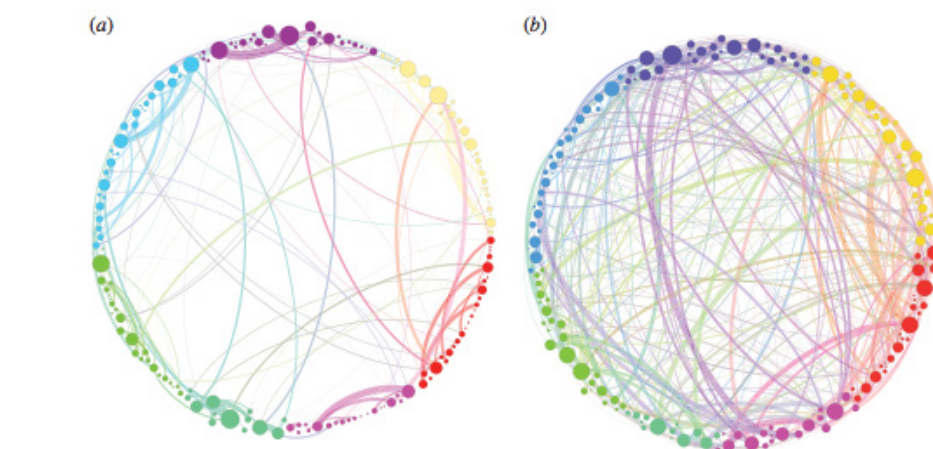
However, it remains a territory that some people from a strict medical perspective might question. "There is this psychological element that some people might find too qualitative and abstract. But you just have to look at the placebo effect to see how effective it can be," Carhart-Harris explains.

ADDICTIONS

Alongside apparent heightened suggestibility, Carhart-Harris' research indicates that LSD could help with the treatment of addictions and depression. "Ordinarily when we experience the world, we do so in such a constrained manner...habits and routines we have are all about digging certain channels in a way that we slip into," he says. "Psychedelics start to fill in those channels that have already been dug out so that they are shallower and you can start falling into different channels."

This happens not just on a metaphorical level but also mirrors what Carhart-Harris has found in changes of brain activity. "Brain activity is governed to a large extent by important hub structures that are important for governing the channels of activity that the brain supports, and to some extent constraining the circuitry of the brain. What we see with LSD and other psychedelics is that these hub structures are affected and their activity is disturbed, which seems to allow the brain to work in an unconstrained manner. Cognition can be more flexible and to some extent broader as connections can be formed between regions that are ordinarily not connected or weakly connected, so we see this heightened plasticity and intercommunication within the brain that we would not see ordinarily," he explains.

Using psychedelics to disrupt reinforced patterns on the brain in people with addictions or depression could introduce a suppleness of the mind, where new things can be learnt whilst old things are unlearnt. A recent study in the United States into psilocybin (magic mushrooms) and tobacco addiction, found that 80% of smokers treated with psilocybin, with the intention of giving up cigarettes,



Visualisation of homological scaffolds (a) placebo (b) psilocybin treatment. Increased functional connectivity can be seen in the brain under psilocybin, suggesting more flexible cognition. Photo: RoyalSociety doi: 10.1098/rsif.2014.0873

abstain from smoking 6 months after the treatment, a better result than the current best treatment for tobacco addiction.

"I have a strong conviction that [psychedelics] will develop into therapeutics in the coming decades," Carhart-Harris says.

HALLUCINATIONS

Out of interest, I thought I'd pick the doctor's brain on his theory behind the manifestation of hallucinations while under the influence of psychedelic drugs. These phantom visions have historically played a huge role in mysticism, the history of religion and the religious experience.

"I don't have a really good explanation for hallucinations, but we have some clues," he says. "One explanation I could offer is that the brain holds priors or predictions about what it is going to be given in terms of sensory information. We come into this world with some innate information about what the world will be like, but you also develop an incredible amount of knowledge about how the world is and this develops over time so that we can process the world much more accurately and precisely.

What you see with psychedelics is that these priors and predictions start slipping into conscious when not induced," he clarifies. "Essentially what you are seeing under LSD is the brain itself, the information that the brain already holds is slipping into our normal consciousness."

DMT

"There are always drugs we would like to look at, but are unable to because of limited resources and prioritising research" Carhart-Harris says when asked if there were any other psychedelics he would like to investigate apart from LSD and psilocybin.

"An interesting one is N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT), which occurs endogenously within the human body and in other organisms, and is prevalent in the plant world. It is amazingly similar in molecular structure to other chemicals present

within the body that do important things in terms of psychology, like serotonin for example," he says.

There are many wild and wonderful theories surrounding DMT and people have theorised that it may be responsible for certain endogenous psychedelic, mystical-type experiences and how these arise in certain circumstances such as near-death. "I'm not sure I agree, it's good to keep an open mind... but there is another theory that is more intuitively appealing – that states of naturally occurring psychosis, when people go 'mad' so to speak, is due to endogenous psychedelic-like compounds being released in the brain, DMT is the main candidate for that – but there is no evidence."

In order to get some conclusive backing for this theory, researchers would need to carry out a spinal tap and analyse the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to give a good index of what's in the brain in someone in a state of acute psychosis. "Some of the best studies that would really crack a problem, are simply not feasible," Carhart-Harris says.

Psychedelic research is still very young, but seems to be an incredibly fertile domain and on the up. Of course, these compounds are to be treated with caution and Carhart-Harris' research is carried out under carefully controlled settings. "The dangers with psychedelics arise when they are taken without the proper caution," he says.

For many drugs the decisions to classify them under Schedule I in the current UK drug legislation was made before modern scientific methods allowed a more comprehensive understanding of their pharmacology and toxicology. As a result, drugs were lumped into groups not based on any consideration of their physical harms but on the assumption they had no therapeutic value.

By breaking the 50 year taboo surrounding psychedelics in research and confronting the mysterious with honest scientific methods, Dr Robin Carhart-Harris and his team of researchers have found evidence that contradicts this assumption.

"...studies that would really crack a problem are simply not feasible."

Science

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Science Editor || James Bezer & Lauren Ratcliffe

Having Trouble Sleeping?

Utsav Radia reports on Imperial's research into getting a good nights sleep

In the UK, 1 in 4 people suffer from some form of sleep disorder resulting in excessive daytime sleepiness. Researchers at Imperial College London, led by Professors William Wisden and Nicholas Franks of the Department of Life Sciences and Dr Mick Hastings' group at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, have shined new light on exactly how the body controls when you wake up and when you fall asleep (the circadian rhythm).

The human circadian system regulates the rhythm of the human body by establishing normal sleep and wake phases. During the transition from wakefulness to sleep, the brain gradually becomes less responsive to visual, auditory and other environmental stimuli and relatively more responsive to internal stimuli. We now understand this transition better in terms of the stages of sleep – stage I being the most superficial and stage IV requiring the most stimulation to wake an individual; REM (rapid eye movement) sleep is either considered separately or as stage V sleep.

Previously, sleep was thought to be a very passive state of unconsciousness with decreased body (especially brain) activity. Nowadays we know that sleep serves a variety of functions: from restoration and recovery, to energy conservation, metabolic replenishment of the brain and even memory!

A 'master clock' found in the hypothalamus called the

suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) is believed to be centrally involved in synchronising many other 'local clocks' that collectively modulate our body's state of activity. However, until now, we were not able to demonstrate the effects of these 'local clocks' in the brain or explain the mechanisms by which they influence various areas.

In this experimental study on mice, the contribution of one putative 'local clock' in histaminergic neurons in the tuberomammillary nucleus (TMN; lies outside the SCN) to the regulation of the sleep-wake cycle was tested. The underlying hypothesis of this study was that histaminergic neurones in the hypothalamus are silent during sleep (i.e. they release no histamine) and only start firing after the onset of wakefulness. The subsequently released histamine, made by the enzyme histidine decarboxylase (HDC), enhances wakefulness by acting on areas of the cerebral cortex.

The scientists selectively deleted a well known 'clock gene' called *Bmal1* from histaminergic cells in mice and found that this led to higher levels of HDC expression and subsequently higher brain histamine levels during the day. As a result of this, the test mice had more fragmented and shallower sleep, prolonged wakefulness, hindered recovery after sleep deprivation and even impaired memory.

The researchers used electroencephalography (EEG)

analysis to compare the levels of brain activity during the sleep-wake cycles in control mice (i.e. those with the *Bmal1* gene in the TMN) with those mice bred with the gene deleted (test mice).

Wakefulness and recovery from sleep was assessed by placing pieces of paper and plastic tubes in the mice's chamber to discourage sleep. It was found that after 5 hours of sleep-deprivation, the control mice had an average of 6 hours more sleep than the test mice. Memory was assessed by observing the ability of the control and test mice to recognise two previously familiarised objects after a fixed period of sleep deprivation and a period of recovery. For both groups of mice, sleep deprivation impaired performance in recognizing the objects; however, the test mice performed worse and explored all the

objects equally.

Dr Xiao Yu of Imperial College London, lead author of the study, expressed how "exciting [it is] to find significant evidence of a local body clock. Now we know that the master clock is not working alone, but relies on lots of helpers to wake up our whole body".

Furthermore, the next steps are to investigate if there is a direct link between the SCN and other 'local clocks' to decipher how sleep-wake messages are interchanged. Nonetheless, this study has helped us to establish a platform to better understand how circadian control may be occurring in humans. Hopefully, we are not far from translating this understanding into tangible benefits for patients suffering from sleep disorders.

"Scientists selectively deleted a well-known 'clock gene' called *Bmal1*."

"Previously sleep was thought to be a very passive state."



Sleep isn't as simple as this mouse makes it look. Photo: Shutterstock

First baby has been born after womb transplant



It's a boy! Baby Vincent
Photo: TheGuardian

In early September this year, a 36 year old woman made history by giving birth to the world's first womb-transplant baby. Absolute uterine factor infertility, caused by either an abnormal or absent uterus, is considered the only untreatable type of female infertility. It affects many women throughout the world, some of whom have resorted to other motherhood options such as surrogacy and adoption. Several uterus transplantations have previously been attempted but no live births have been reported until recently, as part of a groundbreaking clinical trial led by Dr Matt Brannstrom of the University of Gothenburg. It has taken more than a decade

absolute uterine factor infertility, there were doubts as to whether a transplanted uterus could provide nourishment to the foetus, and whether a post-menopausal womb would even work. Eight other women are currently involved in the transplantation trial and the research team has recently announced that two more women are pregnant having undergone the same procedure.

Scientists have to consider the ethical caveats that surround such research, which has been described as one that requires "greater ethical justification than other organ transplants". Critics have questioned whether the operation would be a realistic option since it only seeks to improve one's quality of life rather

of intensive animal research by the team of scientists before achieving this goal.

The Swedish woman was 15 when she was told that she would never bear children of her own after being diagnosed with Rokitansky syndrome, a congenital absence of the uterus. The woman received the uterus from a 61-year-old family friend, and after in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment with her partner she underwent a single embryo transfer a year after the surgery.

Vincent was delivered prematurely at 31 weeks. He is normal and healthy, much to the delight of his parents and the research team.

Before this case became a proof-of-concept for uterus transplantation as a treatment method for

than being life-saving, yet it is costly and fraught with many health risks. However, advocates believe it helps women to fulfil personal dreams of having a child and developing a maternal bond which could be missing from other options, namely surrogacy.

This live birth has opened up the possibility for treating women with absolute uterine factor infertility and is a reflection of the long and challenging journey taken by Dr. Brannstrom and his team. "I want people to know that what they think is impossible can happen," said the new mother who hopes that other women will be encouraged and can tell the same story in the future.

KAY YI CHONG

IMPERIAL'S STUDENT SCIENCE MAGAZINE

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Technology

technology.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Tech Editor ||| Jamie Dutton & Osama Awara

2014: a monumental year for tech, bu

Laptops/Tablets

Apple iPad Air 2

It has been claimed by some as "the best tablet ever made" and when you consider you can pick up the 16GB version for about £350 it is very good value too. It took on a very good tablet in its predecessor and improved the processor and camera whilst also introducing a fingerprint sensor.

In the quest for thinness, Apple had to sacrifice the side switch which started a few teething issues with its users but this has not detracted from their achievement. Onboard is a 1.5GHz triple-core CPU, a total of 2GB of RAM and a



Photo: IGN.com

7340mAh capacity battery which will give you about 10 hours of work or play. Even more impressive are its dimensions - a 9.7 inch screen

on top of 6.1mm of well-crafted technology. I feel a few of these are going to end up under the Christmas tree next month.

Toshiba Chromebook

If you fancy something different this Christmas then maybe a Chromebook is for you.

Data is not really intended to be stored on the device, but a 16GB solid-state drive is part of the package with an extra 100GB provided on Google Drive for free for two years. It runs on Google's own OS and doesn't have the snazziest of specs.

What this computer lacks in toys, it makes up for in comfort and design. It's easy to type and move the cursor with the trackpad and is as stylish as Apple laptops. It has a standard 13.3 inch screen



Photo: htechnews.com

and, like the Air, works with a 1.4GHz processor.

Another pro is the battery life which will give you about 7 hours of

regular use. You can pick this up for less than £220 online, making this one of the best budget laptops available.

Apple MacBook Air 13 inch 2014

The Air is back again and although there have only been a few tweaks on previous iterations, this version of the MacBook looks like one of the best laptops you can buy today. Its main selling point is its battery life, going for about 10 hours depending on the display mode.

It comes with an i5 processor running at 1.4GHz and 4GB of RAM. The design is much the same as before (not many people will argue that they are unattractive) but what you lose out on to other laptops is the relatively poor quality of screen, but figures such as contrast ratio and sRGB colour space coverage are those which



Photo: pcmag.com

are going to be critiqued by the keenest of eyes. At just under £700, the Air is a bit pricy compared to

other laptops with similar specs but that won't stop them flying off the shelves.

Also worth a look...

The **Surface Pro 3** reviewed by Osama Awara in issue 1586, probably established itself as the best 'tablet' you can buy (which will set you back about £1250 for the whole tablet + keyboard package).

Aorus X7 V2 – If Santa has won your local lottery recently and you like gaming you might want to consider this beast. With a CPU that can be clocked at 3.6GHz and 16GB of RAM, this is considered

to be a modern masterpiece of computer engineering. However, with a price tag of £1729, this writer would recommend building a very competent desktop for the same amount or even less.

Smartphones

Google Nexus 6

The Nexus 6, the successor to the much celebrated Nexus 5, is here and its bigger and better than ever. Now manufactured by Motorola, with an improved 2.7GHz quad-core CPU, a massive 5.96 inch AMOLED display, the option of 64GB of memory and a 12 megapixel rear camera, I believe this device is going to sell very well this Christmas. The significant size of the phone means it can accommodate a large battery (3220mAh) and its Quick Charge technology means it can operate for six hours after just fifteen minutes of charge. It also comes with Qi wireless charging which is the icing on the cake for this state-of-the-

art device. It comes out of the box with the newly released Android 5.0 Lollipop OS but at just under £500 for pre-order, it is expensive compared to its predecessors.

Apple iPhone 6 Plus

So if you have an iPhone, but either the screen is smashed beyond repair or you feel you need a bigger screen to look at pictures of cats or watch videos of cats... the iPhone 6 Plus is the probably the phone for you. It comes standard with a 1.4 GHz dual-core CPU, a 5.5 inch Retina HD display, a 8 megapixel rear camera and its battery holds 2915 mAh, so it may seem inferior to the new Nexus.

Gaming

Wii U with Gamecube controller adapter

"Honey, I think we need to talk. I think we need a new addition to the family. I think we need a Wii U". This pleading will probably manifest in at least one home this Christmas time. It may or may not have something to do with the recent release of *Super Smash Bros.* for said console. Yes, it will definitely be a nostalgia-gasm but the problem is about ten people in the country own the console. So go on... be a hero! Get a Wii U so your friends can come round your house and continually humiliate you with Pikachu. And while you're at it, get the Gamecube adapter so they can bring their own controllers and pummel you even more. I promise it'll be fun. You can pick up an 8GB Wii U online for less than £170 and a Gamecube controller adapter for less than £18.



Other

MisMisfit Flash

The more I read about this product the more I wanted it. It's not clear from the name but it is described as a 'personal physical activity monitor' and in a nutshell it tracks how you're exercising and sleeping. It has a simple circular LED display which monitors your heart rate for different activities (cycling, football, running etc). It can double as a watch when



Photo: Amazon.co.uk

required and runs on replaceable batteries which last up to six months. It can be found for less than £50 online and is a bargain considering how relatively new the market is to this type of technology.

Technology

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Tech Editors || Jamie Dutton & Osama Awara

at what do you want under the tree?

However, it is a very attractive piece of kit and it runs smoother than most of its competitors. At £660 it is probably not feasible to buy this for a family member or a significant other, but for yourself it could be a cracking investment.

Moto G 4G

One of the hottest budget smartphones you can buy right now, at under £145 the Moto G is a fabulous device for the money. Unfortunately, the 4G iteration is only available with 8GB of memory but the Moto G has many qualities which put it on a level playing field with the rest. The second generation G (released September this year) has a 1.2GHz quad-core processor, a sizeable 5 inch display and like the 6 Plus, an 8

megapixel camera. Its size limits the battery to a capacity of 2070mAh, lasting about a day of heavy use.

However, for such a reasonable price, this is almost (as Kevin Bacon would say) a no-brainer.

Also worth a look...

OnePlus One it may be the new kid on the block but its earned a lot of plaudits this year despite beginning as an invite-only product. It costs under £260 for the 16GB model.

The **Sony Xperia Z3 Compact** offers everything from its predecessor apart from a full HD screen. It's perfect for Playstation 4 owners with the PS4 Remote Play feature but also good all round in the smartphone department. The Z3 can be found for under £330 online.



X4 Quadcopter

I watched a *South Park* episode recently which lampoons the use of drones and depicted how they could be misused by the public on a grand scale, resulting in the need for police drones and culminating in riots between the police and public drones controlled from the comfort of your bed. As I was watching I was just assuming that a decent drone with a camera would cost you hundreds of pounds but with a quick search on Amazon I found that you can get one for less than £35!



Photo: Amazon.co.uk

Smart Watches

Pebble Steel

Smartwatches are coming into the mainstream and the technology owes a lot to Pebble. The Steel is elegantly designed and gets its name from its stainless-steel casing which protects the 1.36 inch black-and-white display. It doesn't discriminate between phone makers; with its interface compatible with both iOS and Android. With a battery life of up to 5 days and currently being sold at £165 this watch is an absolute steal.



Photo: Wikimedia commons



Photo: flickr.com

Moto 360

Paul Balaji reviewed this piece of kit last week and his impressions were mostly positive. He was particularly impressed by the 1.56 inch LCD screen and its sleek design. It comes with different coloured straps and bodies giving it a personalised feel and running Android Wear allows great options for the default clock interface. Its optical heart-rate monitor, pedometer and water resistance make this a solid buy at under £200 (RRP, seemingly more at the moment online).

LG G Watch R

What differentiates the LG G Watch R from its competitors is its appearance. It boasts a 1.3 inch circular P-OLED screen and looks like a chunky Citizen watch at first glance rather than a typical smartwatch. Like the Moto 360, it runs on Android Wear but it processes tasks with a whopping 1.2GHz CPU (which can currently only be matched by the Asus ZenWatch). At under £220, the LG looks on par with its competitors for value, but unless its design suits you, I would give it a miss.



Photo: androidpolice.com

Coming next year...

The Apple Watch, arriving guns-a-blazing to the soundtrack of a new mediocre U2 album, the Apple Watch looks the perfect accompaniment to your new iPhone 6 or 6 Plus. (Due Spring 2015)

The Samsung Gear S. With a plethora of new features including a massive 2 inch curved screen, an accelerometer and a gyroscope, when the Gear S (right) arrives it will likely be the best smartwatch you can buy. (Due Early 2015).



Photo: slashgear.com

Union Page

Union General Meeting takes place Monday 1 December



We've had your feedback about Higher Education Funding, and now it's time for YOU to decide what your Union is going to do about it.

We're holding a General Meeting on Monday 1 December at 18:30, Blackett Lecture Theatre 1 to determine what our stance should be on tackling the issue of Higher Education Policy. Should we be lobbying for...

▲ Free Education ▲ Tuition Fees ▲ Graduate Tax ▲ or none of these?

This is your chance to help us try and shape the future of university funding for students like you.

A General Meeting is also a chance to talk about anything, and you can submit a paper to the Union Council Chair for a subject to be raised. Papers must be submitted by email to chairman@imperial.ac.uk by Monday 24 November. You can find information about how to write and submit a paper on our website.

Find out more online imperialcollegeunion.org/hef_factsheet

Free STI Clinic



Free STI testing at Imperial College Union, provided by the Terrence Higgins Trust and Earls Court Health & Wellbeing Centre

Gonorrhoea, chlamydia and HIV tests will be available, as well as contraception and sexual health advice.

Appointments are free but availability is limited.

Please email sexualhealth@imperial.ac.uk to request a slot, including your preferred time.

Entertainment Survey



Take our Entertainment Surveys and give us your thoughts on the Reynolds Bar and h-bar!

Situated in Charing Cross hospital, Reynolds bar offers competitive drinks prices, entertainment and two large screens with Sky screening live sports.

The h-bar has been open since November 2013, and has become a great location for Postgraduate students and staff on campus.

We want to get your feedback on the Reynolds and h-bar and what you would like to see.

Singin' In The Rain



Academy. Tickets: £6 Students, £8 Non-Students



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3rd-5th Dec

19:30

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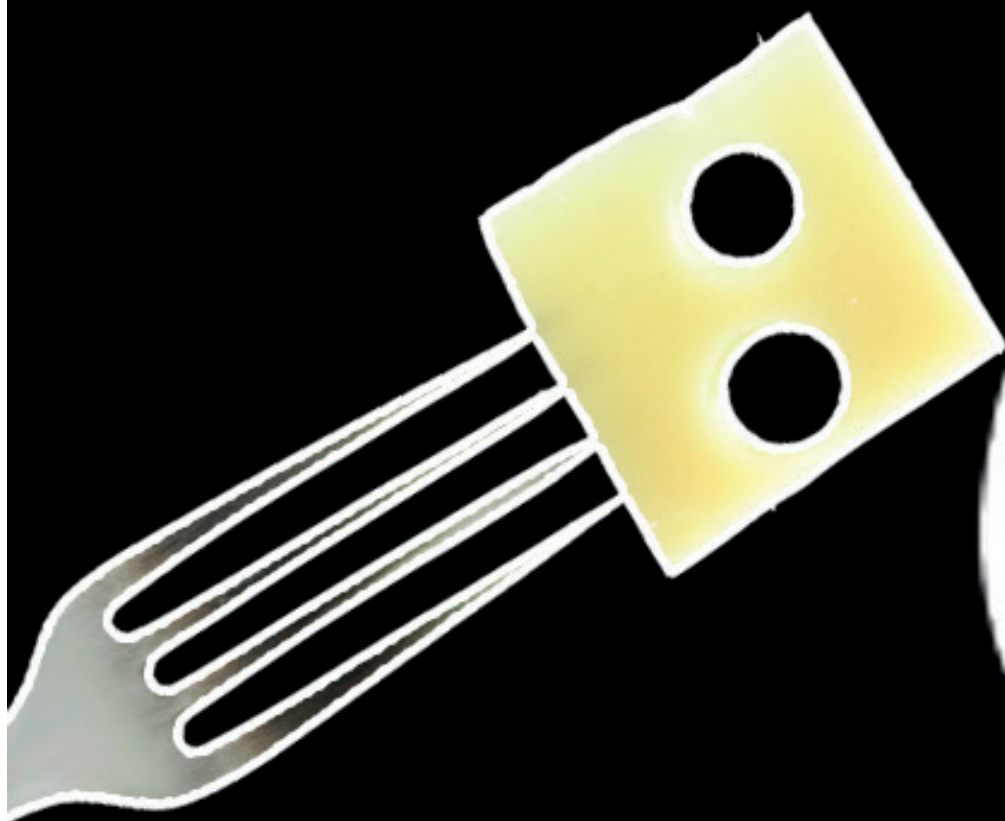


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Film

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Film Editors

Ellen Mathieson, John Park & Jack Steadman

The hardest working man in show business

Although **Jack Steadman** probably isn't the hardest working man in *Felix*

Get On Up

Director: Tate Taylor

Screenplay: Jez Butterworth, John-Henry Butterworth

Cast: Chadwick Boseman, Nelson Ellis, Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer



Biopics have a weird status in the film industry. Most struggle to assemble some form of narrative arc around the messy lives of the famous, but some – and only some – transcend that to become something greater.

Just occasionally, a film like Tim Burton's *Ed Wood* or Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* comes along, proving that really can be something more to biographical films than just 're-telling the story'. Faced with the life of James Brown, one of the most influential, if not the most influential, figures in music, *Get On Up* has high expectations saddled on it from the start.

And damn, if it doesn't deliver on them straight away. The opening is riddled with an infectious momentum, picking out two

moments in Brown's life before the inevitable jump back to the early days. An elderly, borderline delirious Brown threatens some conference-types with a shotgun for the crime of using his toilet, and a younger, successful Brown berates a pilot under fire in Vietnam, insisting that they make it to their gig for the army despite the explosions rattling the craft. Two very different moments, two very different snapshots of Brown. But immediately, two things are clear.

First: This is Chadwick Boseman's finest hour so far. He is utterly consumed by the role, as magnetic a screen presence as you'd expect – as you'd demand – from James Brown, and if this doesn't prove to be the (potentially Oscar-nominated) breakout role that launches him into the acting big leagues, I'll be investing in an edible hat. The recent announcement of his casting as Black Panther in *Captain America: Civil War* and *Black Panther*'s own solo film probably means I won't need to worry too much about that hat, but just in case.

Secondly: *The Help* director Tate Taylor is having an absolute blast here. Working off a screenplay from Jez and John-Henry Butterworth (the duo behind the summer's most



Unfortunately, you don't look quite this good whilst singing karaoke

Photo: Tate Taylor/Universal Pictures

underrated piece of genius, *Edge of Tomorrow*), his scattershot approach to chronology can sometimes make things a little jarring – following those first two scenes, the film ends up with whiplash from jumping back to the beginning, at which point it starts to meanderingly tell the story in vaguely chronological order, replete with the occasional scene from a completely different point in time.

But there's a sense of fun pervading it all that makes you want to let the film off the hook – and besides, telling the story straight would be far too obvious for a film about a man who defied the obvious. That

subversive nature slips through in Brown's winks and nods to camera, culminating in one point with his walking out of a scene while talking to Dan Aykroyd's manager, instead opting to continue the argument with the camera.

The most extreme example of its kind, that little diversion manages to overcome its oddities to help cement the concept of this being Brown's story from Brown's perspective, a tale – a legend – that he is spinning the audience, even if that occasionally means letting him off the hook somewhat for his less endearing activities.

The fact this review has mostly centred around the lead actor and the director is a reasonable reflection of the impression the film gives off – the supporting cast all put in excellent turns, with no noticeably flawed performances beyond the occasional 'man with one line' being a bit dull, and the music inescapably glorious, is, obviously, but it all keeps coming back to Brown, and Boseman's electric performance. Looking anywhere else or noticing anyone else, is tricky. Even in those moments where Brown is being borderline malicious, sociopathic even, it's still him you end up rooting for.

Get On Up is a clever piece of film-making, an alluring cocktail of snapshots from a true industry legend, all bound together by Boseman. Despite the time-jump-whiplash, there's an undeniable sense of momentum, and an infectious joy that spreads throughout – making the moments where the film pulls the rug from under you all the more painful.

It may not be to everyone's taste, and it may be a tad too long, but *Get On Up* grabs your attention and keeps it for its entire 139-minute running time. Which is, whichever way you look at it, a pretty damn respectable achievement.

Second time's not that much of a charm

JACK STEADMAN
SECTION EDITOR

Horrible Bosses 2

Director: Sean Anders

Screenplay: Sean Anders, John Morris

Cast: Jason Bateman, Jason Sudeikis, Charlie Day, Chris Pine, Jennifer Aniston



This year has been an interesting year for comedy. We've had the hilarious-but-not-strictly-a-comedy *Grand Budapest Hotel* and *Guardians of the Galaxy* (amongst many, many others), a glut of resoundingly mediocre entries (looking at you, *Last Vegas*), a few pieces of questionably quality, and lastly the prime example in how to properly do an American comedy



Photo: Sean Anders/Warner

sequel in *22 Jump Street*.

The *Jump Street* sequel was an exercise in knowing what made the first film so entertaining, and respecting that while also making efforts to carve out new ground. It's a high benchmark for comparison, which makes it a shame that, from the start, *Horrible Bosses 2* wields almost none of that charm.

This was a much more traditional sequel, one which adhered to the spirit of the original (albeit with a new director) without straying too far from its comfort zone. A few

genuine laughs aside, the majority of the humour fell into the standard trap of aiming to be offensively amusing, and simply turning out to be smirk-worthy. The saving grace came from the natural talent of the cast, who are genuinely funny people. The film seemed mostly content to let Bateman, Sudeikis and Day bounce off one another, leading to several scenes that simply drag on too long with unfunny riffs on various themes, with the occasional flash of genius. The fact that the out-takes, played over the credits, provide the highest

laugh rate per minute speaks volumes about the talent of the cast – it's just a pity that they've been lumbered with a film that feels so oddly happy to wallow in mediocrity.

Horrible Bosses 2 works best when it allows the focus to stray outside the leads – as likeable as the actors themselves are, their characters are largely unlikeable jerks, so spending any real length of time with them quickly becomes a drag regardless of any jokes they come out with. Chris Pine and Jennifer Aniston both steal the show – the former bringing a manic energy that channels his Captain Kirk at his worst, the latter turning up the nymphomania of her returning, eponymous horrible boss beyond the levels of the first film. Both Pine and Aniston inject the film with life right when it needs it most, blasting away the cobwebs of the excessively long scenes of bickering to produce something genuinely funny. The same can't really be said for the rest of the supporting cast – there aren't bad performances by any means, it's more a case of poorly

written characters and a total waste of the ridiculously talented cast, not least Christoph Waltz.

Horrible Bosses 2's cast really is its biggest strength. The soundtrack is utterly abominable (perhaps predictably), pushing the 'popular music that's sort of relevant right now' button repeatedly, while the editing is lazy and the cinematography standard for American comedies – a bunch of talking heads, a few predictable sight gags, and that's your lot. There are a few inspired moments – the montage of the trio's plan for the money drop that forms the film's centre-piece is hilarious, and the editing/cinematography suddenly up their game to match – but mostly the whole thing just feels like a missed opportunity. It's an entertaining missed opportunity, and if you have two hours in your life that you need to fill with a comedy on the big screen you could definitely do worse, but in the end, *Horrible Bosses 2* is just another not-bad, not-great either sequel. It's a shame.

Games

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Games Editor || Max Eggl & Calum Skene

Newest release: Binding or does it (I)saac?

Calum Skene on the sequel to one of the biggest indie successes

As a big fan of the original Binding of Isaac I was very happy to see that one of this month's Playstation Plus games is the shiny new remake entitled Binding of Isaac: Rebirth.

For people who haven't played the original, Binding of Isaac is a game based on the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, except this time it's Isaac's mum who is trying to murder him. You play as Isaac and must traverse through many floors, each of which are randomly generated each time, and defeat the enemies with your tears. Each floor contains many rooms and these can contain monsters, treasure and items. At the end of each floor you must face off against a boss to open the trapdoor to the next floor. Each floor gets harder and harder but this is balanced by the items you find which serve to give you more health, let you deal extra damage and much more.

The main attraction of this game is its rogue-like play style. Each time you play the game you get different items, face a different layout and have to defeat different enemies. Binding of Isaac is (at least for me) a hard game where



Photo: Bindingofisaac

on an average run I can do 3 or 4 levels but on a good run – which is a mixture of skill and good luck

– I can do more. There is a steep learning curve; beginners might find it hard to get past the first level

but pro players can consistently get to the end and defeat mum. No matter what level of skill you

have with this game the random elements of this game means that there is always a lot to see and discover even in the early levels. As you play more and improve you will begin to recognise patterns in how the game plays and get excited when your favourite item pops up.

The 'rebirth' of the game takes the flash-based original and makes it what it always should have been. The game now crashes less, has an even more beautiful Edmund McMillen art style and has about 100 new items. The game has been left alone in all the right places whilst also being improved and expanded. Everything that was already great and addictive about this game is now even greater and more addictive. Even players who mastered the original game will want the new version because of its new hard mode (as if the original wasn't hard enough). The PSVita version plays very well, controls naturally and the nature of Binding of Isaac means it's perfect for a train or bus journey.

Overall this game isn't new but it is definitely worth picking up whether you are new to Isaac or even if you're an avid fan.

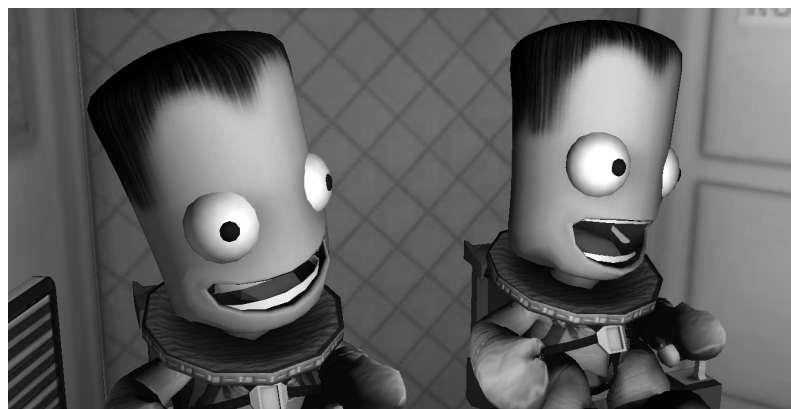
From the KSP Mission Control

In the first of a weekly installment Matt Allinson mourns his brave Kerbals

Jebediah Kerman Day 1, Hour 4

It's with a heavy heart and a tear-tinged eye that the Kerbal Space Centre has to announce the passing of Captain Jebediah Kerman this week, following a rapid and slightly less-controlled-than-planned landing of his space craft – The Ugly Duck II – about 20 metres south of the launch pad he had departed from 30 seconds beforehand.

Cpt J. Kerman had already demonstrated his excellent flying capabilities as pilot of the first ever mission launched by the Kerbal Space Program, the Ugly Duck I. Jebediah was always first in line for missions with the KSP based in part on his enthusiasm, courage, and default setting at the top of



RIP Jeb and Bill: Their sacrifice will never be forgotten Photo: Tumblr

the list as programmed into the game. His tragic death was a freak accident, inasmuch as the engineer who designed the Ugly Duck II had forgotten to check the staging commands properly so that when the main rocket engines fired, the parachute deployed simultaneously,

destroying them and sending the whole craft into an unrecoverable spin. We can all take encouragement knowing that Jebediah died doing what he loved: experiencing 4 vertical g and 6 lateral g whilst pointing straight at the ground travelling at 140m/s. A true Kerbal Hero.

Bill Kerman Day 2, Hour 3

The Kerbal Space Centre regrets to announce the death of Commander Bill Kerman after a spacewalk inadvertently went completely bollocks up. Commander B. Kerman had nobly stepped into the shoes of Jebediah Kerman (which miraculously had survived the wreckage of the Ugly Duck II disaster almost intact) and had been the primary pilot of the subsequent 2 missions launched as part of the Kerbal Space Program.

As commander of the Ugly Duck III mission, Bill became the first Kerbal to leave the atmosphere, reaching a record height of 82,000 metres above the surface of Kerbin. The subsequent Ugly Duck IV mission

saw Bill become the first Kerbal to achieve orbit. Or rather it would've done if he hadn't decided to let go of the side of the spacecraft whilst on EVA. Unfortunately ground-control hadn't actually noticed that Bill had taken such a rouge action for quite some time, as they were busy taking screenshots for the KSP forum.

Questions are being asked about ground-control's attempts to rescue Bill, as various commands sent to his EVA suit saw him drift wildly far away from the craft as there was decided confusion as to whether or not the shift key meant up or down.

By the time common sense prevailed, Cmdr Kerman was 2km away from his craft, and out of monopropellant. Friends and family have all taken solace in the fact that, in death, as in life: Bill was too stupid to realise what abject peril he was constantly in.

Games

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Games Editor || Max Ettl & Calum Skene

GamerGate: not about ethics in journalism

Social Justice Wizard Tom Rivlin gazes into the internet abyss

Anyone with an interest in feminism, social media, video games or nerd culture in general has probably heard this term over the past few months: GamerGate. What exactly is it? Why is it so awful? To get to the bottom of this we need to take a long, ugly look at gaming culture...

The short version of the story behind the Twitter hashtag is as follows: Zoe Quinn, an indie game developer, was accused by her ex-boyfriend of cheating on him in a long, ranting blog post. She was accused of sleeping with a reviewer for the popular gaming website Kotaku. The internet (mostly 4chan and Reddit) ran with this, accusing her of sleeping with said journalist in order to get a good review for her game (it turns out he never reviewed her game, of course).

At around that time, feminist critic Anita Sarkeesian released the latest in her long series of videos highlighting systemic sexism in popular games. Also around this time, there were several opinion pieces by games journalists with provocative titles like "Gaming is Dead", and "There are no more Gamers". They may not have been wrong.

Here's the deal: video games used to be a niche hobby only we nerds did, but now everyone plays them, from your toddler cousin to your grandma. Before it was cool, the community defined a term to describe themselves: gamers. It was simple: anyone who played video games was a gamer, everyone else wasn't.

These days, however, it's become a lot harder to pin the term down. Is a businessman who plays Candy Crush on his morning commute a gamer? Or do you need to have beaten Halo 3 on Legendary difficulty? Clearly the answer is somewhere in the middle, and whenever that's the case you get

"It was simple: anyone who played video games was a gamer, everyone else wasn't."

Steam Greenlight Game of the Week

This week's game found on Steam is Crystal Rift. This game is a 3D dungeon crawler, that was developed with Virtual Reality in mind. This means that if you have an Oculus Rift or anything similar (and I seriously envy you if you do), then this is a game you should seriously consider looking at. The British-based team has done a lot of work with the game, introducing interesting-looking puzzles, married with a great atmosphere and superb graphics.



Photo: Forbes

disagreement. Many gamers use the term 'casual' (in a derogatory way) to describe people who play games but don't fit their idea of what a 'gamer' is. Mostly this means they don't own a console or dedicated gaming PC.

It may seem silly, but words have power, especially labels people use for themselves. Just think of how often a new letter is added to 'LGBTQ+!'. Many (self-identified) gamers see their hobby as escapism from less-than-ideal lives. To them, the 'dilution' of the term undermines an identity that they've invested heavily in, meaning these opinion pieces were a direct attack on not just their hobby, but their way of life. Of course, all the writers were really saying was that gaming is no longer niche, and wondering whether we need a word to describe gamers when everyone is one, but you can see how the conflict arose.

All these things combined together to form a perception that games journalists had somehow 'betrayed' the gaming community they catered to and came from. People were shocked to learn that some game journalists were friends! Their review of GTAV might be their personal opinions, possibly influenced by people they know, instead of some abstract 'objective' review. They thought any mention of social issues like feminism, diversity, or inclusivity must be evidence of journalists working together to promote their own ideology, not realising, of course, that this is just the zeitgeist of 2014. In short, these people have no idea how reviews of works of art work, and are asking for something

impossible.

This insane mess is all driven by a thoroughly anti-feminist worldview, if that's not already clear. GamerGaters will deny this, of course. "Actually it's about ethics in games journalism" has been used as a stock response by them to the point of parody. GamerGaters (i.e. anyone who uses the hashtag and supports the call for boycotting of 'compromised' websites) have been in their 4chan/Reddit echo chamber for so long they don't realise how backwards what they believe sounds to the outside world.

The 'villains' to GamerGate are the Social Justice Warriors (SJWs): their pet name for anyone who wants crazy things like well-developed female characters, racially diverse game protagonists, less overly-sexualised imagery in blockbuster games; basically anything a sensible person would see as obviously a good thing. All of this is anathema to GamerGate.

If this all sounds harsh, it's because it's deserved. Quinn and Sarkeesian had received abuse and credible death threats, had their personal information leaked online ('doxxed') and their websites hacked before all of this started. After GamerGate began (the hashtag was coined by actor and vocal homophobe Adam Baldwin in August) the torrent of abuse grew and spread to others, mostly women (but also many men who stood up for them).

A great example is how actor and 'nerd-celebrity' Wil Wheaton was vocally anti-Gamergate for weeks with no harassment, but as soon as his friend and colleague Felicia Day came out

against the movement, she was doxxed and abused incessantly.

Some female game developers have even quit the industry as a result. Who can blame them? Is it worth putting up with all this to make games that people will hate because they hate you? GamerGaters claim it's about their SJW agenda, but it's really about their gender.

GamerGaters, of course, claim these women are lying about being abused, have faked it all for attention, and are 'professional victims'. Sarkeesian's response to this is at once a stirring quote, and a shocking reminder of how bad things are: "one of the most radical things you can do, is to actually believe women when they tell you about their experiences".

Although it's died down a bit by now, the abuse has not stopped for these people. Every day is a day they have to wonder if that last death threat was credible or not. But there is a bright side: heavy-hitter mainstream media have taken an interest in this story. Sarkeesian has been interviewed by news sources from the *New York Times* to *The Colbert Report*, and has spoken at various conventions. Her story is being told and people are listening.

Seeing this level of harassment has shown many people why feminism is still necessary. GamerGate has introduced so many to feminist issues it's a wonder why no one's suggested it was a 'false flag' by the SJWs all along. At points GamerGate made me ashamed of calling myself a gamer, but deep down I know we're better than that, and I'm proud.

"Seeing this level of harassment has shown many why feminism is still necessary."

Games

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Games Editor || Max Egl & Calum Skene

Always the Story, Sometimes the Choices, Mostly Monsters

Sanchit Sharma reviews a humble bundle purchase he actually plays

Always Sometimes Monsters is an indie game by Vagabond Dog and Devolver Digital. The first time you load it up, you'll see a tiny (560x454) window with the game logo and 3 buttons – New Game, Credits, and Quit. Yeah, no options. This is a pretty simple game. You can adjust the window by pressing F6 or F7, which make the window bigger and fullscreen respectively. If it didn't have those options, the size of the window would make Always Sometimes Monsters pretty much unplayable.

When you press New Game, a cutscene will start. This shows a hitman walking away from his employer, trying and failing to quit. He's interrupted by a random guy on the street, who offers to tell him a story. You have the choice to shoot the guy or listen to the story – shooting the guy will end in the guy dying, and the hitman carrying on with his life. Game over.

A few things happen in quick succession if you choose the (obviously intended) listen option. The guy tells the story of a man hosting a party, as a celebration for his new job. He talks to a bunch of people, and you choose someone for him to drink with. All of a sudden, the character you're controlling switches for the third time. The person you chose to drink with needs to go out to the balcony to fetch his/her partner.

After a little bit of this, it becomes apparent that this is the character you're going to be controlling for most



Photo: irrationalpassions

"Your ex is now getting married halfway across the country in a month. So what do you do?"

of the game, which is good because I was starting to get motion sickness from all the body-jumping!

Fast forward a year and your partner left you, you're about to get kicked out of your flat, and your book deal is falling through. To top it all off, once you've been evicted you find that you're not getting any more cash for the book you were supposed to be writing, and your ex is now getting married halfway across the country in a month. So what do you do? Scrounge together as much money as you can from wherever you can get it and rush madly across the country to stop him/her, of course!

The core of the game consists of controlling this third character through various scenarios. It's pretty open-ended, even though there's a final goal.

"This is a game about decisions, and how each decision we make affects both us and those around us."

For the most part, you explore the town and try to get money. There are a few work minigames that mean that it's impossible to run out of cash, but these can be avoided if you do all of the 'quests' correctly.

The inventory management leaves a bit to be desired and sometimes it's not overly clear what you need to do. Overall though, this simplistic gameplay works quite well. The majority of the game is plot, and that's how it should be.

This is a game about decisions, and how each decision we make affects both us and those around us. Even the first decision of the game, whether or not to listen to the guy on the street, has an enormous impact on the game. Sure, they could have forced you to listen, but

that would have taken away from the message. You come across situations throughout where you need to decide if you're going to do the right thing or the thing that will further your own goals, and there's a 'fate' score that reflects how much of a dick you've been. In the end, you only have 30 days to raise the cash you need though, so sometimes being a dick is necessary. Through the game, the player is constantly presented with interesting choices – some of these have no impact and others have impact far beyond what you might first expect.

I should level with you at this point: I haven't finished this game yet. Steam tells me that I've been playing for 3 hours, so I expect a good 2-5 more hours before I do so. Maybe my story will end with my protagonists (Samantha and Lizzie) reuniting. Maybe not. But that's what this game is about. We don't know how it's going to end, we don't know when it's going to end. What we do know is that our decisions matter, and when it does end everything that happens will have been as a result of the choices we made along the way.

Trigger warning: Always Sometimes Monsters has content with racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, mental health, sexual assault, child abuse, animal abuse, drug abuse, and suicide.

Always Sometimes Monsters is available from the Humble Store (with a Steam key) or directly from Steam for \$9.99 or £6.99 respectively.

Enforcing the Law: Simulator Style

MAXIMILIAN EGGL
SECTION EDITOR

Recently Felix Games was offered a steam key to Enforcer: Police Crime Action, to test and try out, review and break! And that is exactly what we have done.

A little overview; Enforcer is a "life-simulator" game, with an emphasis on the police force side of things. You are a police officer, starting out in a new little mountain town, and the aim is to advance your career in the force with the ultimate goal of being the chief. However, in addition to this you can also live your life, designing your home, having fun with your pals and visiting the town. Lastly since this game is a simulator, everything is done with hyperrealism (as far as possible). Right now the game is in

beta, so lots of features are currently unimplemented and there are still lots and lots of bugs.

When I was offered this game I was super excited. I get to play as a police officer (maybe rampage a bit, GTA style), as well as do some of that stuff that makes the Sims so fun. However, almost never playing any simulator games I did not know exactly what to expect.

I jumped into the game as Frank (the most generic policeman name ever!), and saw how efficient the existing police force was in my town. After pulling out my sub-machine gun and gunning down some people, I came to the conclusion that they were pretty useless. No sirens, no calls not even the bystanders seemed to care! Hmm, I definitely would not be relying on my colleagues here. So I promptly changed into my uniform and started policing. As I drove my

car into town, I immediately got a call to pick up a drunk who had been

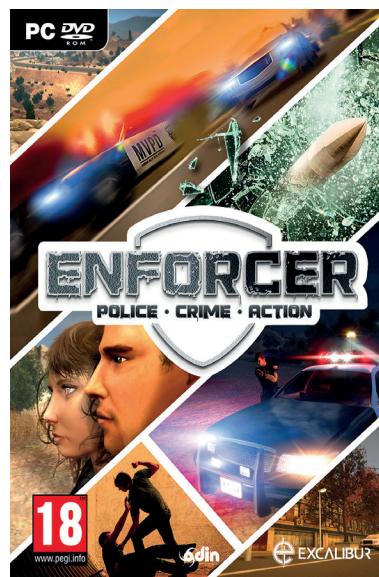


Photo: excalibur-publishing

causing problems. After scanning my HUD I realised that I could find this menace on the minimap. And So I did. However, midway through my handling of this rowdy character I was called in to take care of some murderer who was wondering the streets. I had to make the hard decision which one was the bigger menace to society, and in the end I decided that the drunkard definitely could cause more harm (also I was like right next to him so...yeah). However, when I tried to apprehend him and send him to the can, the game crashed. Maybe the game judged me on my ethics?

Oh well, so I started the game up again and tried to make the good choices. This time I was trying to arrest some woman who had stolen from the bank. Not only did I end up chasing her for about a mile, the game ended up crashing once again when

I tried to send her to jail. So it wasn't my choices!

The experience of the constant crashing really ruined the game for me, especially since it was one of the major mechanics of the game that caused the crash, meaning that I almost couldn't play.

So presently I am pausing the game and waiting for it to be in a better state before I play it again. Currently, the AI is quite stupid, there are quite a few bugs and lots of crashing. I mean, the potential is definitely there. I felt really badass (yes okay I know I am sad) when I was breathalysing people and giving them tickets, but on the other hand I couldn't really send them to jail because the game would then crash.

So I would advise y'all, as much as you love simulator games, to wait this one out. The game will be awesome, but not in its present state.

Arts

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Arts Editor || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

A Reimagination of Biblical Size

Clara Clark Nevola takes on the ENO's gospel interpretation

Two huge, historically successful institutions which have recently lost their appeal, their relevance and many of their dedicated followers: Opera and Christianity. What better way to show the reviving powers of art than to create an exciting, contemporary opera about the Passion of Christ? As pretty much everything in this new piece by John Adams, it's a good idea with truly disastrous results.

The Gospel according to the other Mary, which the composer describes as a "Passion oratorio", is a companion piece to his much acclaimed piece *El Nino*, about the birth of Jesus. It aims to tell the other central Christian story, the Passion of Christ, though even this simple concept is not necessarily obvious from the staging of the production. In an attempt to score triple brownie points (contemporary opera, contemporary take on Christianity and awareness of social injustice and gender issues) the opera is recounted from the point of view of the women who partook in Jesus' life: Mary Magdalene, her sister Martha and the downtrodden, disenfranchised and exploited women who made up the core of his early followers. Mary Magdalene is initially a promising character; jailed for political protest, abused and mistreated in her past, she is an unstable, self-harming and mystical character, embodying the ambiguous sensuous-spiritual love for Christ that the traditional redeemed-prostitute view of her hints at. After a few hopeful scenes however she seems to just drift around pointlessly, leaving the leading role to secondary characters. This is a real shame, as the reinterpretation of Mary in this modern key is one of the most original ideas of this derivative and repetitive production.

The opera is split in two acts, each of which recounts key stories from the Passion. The staging is modern but so sparse and inconsistent that it is hard to place. We're told that Mary has been to prison, in which her cell mate was a drug addict going cold turkey and that Martha runs a hostel for homeless women, setting the scene for a tough urban setting. Most of the large choral scenes, showing large dissatisfied rebellious crowds, are sung in Spanish, evoking scenes of 20th Century workers protest in South America. Above it all floats a moving cloth with painted images of the prostate body of Christ. It is doubtful whether Peter Sellars, the director, had a clear idea of what he wanted the stage to look like, but if he did, he certainly did not get round to telling anyone else.

The interesting idea in the opera



John Adams' *The Gospel According To The Other Mary* at the London Coliseum Photo courtesy of the ENO

is the recounting of Biblical stories through the eyes of women. To do this Sellars, who also wrote the libretto, took female-friendly (or at least neutral) texts from both the Old and the New testament, bulking them out with an interesting array of 20th century poetry and texts from Saint Hildegard of Bingen (a 12th century mystic). These create excellent juxtapositions, taking the edge off the preachy-ness by integrating well known biblical phrases with emotionally charged, graphic language. Regrettably, the libretto does not shine as it should, despite the very competent soloists. The dramatic text and rousing (though long winded) music don't do enough to lift the drab stage and passive cast. The opera is trying to tell us that the motives and problems that motivated Jesus and his early followers are as pressing and relevant today as they were then, but how can we believe it when the cast display so little involvement and commitment? Their passivity is slightly mitigated by four "dancer" figures, who animate the characters like shadows. Most of the time they're an annoyance, and further confuse the story as they are not fixed to their character, flitting from one to the other as

"It's a good idea with truly disastrous results"

props in a school play. The one glorious exception to this (almost the redeeming feature of this production) is Banks, an astonishing flex-dancer who represents the moods of each scene. The second act is completely taken over by him, as he is the only alive, vibrant and interesting thing left in the performance. Certainly his presence is a bit odd, and definitely distracting from the story, but his performance is so extraordinary compared to the flat, lifeless and convoluted production that his presence is defiantly a relief.

It's a shame to have picked up so many promising ideas and to have ruined every one of them- John Adams and Peter Sellars would have done well to take tips from Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice about how to make an edgy contemporary opera about Jesus- the Gospel According to the Other Mary has none of the snappy popularity of Jesus Christ Superstar, none of the intimate spirituality of faith and nothing that could keep the audience in their seats past the interval.

The Gospel According to the Other Mary runs at the ENO's Coliseum until 5th December. Tickets available from £5.

"It's a shame to have picked up so many promising ideas and to have ruined every one of them"

Editorial: The Transformation Issue

FRED FYLES
KAMIL MCCLELLAND

SECTION EDITORS

The Western Canon. For some, it is the creme-de-la-creme of artistic expression; a source of extreme beauty, and due recognition for a number of writers. For others it is an outdated concept, one that reeks of Western imperialism, racism, and misogyny. But what happens when you want to reinterpret a classic work? In this issue of Felix, we are looking at how classics are transformed by contemporary artists.

We start off with the ENO, who are taking on possibly the most well known piece of art in the entire world: The Holy Bible. In *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, John Adams has scored a dramatic retelling of the story of Jesus. Clara Novela Clark delves into this opera, and lets us know whether it is a biblical success, or just an epic failure.

Elsewhere, Jeff James takes on a new reimagining of Sophocles' ancient drama *Philoctetes*; through careful adaptation and radical direction, James has transposed the play into the modern age, turning it into a treacle-soaked production - *Stink Foot*. Peter Sarvari heads down to The Yard Theatre to give his judgement on the play, while we sit down for a chat with the director to find out the challenges of taking on a classic.

Peter Sarvari also heads down to The Barbican Centre to check out *Howie the Rookie*, a dive into the alcohol-soaked realm of Dublin's criminal underworld, bringing with it fierce lyricism and manic energy. The lack of multiculturalism in the Western canon is taken on by Indra Malik, who utterly destroys the idea that medieval art features only Caucasian people. Taking on a whole range of examples, from Black Madonnas to Hieronymus Bosch, she explores how black and Asian people have largely been written out of this art history. Finally, Kieran Ryan challenges the idea that the impossible is unobtainable. Taking an inspirational quote from author Neil Gaiman as a starting point, he gives some examples of artists who have achieved the impossible, and in the process transformed the art world around them. One such artist is Llew Watkins, who will be giving a talk at Imperial next Wednesday. So that's it for this week's issue; hopefully we should have showed you that it is possible for art to transform not only your view of classic works, but the whole world too.

Arts

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Arts Editor || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Taking on the Classics: A Director's How-To Guide

Fred Fyles chats with Jeff James about theatre, traditions, and treacle

How do you go about reinventing the wheel? This was the question facing Jeff James when he decided to take on Sophocles' classic piece of drama *Philoctetes*; directing and writing the adaptation himself, James has shaped the play into something new, renaming it *Stink Foot* after Philoctetes' main feature: his rotting, stinking foot. It was this foot that led to him being abandoned on the island of Lemnos for ten years, until it is prophesied that he is needed back in Troy in order for the Greeks to win the war; it is up to young Neoptolemus to convince him to return, using every ounce of skill and cunning in his mind. It's a heavy mantle to take on, and so we sat down with James for a chat about the challenges of adapting Greek drama, the relevance of the play to modern life, and the dangers of using gallons of treacle on stage.

So firstly, when did James become aware of the play? 'I'd read Sophocles at university, and thought that this play was very interesting, funny, and profound – I kept coming back to it, but thought it was too difficult', says James; eventually it was a friend who pushed him to produce the play, saying 'if that's the play that's obsessing you, then you should go for it'. And taking on Sophocles as his first adaptation, was that always the plan? 'No, initially I didn't know I would write it,' admits James, 'but there were things that I could feel in the play, and wanted to express'. After a period of deliberation – 'one scenario was to employ a writer, and adapt it in collaboration' – James ultimately felt that by writing the adaptation himself it would be 'easier to get these ideas across'.



Stink Foot by Jeff James. Daniel Millar (Philoctetes) and Joshua Miles (Neo). Photo: Bronwen Sharp

Luckily he wasn't alone in the endeavour; he has enlisted the help of designer Alex Lowde, with whom he worked in a Young Vic workshop the previous year. Together they came up with an ingenious staging device: treacle. 250 kg of the stuff, which oozes out of the sores on Philoctetes' leg, eventually covering the pristine stage. 'The treacle idea actually came really early on in the process', says James, 'a nasty black pool is an interesting way of representing Philoctetes' foot, which is supposed to be the most horrible foot in the world.' But the treacle takes on a more symbolic role too: 'the play is about morality; Neo is employed to trick Philoctetes, who is essentially a lonely disabled man. He starts off by saying that he isn't the kind of person to trick people, but it's a question of ethical compromise'. As James puts it succinctly: 'in the end everyone is

just lost in this shit'.

Like many things in the theatre (pyrotechnics, children, live animals), working with treacle can pose a unique set of challenges for the actors. These can be both physical – 'the actors would slip everywhere... the treacle pulled out body hair' – and mental – James mentions that 'it was interesting to see how a person's acting style can change as they become covered with the treacle.' The presence of the treacle means that it's a fine balance (literally) between the actor's intentions and their physical limitations.

This isn't the first time James has turned his attention to classic theatre, having previously directed plays by Anton Chekhov and Harold Pinter, but he admits that he is 'a bit bewildered by the distinction between new writing and classic texts in the British theatre industry'. He follows

the maxim of George Devine, one of the founders of the Royal Court's resident company, who said 'treat new plays like classics, and classics like new plays', but admits that it can sometimes be easier to access the classic texts: 'these classic plays exist, and it is easier to access them than to access the very best new writing, which often goes straight to the Royal Court'.

But are these plays still relevant to the modern age? 'Yeah, I think these classic plays still explore modern ideas', says James, who explored the link between Sophocles and urban life in his article *The Desert Island and the City*. 'The desert island never becomes a home – even after years there, the castaway still wants to return home', he writes, 'we are unable to get used to the strangeness of living alongside so many other people, but the only thing worse

would be to live alone'. Alongside this theme of alienation and ethical compromise, the play also explores 'the difficulty of having a body; the materiality of it', as expressed through the ever-present, stinking foot of Philoctetes.

It can be difficult to adapt any classic text, and James is aware of the possible pitfalls: 'when you adapt well known texts people can get quite upset if they come to see it and don't recognise the play exactly as they know it'. But taking on Sophocles comes with its own challenges: 'the form of the play is so strange', explains James, 'Sophocles had so many radical ideas about the theatre, and it's so exciting that he engages with the form at that level... but every other line in the play is a reference to a classic story or figure, the kind that would be relevant to Greek audiences'.

So what is his solution to this problem, which can lead to the 'play resisting you'? 'I tried to cut out all the references', says James, 'except the ones where we could show the audience exactly what we meant'.

Ultimately any form of adaptation is daunting, and James has set his sights high by starting with one of the founding fathers of the theatre, but during our conversation his energy and passion for the project is evident. Does he hope that this will encourage a new generation to explore Greek theatre? Perhaps. 'It's not a question of accessibility, more about communicating the things that I really want to get across. But if people get into Sophocles because of this, that would be amazing.'

Stink Foot runs at *The Yard Theatre* until 2nd December. Tickets are £12.50 adults, £10.00 concessions

Stink Foot: Greek Theatre Reimagined

PETER SARVARI
ARTS WRITER

Two men fight half-naked in a puddle of golden syrup. One has a magic bow in his hand and the other tries to avoid him shooting down the lady playing Odysseus. The shadows on the wall reflect the play on the stage. An innovative performance, such that you have never seen before, at student friendly prices. A must-see.

Stink Foot is a new adaptation of Sophocles' Greek tragedy *Philoctetes*; Philoctetes' foot is not stinking, but smells like sweet treacle, Odysseus is a female, and Neoptolemus, the

"... giving us an insight into the ruthless and selfish nature of humanity"

son of Achilles, is overly straight. Philoctetes has a magic bow, a reward for saving Hercules' life, but was abandoned on a desert island by Odysseus, simply because no one in Greece could bear the smell of his poisoned foot. But now the Greeks need to use of the bow in the long ongoing Trojan War.

When I set foot in the Yard Theatre and walked across the stage – built from recycled materials – to find my seat, I knew I was going to see something unusual. But it is perhaps more accurate to say that there was no stage at all, with the actors performing right in front of, and sometimes behind us. I felt that what I would see would be really involving

and lively, but the cast exceeded my wildest expectations.

The story may not be long and complicated, but it can be interpreted in a myriad of ways. It shows us two entirely different characters, employing two different kinds of persuasion, allowing us to see the result of each.

It is like good cop versus bad cop, one being kind and empathetic, the other authoritarian, while giving us an insight into the ruthless and selfish nature of humanity. Even without any interpretation the story was easy to follow; despite the rather simplistic plot our attention was maintained due lively dialogues, brilliant acting, and director Jeff

"Theatre has never felt so alive!"

James' innovative means of depiction: displaying pain with harsh noise, having Philoctetes' foot ooze golden syrup, using a DJ mixer to convey divine messages – these are all ways to bring the audience closer to the performance.

Perhaps I wouldn't recommend this play for those who are expecting a full, epic story, or all night entertainment, given its snappy 70 minute run-time. But for those who enjoy watching well developed, fleshed-out characters, appreciate excellent lighting and sound design, and are interested in the director's panache, then I couldn't recommend *Stink Foot* highly enough. Theatre has never felt so alive!

Arts

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Arts Editor || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Ruthless. Disgusting. But Honest, with Truth to Tell.

PETER SARVARI
ARTS WRITER

Howie the Rookie is an 80 minute single-actor play directed by Mark O'Hove and performed by Tom Vaughan-Lawlor, playing from the 19th to the 29th November in **The Barbican Centre's** Pit Theatre. The piece won two prizes, attracted critical acclaim, and also won the Irish Times Best New Play award. After all these fancy lines let me now dig deep into soul of the play and show what I found.

It all starts with that fearful repetitive sound. It describes the mood of the night really well, the pub and the pitiful characters, who have no way out of the wood. This first sentence leads me to discuss one word- character. Yes, but in what sense? Vaughan-Lawlor played one character - Howie - and then in the second half of the play switched to Rookie; during this, sometimes he played others, sometimes he did not. But we know others existed, because he both mentions them while he was acting, and also since social interactions with other people were expressed by Vaughan-Lawlor's original character. After this long



Tom Vaughan-Lawlor brings the energy in Mark O'Rowe's *Howie the Rookie* Photo: Patrick Redmond

"It is sometimes funny, or eye-opening, or truly sad, or all at the same time"

and complicated diatribe, aimed at explaining how one actor can give birth to several ones who are playing different characters, one is very likely to ask if the storyline can be followed. The answer is yes; partly because of the wonderful acting (more about this later) and partly because of the storyline, which barely exists. The plot the writer wants to convey is a mixture of short stories; situations based around one guy or two. He depicts a bunch of hopeless guys and girls, and their way of living; it is

sometimes funny, or eye-opening, or truly sad, or even all at the same time. The message the writer is putting across is not within a soft shell, but - through the staging of the action - bursts out in a non-fearful way.

That being said, the storyline and the characters could be enhanced. There was - I found - perhaps too much in terms of swearing or fighting, making it difficult to find a character with whom one could sympathise. But this must be attributed to the ruthlessness and

"If you want something innovative, special and modern, you have just found it here"

the candidness of the play and is a consequence of its topic. If you want to see a romantic fairy tale with your loved one as a Christmas treat, this play might be one to avoid.

But if you are bored with the mainstream theatre, and want something innovative, special and modern, you have just found it here. The play is definitely funny, if you are able to stomach its novelty; what makes the story a lot more involving is Vaughan-Lawlor's amazing acting (and it wasn't just me that thought this - one lady used that term at least five times afterwards to express her admiration), the fast dance-like movements, the really skilful use of tone, and the mysterious lightning, which combine to make the drama, the action and the whole story lively and irresistibly involving - despite the fact that there is only one man on the stage. Due to Vaughan-Lawlor's strong presence you start to feel you know the characters, you grasp the plot and, by the end of the play, the story is your own.

Howie the Rookie runs at The Pit Theatre at Barbican, until 29th November. Tickets are £18 for adults, students can gain a discount through the Young Barbican scheme.

Nothing Is Impossible

Neil Gaiman is possibly the most quotable living person. In his "Make Good Art" speech in Philadelphia two years ago he gave a rousing encouragement to young practicing creatives, and his take on some of today's art practices. He also came up with about 10 epiphanic lines; "make glorious and fantastic mistakes"; "do the stuff that only you can do"; "...you have no idea what you are doing. This is great."

As inspirational/soppy as this may seem to you, I'd like to talk about one in particular. It goes like this:

"The rules on what is possible and impossible in the arts were made by people who had not tested the bounds of the possible by going beyond them. And you can."

I think this is an important one, because it's precisely the attitude that you need as a young creative to make something new that is true to your abilities. An open mindedness to new things.

Consider that the Impressionists, Turner, Van Gogh, and many other huge canonical art figures were scoffed or thought little of in their lifetimes. But even more than this - because fame and even widespread critical acclaim I don't think are the end-goal of an artist - think of the mindset of anyone you know who has made something actually

interesting.

For example, my sister and I love the band Elbow, and we've been to see them twice. Last week for my birthday she surprised me with a T-shirt on which she's painstakingly drawn some of their lyrics, and a flock of starlings, and on the back the logos of the O2 Arena and Echo Arena.

Or think of the early Youtubers, who in '07 and '08 realised that talking into a camera for four minutes was more engaging than almost all of television. Think of making up your own chemical symbols because the originals are rubbish. Think of the "Notes to a Fresher" series that Felix ran last year - short creative pieces by Imperial Horizons students.

Think of the artist Ben Wilson who paints miniscule images onto the blackened chewing gum on the Millennium Bridge (Seriously, Google it).

Think of an arts magazine that you can literally walk through - huge pages of drawings and video and poetry - that's the idea for Roulade, the magazine co-edited by artist and poet Llew Watkins who is speaking at Imperial next Wednesday. His work and interests are thoroughly interdisciplinary, and his sculptures often exist only temporarily.

These peoples' mindset is that they have this thing, this idea, and they assess it based on merit, based on how well it's going to do the thing they want to do. And then they do the thing.

Responding to the world around you in an honest and open manner I think is crucial to making things. It's important to know what other people have made, but it's really, really important to know that what other people have made does not in any way define what you can or can't make. There are no criteria. There are no rules. If it's interesting to you, it's worth making.

Llew Watkins is speaking on Wednesday 3rd December at 13:00 in Blackett LT1.

He will talk about interdisciplinary practice - art that is based on collaboration and bringing together different areas of expertise. He will talk about the term post-internet art and what that means, however especially his interest in the straight-forward bringing together of film, politics, performance, text, image, sculpture and internet to tell a story.

Perception is continually called into question throughout this poet and artist's work, creating raw and daring work at the boundary between mind and reality.

KIERAN RYAN

Student Art



Venus de Starbucks by Indira Mallik

Arts

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Arts Editor || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Transforming Modern Perceptions of Medieval Art

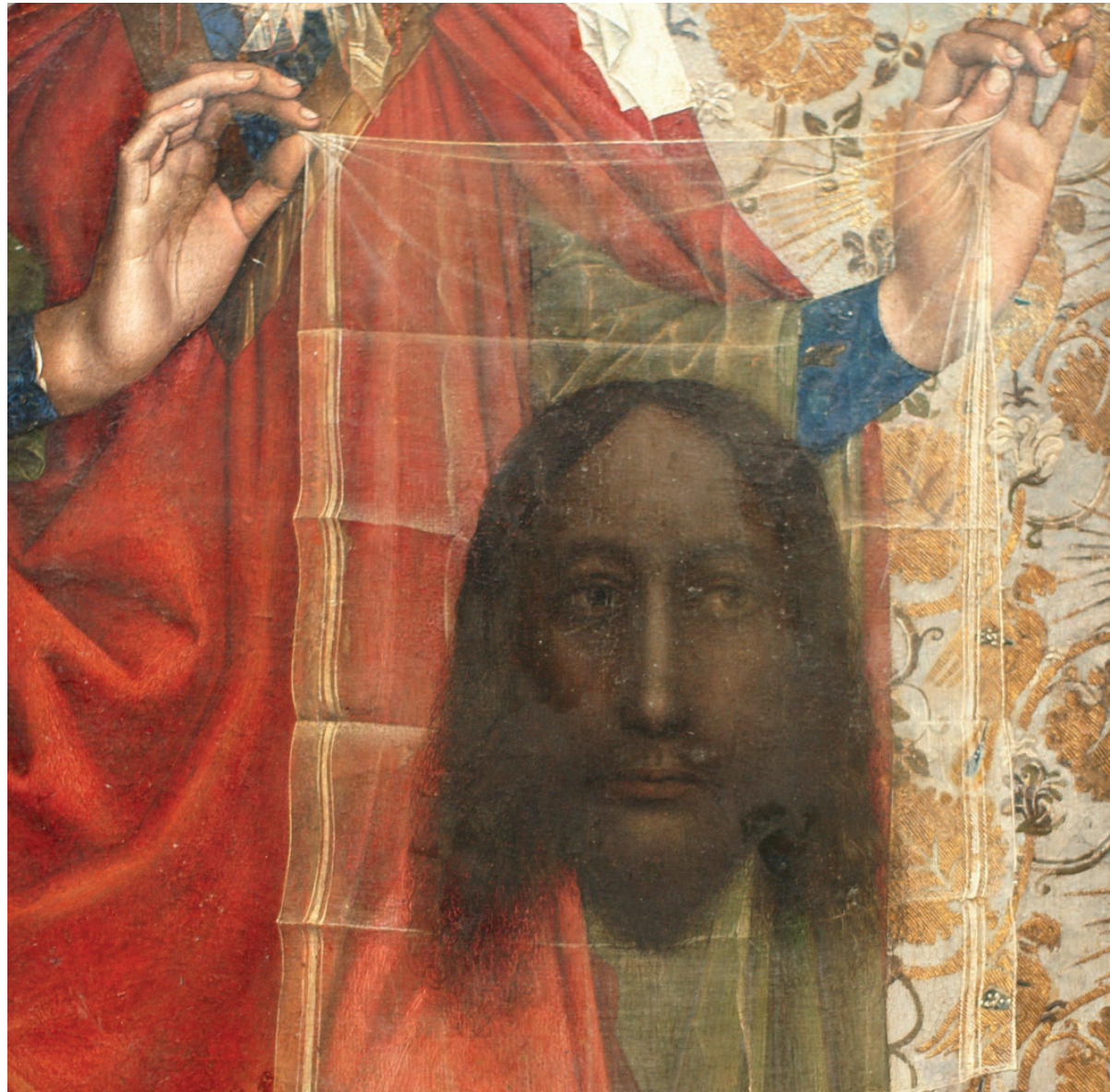
Indira Malik explains how prejudices have clouded our appreciation of art

Earlier this month, the author Saladin Ahmed wrote on Twitter “the fantasy vision of a medieval Europe devoid of people of colour isn’t realism. It’s a different word that starts with ‘r’ and ends with ‘ism’.”

I’ve always been interested in art, and in all of those years of admiring Renaissance and Medieval artworks, the thought that I was not seeing the whole picture never occurred to me. The absence of art depicting people of Asian and African descent in European art history seemed to me more an artefact of the lack of globalisation rather than the erasure of existing artworks because they don’t fit in with our preconceived ideas of Medieval and Renaissance society. But even my most rudimentary of research has shown me that people of colour have been depicted throughout European art history, often as any other citizen would have been, at all strata of society; yes, as slaves, but also as courtiers, nobility and men and women of wealth and power.

These artworks are not even as obscure as one might imagine, often the true story lies in looking closer at familiar works of art and recognising what is already there. The Garden of Earthly Delights – the triptych painting by the Dutch master Hieronymus Bosch dates from the late 15th century; three oak panels, it depicts a scene from Genesis, showing amongst others things, the presentation of Eve to Adam by God. It has been heaped with praise and even inspired Joan Miro and Salvador Dali; but what art history books fail to mention is the incorporation of not one but at least 17 figures that are clearly of African descent in addition to many others of different skin tones. This highlights the power that erasure and miseducation holds; because we have been taught not to expect it, we often dismiss it altogether.

People of colour (who were definitely not enslaved) have been incorporated into tableaux throughout European art history – there are black bystanders in Liberale da Verona’s work *Dido’s Suicide*, an Ethiopian envoy forms part of one of Carlo Saraceni’s frescoes created in 1617. Scenes depicting the adoration of the magi have always shown at least one king of the three to be a man of Middle Eastern or African descent. These depictions range from Spanish paintings to Italian frescoes to German wood cuttings, showing that Europe has always been a place that people of all nationalities and skin colour have travelled to, worked and settled in. The idea of a completely white Europe simply has



St Veronica by Robert Campin of Flémalle (1410)

never existed.

So if this art has always existed, why is it not taught in our schools? Why do we as children grow up with an idea of Renaissance and Medieval society as one that is deeply segregated? Evidence suggests that this may have more to do with the influence of the 18th and 19th art historians than historical truth.

Take for instance the case of the Black Madonnas of Europe. Over 450 ‘Black Virgins’ exist across Europe, including those attributed to Saint Luke who is said to have painted his copies from life – a dark skinned Virgin Mary from an African or Middle Eastern background. What is striking is that accounts of these pieces do not hint that contemporary viewers found her anomalous in any way, simply referring to her as ‘Our Lady’ without comment on skin hue.

It is only in the 18th or 19th century that these were seen to need explanation, the perceived darkening of skin tone was attributed to an accumulation of smoke, careless handling by worshippers and deterioration of pigment. These

theories have now mostly been debunked, showing that hues would have deteriorated to a distinctly Martian green as opposed to the brown of darker skin.

In the 18th and 19th century many of these were painted over, including the statue of Mother and Child in Tindari, Sicily with its Latin inscription “*nigra sum, sed formosa [I am dark, yet beautiful]*”. ‘Explanations’ for Robert Campin of Flémalle’s 1410 *St Veronica* painting with its dark skinned Christ are never offered up by artists of the time. It is only in later centuries that we find art historians trying to justify them as by this time, colonialism had meant darker skin tones were seen as of less aesthetic value.

In *From Majesty to Mystery: Change in the Meanings of Black Madonnas from the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* the anthropologist Monique Scheer notes that “Johann Wolfgang von Goethe also expressed a sense of aesthetic disappointment in black Madonnas in a comment from 1816: “How the most unhappy of all appearances could have crept

in – that, probably for Egyptian or Abyssinian reasons, the Mother of God is portrayed as brown, and the face of Our Saviour printed on Veronica’s veil was also given a Moorish colour – may be clarified when that part of art history is more closely examined.”

As modern viewers we need to recognise that our perceptions of history and art have often been formed by people such as Goethe whose racist and colonial views have informed our idea of what was ‘normal’ in Medieval or Renaissance Europe.

Art history may not seem like a significant issue in the face of on-going racial unrest. Only this week, violent riots have resumed in Ferguson, Missouri when state prosecutors declined to bring charges against officer Darren Wilson who shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager. But, history forms a large part of our identity and the way we see the people around us.

In *Black Indian: A Hidden Heritage*, William Lorenz Katz writes “If you know I have a history, you will respect me.” and the sentiment was reflected by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her 2009 TED talk: “Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. Show a people as one thing, only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become”. Representation is important; it is imperative that the history of people of colour in Europe does not become tied wholly to slavery and that the diverse heritage of Medieval Art is not lost in the tired trope of racism weakly disguised as ‘historical inaccuracy’.

The erasure of people of colour from the narrative of Medieval art is not only essential for the way we relate to various groups of people today but to the art itself. As the famous Guerilla Girls piece reads, “you’re seeing less than half the picture without the vision of women artists and artists of colour”. But this could so easily refer to the art as well as the artists. In his essay on art and propaganda George Orwell wrote: “every work of art has a meaning and a purpose – a political, social and religious purpose... our aesthetic judgements are always coloured by our prejudices and beliefs.”

It is important that we learn to recognise our prejudice as artists but also as modern critics; it is true as Goethe writes that Medieval art needs to be more closely examined, but perhaps ultimately it reveals more about our own ideas and prejudices than it does about the original artists.

"The idea of a completely white Europe simply has never existed."

"... perhaps ultimately it reveals more about our own ideas and prejudices than it does about the original artists"

Have your say

Union General Meeting

Monday 1 December, 18:30, Blackett
Lecture Theatre 1

We've had your feedback about Higher Education Funding, and now it's time for YOU to decide what your Union is going to do about it. We're holding a General Meeting to determine what our stance should be on tackling the issue of Higher Education Policy. Should we be lobbying for...

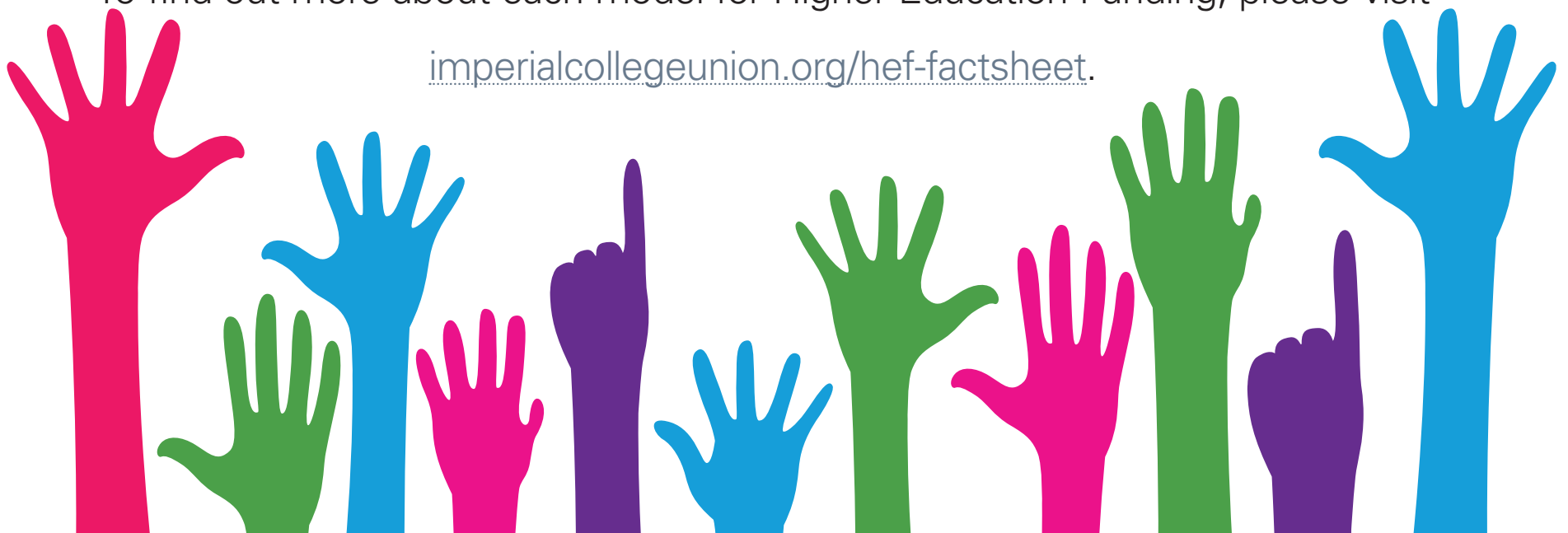
▲ **Free Education** ▲ **Tuition Fees** ▲ **Graduate Tax** ▲ **or none of these?**

This is your chance to help us try and shape the future of university funding for students like you.

A General Meeting is also a chance to talk about anything, and you can submit a paper to the Union Council Chair for a subject to be raised. **Papers must be submitted by email to chairman@imperial.ac.uk by Monday 24 November.** You can find information about how to write and submit a paper on our website.

To find out more about each model for Higher Education Funding, please visit

imperialcollegeunion.org/hef-factsheet.



Fashion

fashion.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Editor || Cecile Borkhataria

Model of the moment: Kendall Jenner

Cecile Borkhataria on how Kendall is taking centre stage on the runway

If you haven't heard of Kendall Jenner by now, then you probably live under a rock. Her face has been plastered on every magazine cover, from the likes of Vogue to the edgy Dazed and Confused. She is part of the new wave of social media powerhouse models, with multiple selfies posted on her Instagram account – a de rigueur daily ritual. Many will know of her from her childhood appearances alongside her sisters on the hit US reality tv series, *Keeping up with the Kardashians*. Despite the fame she acquired from appearing on the series, she was determined to become a model from an early age, without the Kardashian name. In an interview with Juju Chang on *Nightline*, she explained that she has worked hard towards achieving her newfound success as a model, saying “In reality I worked pretty hard for this, running around doing tests. It wasn't like I just got it magically.” When she was asked why she wanted to become a model, she said “I would always be looking at these supermodels, they were just so amazing to me, they were like superheroes... I want to be some little girl's superhero. I want to be the best role model I can be to a little girl or a little boy or to anybody.” Interestingly, she has asked her sisters not to attend her catwalk shows, because she feels that this would take the attention away from her, especially if her uber-famous sister Kim Kardashian West were in attendance. Recently, in an attempt to distance herself from her *Keeping up with the Kardashians* persona, she dropped her last name so that she would be taken more seriously. She said that she did this at all her model castings last year, where she only went by her first name. Kendall enjoyed her big-break as a runway model in September, for the Spring/Summer 2015 fashion season, which saw her walk the runway for 13 labels at New York, Milan and Paris fashion weeks. Among some of the big names she walked for were Diane Von Furstenberg, Chanel, Givenchy and Dolce and Gabbana. Her global success as a fashion sensation has only just begun, and two weeks ago she announced on her Instagram and Twitter accounts that she would be the new face of beauty cosmetics brand Estee Lauder.

Kendall is not only a hugely successful model, but she is also a businesswoman, much like her older sister Kim. With her sister Kylie Jenner, she has launched a jewellery line called 'Metal Haven,' a clothing line called 'Kendall and Kylie,' sold at US retailer Pacsun, as well as a

"I want to be some little girl's super hero."

shoe and handbag collection for Steve Madden. The budding model has even ventured into writing, and in 2014 released a novel co-authored with Kylie called *Rebels: City of Indra* (which was actually ghostwritten by Maya Sloan).

Kendall has said that her reputation as a reality tv star has made it difficult for her to break into the fashion industry, and she has had to work a lot harder to be taken seriously and build a career in modelling.

With her recent rapid rise in fashion, rumours about her life have run rampant. Recently, it was reported that fellow models were mean towards her during fashion week, would bully her backstage and put their cigarettes out in her drinks. However, in her latest magazine interview with *Dazed and Confused*, Kendall confirms that these rumours are exactly just that: rumours. In the issue, which hits newsstands on the 27th of November, she said “Everyone's been really cool to me. I've never had one girl be mean... so far.”

The rumours about her don't just stop at the runway either. Being as famous as she is, she has been romantically linked to many high profile stars, including Justin Bieber, Chris Brown, Harry Styles and more recently, Dallas Mavericks basketball player Chandler Parsons.

Earlier this month, Kendall celebrated her 19th birthday at Chateau Marmont in West Hollywood, where she re-united with her close friend Selena Gomez. The two were feuding after Kendall had been spotted out to dinner with Justin Bieber, Selena's ex-boyfriend. In a recent interview however, Kendall set the record straight, clarifying that her and Bieber were in fact just very close friends. Another rumoured frenemy, Cara Delevingne, also attended the party, ending rumours that the two are feuding. Both Cara and Selena sang happy birthday to Kendall.

So, what's on the horizon for the fashion sensation? The star will soon be featuring as the new face of Karl Lagerfeld's own fashion label, and it's been rumoured that she may replace Cara Delevingne as the face of Chanel. This isn't so implausible, considering that Cara Delevingne has announced that she will be focusing more on her acting career next year.

Kendall has compared her busy, whirlwind year to living like Hannah Montana. She told the New York Times “It's definitely two different worlds. I feel like Hannah Montana. But it's fun.”



Kendall Jenner walking for the Diane Von Furstenberg runway at the New York Spring 2015 Fashion Week. Photo: Glamour.com

HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

Students steal CT scanner to recover club costs

Sources have revealed to Hangman this week that a group of men took a large piece of machinery to a local Cash Converters with hopes of receiving cash in hand. Upon closer inspection it was found to be a CT scanner, which was damaged but still useable, although has now been deemed a health hazard.

Although it is uncertain as to where this CT scanner was sourced, it coincides with Charing Cross hospital reporting last Wednesday that one of their own scanners had gone missing. The scanner was seemingly dismantled and carried out of the building, in a manner that, according to a mechanic “would imply those removing the scanner has some crude knowledge of medical machinery.”

CCTV was unable to capture the culprits on camera, as those cameras located in the vicinity were also dismantled and removed too. The same mechanic told hangman, “It was like these culprits had experience with this sort of crime: the latest footage to be recovered shows a group of men, semi-naked, approaching the camera with an apparent look of apprehension on their faces. They then purposefully grasped the side of the camera, and the screen goes blank.”

“It was like they knew exactly how to stop a camera from capturing what they were doing. Maybe they had been caught on camera in the past?”

Sources from the hospital said they then saw a group of ten or so males attempting to “unplug” the equipment, before descending into an argument about how to remove the technology in question.

A patient said she could hear mutterings, various “grunts” and large bangs from inside the CT consultation room.

It seems the team of men later managed to dismantle parts of the machine, and were seen apparently



It is uncertain if the men suffered from any radiation issues after

skulking through the corridors lumbering the large chunks of metal, dragging wiring along behind them. Said one patient who was walking the corridors after being unable to sleep: “It looked and sounded like a bunch of cavemen dragging carcasses down the hall. I couldn’t quite work out who they were or what they were carrying, but I kept getting wafts of beer from them as they stumbled out of sight.”

The students, who appeared to be of an “athletic physique,” then offered up the scanner once reassembled for cash in hand early Thursday morning. They were willing to take the first offer presented to them.

The shopkeeper told Hangman they don’t usually trade in medical equipment, especially pieces that looked like they had been forcefully dismantled then reassembled and was leaking some questionable liquid, but

the boys seemed desperate.

“All of them were talking at the same time in the store, but I caught snippets of something to do with a broken window, some sort of fine and having to pay for training next year.”

“They also managed to produce about 30 silver sterling stethoscopes, 50 copies of a yellow and green A5 handbook in various states of distress and some sort of large bird costume.”

The shopkeeper said she handed over roughly £2,000 for the lot. “They seemed pleased: one of them said something about how that it was more than “stewarding” would have got them anyway.”

In unrelated news, Imperial Medicals have managed to raise enough funds to pay for their training, coaching and transport for the next academic year. The team are reported to be “ecstatic.”

Deputy President (Welfare) has smooth first date, but doesn’t seal the deal

SKILIPPA PHETT
ANONYMOUS UNION SOURCE

Sources close to Hangman revealed this week that Chris Kaye, our esteemed Deputy President (Welfare) took a female senior member of staff out for a date – to Reynolds. The staff member in question was keen to investigate Reynolds and its perceived drinking culture, and Kaye seized the opportunity to accompany her.

“She invited me,” he blushed, before continuing, “Or rather, I did maybe invite myself along but she was pleased I think for the company.”

The couple were spotted catching the number 10 bus outside of the Royal Albert Hall towards Hammersmith, before walking up to the bar under the Charing Cross Hospital. The pair braved Wednesday Sports night, a venue some would consider challenging at best, and downright terrifying at worst for a first date.

Chris said it was one of the more difficult first dates to navigate, especially as he had not met her on Tinder. “I hadn’t had a chance to stalk

her, so didn’t know what to ask about. She talked a lot about education policy which was interesting, but my phone died so I couldn’t google a lot of what she was saying.”

Chris also found it difficult to enjoy any privacy during the date. “Obviously, I am kind of a big deal, so people were coming up to me and saying hi. People also recognised my date from things like the student prospectus, being on stage on graduation and having her own Wikipedia page.”

However, the date seemed to go smoothly, and although Chris wouldn’t say if they left together, he did say they would be seeing each other again. “We sit on a lot of the same advisory boards, so I will actually be seeing her next Tuesday morning to discuss the outcomes to the General Meeting for the Higher Education Funding.”

He told us that although its not his preferred second date of choice, he understands she is a busy woman. “She’s so important, like myself, so we have to just make time where we can if we are going to make this work.”

“It is still early days but you know, YOLO.”



Is this Imperial’s most eligible and most well endowed bachelor?

Impotent student takes up sport

It was revealed to Hangman this week that a student was left “upset and confused,” after picking up what he thought was a leaflet addressing erectile dysfunction. After initially glancing at the subtitle “get active, no hassle,” the anonymous first year aeronautics student was hopeful that finally he might get some information on how to address his flagging issue.

However, he was left disappointed when upon closer inspection he realised the leaflet was actually advertising the

new Imperial Sport programme, known as “Impetus.”

The scheme, that costs £30, allows students to play sports without the having to commit and play in leagues. Sport Imperial provides the scheme for “competitive sports” such as Table Tennis, and Ultimate Frisbee.

Said the student, “I’ve been worried about my little problem for a while, and it seems to be a common shortcoming with a few of my friends. I was

hoping that finally I can get some more information on my limp handshake but I really don’t want to risk searching for it using the hall’s Internet service.”

When asked if he was aware of the incognito searching mode, he refused to comment. He did add however that he might give Ultimate Frisbee a go now though, as “maybe a bit more exercise may put some wind in the sails.”



HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

Diary of a Fresher, aged 18 3/4

Saturday 22nd November

Dear Diary,

Today I went ice skating with Dorothy, as she had never been before and wanted to take pictures of us together on the ice for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. She took about 150 photos and all were blurry as I kept slipping and sliding about on the ice. She posted them all and then tagged me, and Mum liked some of them, then started to ask me about Dorothy during our Saturday night Skype call. She wants me to bring her over for the weekend. MY BEDSHEETS ARE EVEN MORE EMBARRASSING AT HOME GOD NO

Sunday 23rd

Dorothy knocked on my door super early this morning, asking if I wanted to go for a walk in Hyde Park. I was planning on having a lie-in (I was up quite late on reddit) but she pretended to go in this sort of childish strop until I said I would.

She still won't sleep with me, she says if I love her I will wait until "she's ready." That's fine (obviously, I am a feminist after all) but when did we start telling each other we loved each other? This is meant to be a big point in a relationship, and we have been only going out like a week? Need to Skype Mum about this.

Monday 24th

Received 55 whatsapp messages from Dorothy. Many consisted of just strings of emojis, some of which I didn't even recognise or even know what she was trying to say by using them. Dating is hard.

Received a letter from Kris Krays in jail in Turkmenistan, and he is coming home next weekend! They dropped all the charges and apparently he had started an underground gambling circle with some of the cellmates, and he's a liability or something but it doesn't matter, he is coming home! I am going to meet him at the airport, and Dorothy really wants to come along too.

Tuesday 25th

I spent the afternoon off in the library. I went to the fourth floor (where all the fresher's study obviously, I am not ready for the imposing silence of the second floor yet). It is so warm! Even though it is November people are walking around in shorts and t-shirts, and at one point I swear I saw someone literally tackle another person for trying to move their desk fan.

Wednesday 26th

I told Dorothy that I was going to the ACC Bar night next week (as a geek lol so I can just wear 3D glasses from that cinema trip in freshers week) and she got super upset before I had even had a chance to ask her to come with me.

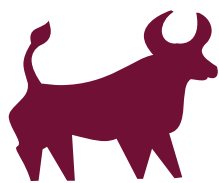
I don't understand this woman .

HOROSCOPES



ARIES

This week you are an oversized spanner. Upset about being brandished by your committee members in an attempt to overcompensate for their own (personal) shortcomings, you run away, hobbling awkwardly into the night. Some RSM douche picks you up, and claims you for their own. Sweet freedom was so close.



TAURUS

This week, you are studying for an exam and write all of your revision notes on your dick. After nipping to the toilet to examine your shaft of knowledge, you realise your crotch sweat has blurred the black ink, making them unreadable. Once you go black, you never go back; you hobble back to halls instead, knowing there is no way you would pass the exam anyway.



GEMINI

This week you are still DPW. You decide to ask an older woman out on a date - to Reynolds. As you sip on a midori bomb together, your date is crashed by four naked medics. You watch in sadness as they enthusiastically lead your date away, who seems just as happy to join them. Don't be sad, there are plenty more swipes to be made on tinder.



CANCER

This week you do your first all-nighter in the library. You spend seven hours "prepping" yourself mentally, three readjusting your seat and two moaning on facebook to friends about having to pull an all-nighter. You cram all your work in between 5am until 8am, but you crash out as your work prints and miss the deadline entirely.



LEO

This week you decide that you are so jealous of all the students that get reading weeks that you decide to take this week off. After missing all your lectures, the head of your department calls you into their office to tell you that as a lecturer you are being employed to teach and, unlike your students, you have to turn up to lectures. Personally you can't see the problem as all your students love you.



VIRGO

This week, you plan your outfit for the ACC Bar Night. You use the hall washing machine to clean your BDSM gear for your "get yo freak on" outfit, but fall asleep with it still in the machine. You wake-up chained to your bed with your Hall Senior standing over you wearing nothing but your knee-high leather boots. Life just got a whole lot more fun.



LIBRA

This week you take a nap in EEE. You wake up and find someone has uploaded a picture of you napping to facebook. Aroused by the voyeurism of it all, you browse through the site getting hard. You wake again; it was a dream within a dream and now someone has uploaded a photo of you napping with a boner.



SCORPIO

This week, on the advice from a friend, you try to cheat on a test by writing your notes on your dick. Sadly, the test is online, and not only that, was plagued by so many technical difficulties that it gets cancelled anyway. You wipe the ink off your shaft of knowledge dejectedly; maybe next time eh.



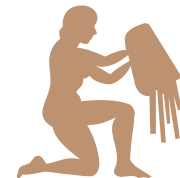
SAGITTARIUS

This week, you are the Felix Editor and have to write the horoscopes avoiding any Felix in-jokes due to all those that complained about the in-jokes. Now you are an in-joke too, how fucking meta is this. We still think you are a wanker, you try writing these fucking things every week.



CAPRICORN

GO ON, YOU FUCKING WRITE THESE THINGS, LIKE LITERALLY COME TO THE OFFICE AND GIVE ME 50 HILARIOUS WORDS OF DEPTH AND MEANING TWELVE TIMES OVER LIKE I BET YOU BLOODY CANT EITHER



AQUARIUS

This week you have to calm the Felix editor with some sedatives as she has a breakdown trying to write the horoscopes so near to the deadline. As she lulls into unconsciousness on the floor of the office, you secretly change the title of Felix to "The Library Café Magazine." No-one notices the difference.



PISCES

This week you are so hungover you puke right in the middle of the library. However, being Imperial, no-one bothers to look up, someone absent-mindedly shushes you and you simply return to your seat, pale and dazed. Better crack on with that problem sheet, it won't do itself.

Puzzles

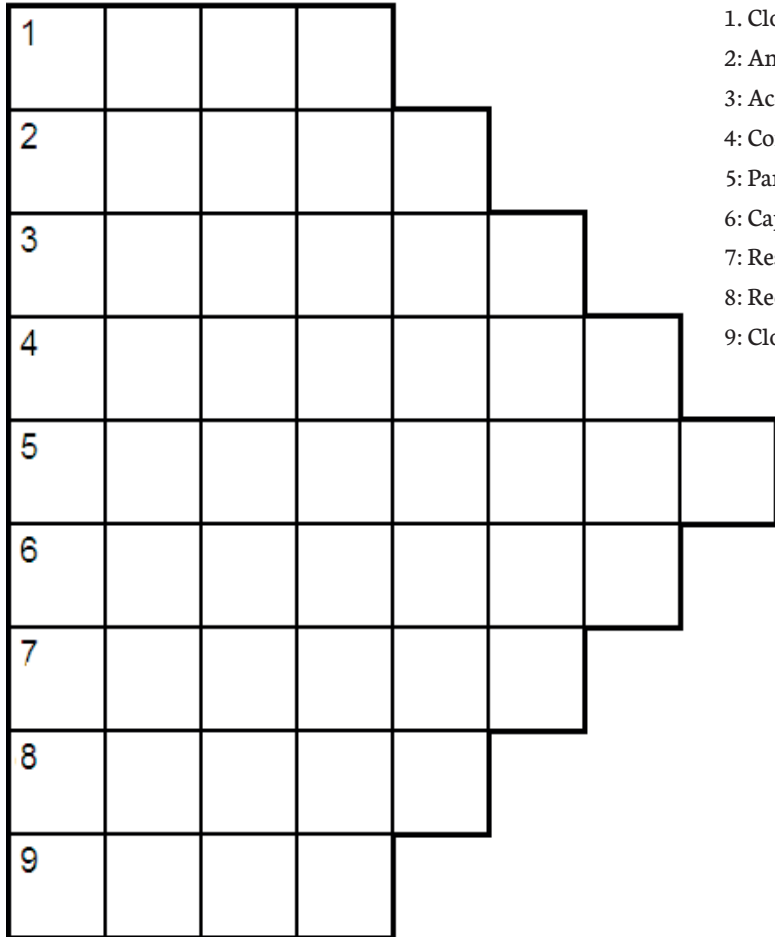
fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

Puzzles Editor | Michael Faggetter

Acrostic Grid

Paul G.

The solutions to each pair of clues are anagrams of one another, but only one of them belongs in the grid. When the correct solutions from each pair have all been entered, the first column will give a Disney character.

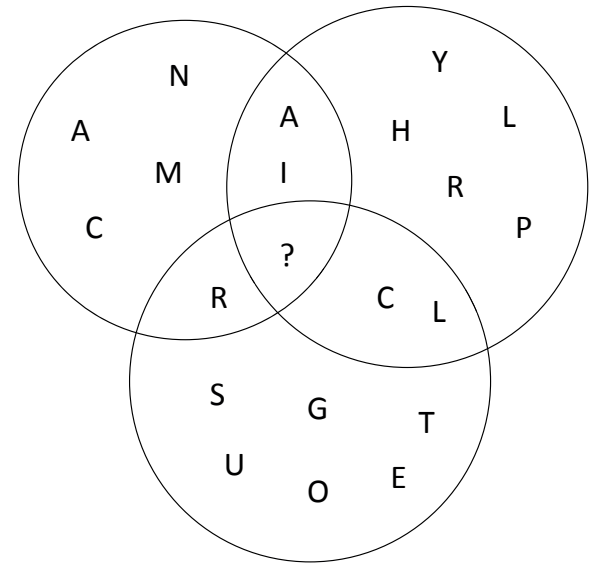


Clues:

- 1. Close || So
- 2. Animal cry || Pivot
- 3. Accompany || Part of a circle
- 4. Concerned || More boisterous
- 5. Parts of transistors || Social insects
- 6. Captain || Fish
- 7. Research dissertation || Robberies
- 8. Recorded || Skilful
- 9. Close || Deserve

Triple Word

These three circles contain words with a common theme. Find the missing letter and discover the link!



Benedict Cumber-bros



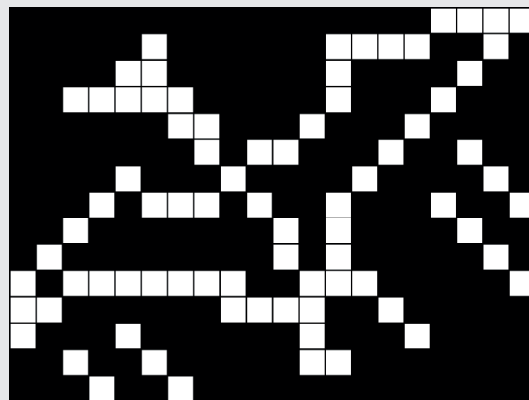
Last week's solutions

As editor for the puzzles page, I take full responsibility for the typo in the Nonogram last week. The clue for the 17th column should have read 2,3,7. If you submitted a solution which was otherwise correct then I have awarded you the points. Thank-you to all those who emailed in.

Quick Crossword



Nonogram



Word Ladders:

- 1. PINK MINK MIND MEND MEAD
- 2. FUNK PUNK PINK PINE TINE
or
FUNK JUNK JUNE TUNE TINE

Word Search

The remaining letters spell out PINA COLADA and SCREWDRIVER.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| CREME DE MENTHE | COCOA | GIN | ABSINTH |
| COFFEE | VALPOLICELLA | TEA | CAPPUCCINO |
| COKE | OOLONG | CUPPA | CHAMPAGNE |
| COCKTAIL | MILK | BRANDY | CAMPARI |
| LEMONADE | MEAD | ROS | KIR |
| LAGER | RAKI | RUM | ARAK |
| ALE | LATTE | SAUVIGNON | BORDEAUX |
| ESPRESSO | OUZO | SHERRY | BUCK'S FIZZ |
| SODA | GROG | BITTER | BASS |
| POP | SPIRIT | BREW | BLOODY MARY |
| PILS | LIMEADE | BOURBON | MILD |
| WINE | SCHNAPPS | SHOT | DARJEELING |
| RIESLING | SHANDY | TEQUILA | SQUASH |
| PORT | CHERRYADE | CHABLIS | SCOTCH |
| IPA | COINTREAU | SANGRIA | DOM PERIGNON |
| SAKE | PUNCH | RETSINA | KEG |
| MARTINI | SLIVOVITZ | CLARET | BEAUJOLAIS |
| PINT | VODKA | CAVA | LASSI |
| HOOCH | NOG | VEUVE | COCA-COLA |
| ADVOCAAT | BEER | CLICQUOT | |
| ASTI | STOUT | JAVA | |
| | CALVADOS | DRAMBUIE | |

Clubs and Societies

felix@imperial.ac.uk

C & S Editor || VACANT

Mascot Mayhem at Tri-Union Bar Night

Philippa Skett reports on the loss of CGCU's mascot

It seems that City and Guilds College Union (CGCU) have been foiled again; this time having their mascot, Spanner, stolen from right under their noses.

The mascot – a giant spanner imaginatively named, well, Spanner – is over a metre in length and weighs in at 64lbs [why am I reporting on a fucking spanner!? Ed.].

This cumbersome piece of brass was taken from the CGCU office last Friday morning by a member of the Royal School of Mines Union (RSMU) committee, despite a member of the CGCU committee also being present.

The RSM student, a member of "Skinner's Bottom" (The RSM mascotry team) visited the office to return another mascot and a tankard that was stolen from CGCU on Thursday evening during the Tri-Union Bar Night. According to CGCU President, stealing mascots during the night was off limits "so that they could meet for a play-date." Felix remains uncertain as to what this

actually means but was not inclined to investigate.

After being granted access to the office by security, the student went to return the mascots, but was greeted by the CGCU Media and Marketing Officer (MMO), seemingly fresh-faced after the previous night.

The MMO did not recognise when the RSM student lumbered the large, overbearing piece of hardware into his Mary Poppins-esque sports bag, then left, Spanner in tow. Said the MMO "I thought the spanner was already in the secret mascot stronghold safe from the slimy hands of RSMU."

Felix spoke to Ben Warnick, who gave us a hilarious recount of what happened. Said Warnick, "As soon as the CGCU's officer's attention strayed, the spanner was hidden deftly in a hockey bag and the Miner beat a hasty retreat.

"The weight of the spanner in the bag was not insignificant, sufficiently so that the Guildswoman commented

... why am I reporting on a fucking spanner?
Ed.

"one would assume a cloak would only hinder the movement of a large metal spanner."



Why is he wearing a cloak? Photo: Facebook

upon the weight of bag. Despite being a hair from discovering the intercollegiate espionage occurring under her nose, the miner managed to escape with the spanner much to the embarrassment of the CGCU Mascot Bearers."

Photos later surfaced of two members of Skinner's Bottom – one wearing what appears to be a fresher's pub crawl t-shirt as a bandana – brandishing the large spanner in front of the RSMU office. Both are wearing top hats, and one also appears to be in some sort of cloak, although it is unclear if the outfits are integral to the mascotry stealing, as one would assume a cloak would only hinder the movement of a large metal spanner.

RSMU then issued a ransom to the CGCU, asking for £250 to be donated to RAG, for evidence of Spanner

working on the bolts of Tower Bridge for which it is allegedly designed to do, for the president and Spanner bearer to do yards of alcohol and CGCU to write a grovelling letter of apology.

Felix has kindly printed the letter, mostly because we find it hilarious, satisfying one of the four ransom note demands. Since the Tower Bridge walkway is closed after a dropped beer bottle smashed its new glass walkway, it is uncertain if students will be allowed up wielding a heavy piece of weaponry to attempt to unscrew any fixtures, but at time of press a spokesperson of Tower Bridge declined to comment.

Felix has every faith in Tim Munday, CGCU President, that he can indeed down a yard, and wish him every success in his endeavour.

The letter of Apology

Dear Guildsmen,

It is with great shame and sadness that I must write this apology. For apologies I must for the loss of our dearest, most spanneriest mascot, the Spanner.

Unbeknownst to the CGCU Exec, most of whom spent the morning in question recovering from the Tri-Union Bar Night, the cunning President of the RSMU had hatched a dastardly plan to robe us of our most scared of artefacts.

Having somehow gained access to the CGCU Office he was able to search unabated for Spanner. Until, that was, he was walked in on by our Media and Marketing Officer. To her shame she did not recognise the violation that was occurring in front of her or the incredibly heavy bag he walked out with. She believed all too easily the story he told about returning poor violated Bolt and did not recognise the flattery he bestowed upon our office as the distracting lies they were.

But what chance did she have when up against such an astute, calculating individual as the leader of the great RSMU. What chance would any mere real engineer have when confronted by the wit and skill of those who study the rocks. It is fitting that we take this total defeat valiantly and it is right that we congratulate the RSMU on their patience, their adeptness and their determination.

And now lonely Spanner, so far from home, faces the indignity of having to appear next to the so much more impressive, shinning edifice of Davy and our union faces the humiliation of being so clearly bettered by the RSMU.

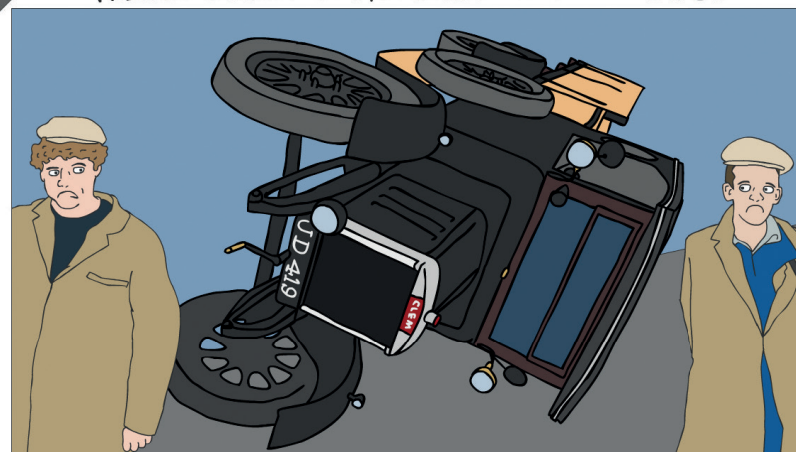
So I apologise to you all for the loss of our mascot and the shame brought upon our Union by it. I ask you for your forgiveness and promise that this will only make us more dedicated that one day the CGCU will reach the dizzying heights of success of the RSMU.

TIM MUNDAY
CGCU President

MASCOTS BEHAVING BADLY

BY OSCAR FARRELL
TRUE STORIES OF IMPERIAL'S MASCOTS MISBEHAVING

PRINCE CONSORT ROAD / EXHIBITION ROAD – 1970's



RSM MASCOT – CLEMENTINE

"I THINK WE SHOULD HAVE PUT LESS BEER IN THE BACK..."

SPORT

Sport Editor: Kunal Wagle

Racism in football: Is the sport living in a deluded bubble?

MAX EGGL
SPORTS WRITER

Racism is unacceptable. Regardless of who you are, the situation you find yourself in, or any excuses you may offer up, the moment you bring up someone's race is the moment that you have crossed the line. However, there seems to be one area where casual racism is endemic, and is rarely punished. I am talking about football. If you Google football and racism, you will come upon scores of results, and ones about the lack of it are rare.

While you may believe this is actually about sport in general you only have to look as far as NBA to see how racism is treated in other sporting activities. In April this year, TMZ released a recording from September 2013 between LA Clippers owner Donald Sterling and a female friend.

Sterling told V. Stiviano: "It bothers me a lot that you want to broadcast that you're associating with black people", and, "You can sleep with [black people]. You can bring them in, you can do whatever you want", but "the little I ask you is ... not to bring them to my games". The person she had posed with on Instagram? Magic Johnson, a Basketball Hall of Fame player. After the comments he made he was subsequently forced to sell his franchise, and now has a lifetime ban. This all happened within the space of roughly two months.

Now consider the strange situation of Malky Mackay. Almost three months ago text messages of homophobic, racist and sexist nature were revealed, which had been written by Mackay during his tenure as manager of Cardiff City. This was further exacerbated when the League Manager's association declared that this was all just "friendly text message



Malky Mackay and Dave Whelan are currently under investigation by the FA Photo: Wigan Athletic Football Club

banter" – a statement they soon apologised for. What!

However, it seems that this did not seem to be the end of Mackay's career, as it justifiably should have been. Instead he has now found new employment as manager of Wigan Athletic. You may think that would be the end of this story. But wait, there is more.

In response to the controversy that surrounded the appointment of Mackay, Dave Whelan, the Chairman and Owner, made equally horrible statements in support of his manager. He tried to veil his comments as compliments as well as comment that certain words weren't actually racist, but this resulted in it just coming

off as worse. Yet, no forced sales, nor lifetime bans, for either of these two men. In fact, the FA and by extension FIFA itself is doing next to nothing to stomp out this disease.

They may have their high profile campaigns, but honestly is this really cutting down on racism? There have been so many high profile cases, which never really lead to any sort of meaningful punishments. John Terry? Was found guilty, fined about two weeks wages and missed four games before resuming like nothing had ever happened. Luis Suarez? Once again found guilty, (strangely enough supported by his team and manager) and now living the high life in Barcelona. There are many

more examples, but all of them seem to reach the same ending; nobody is really punished.

If nobody is ever really severely punished, this casual attitude to racism will continue. Imagine saying comparable things to your fellow students or work colleagues. You would rightly get the sack immediately. Anybody who thinks something as horrid as one race being better than another is an individual who should not be part of our society.

But football is one of the only fields where leniency is upheld. Why? Is it that FIFA in their inexorable quest for profits has forgotten how to keep the beautiful game unblemished? One of the possible reasons is because

in banning people, they risk losing profits. If they had banned Luis Suarez or John Terry more severely, they may have faced lawsuits, and lost ticket revenues. Do they think therefore that it is much better to give a slap on the wrist, and hope it all blows over?

I am not trying to say that racism has been eradicated in all other sports, but in football it seems so much more prevalent. What really frightens me is that whilst this game is able to transcend race, culture, language and sex, it will never be able to cross boundaries, because certain individuals permeate football and certain authorities refuse to do anything about it.

Phil Hughes: The world mourns death of young batsman

8th March 2009, Kingsmead, Durban. An Australian batsman is entertaining the crowd with a superb hundred. It was his second of the game, and meant that he, at the age of 20, became the youngest man to score two hundreds in a Test Match. It was just his second test match. This week, we mourn his passing. Phillip Hughes, who would have turned 26 on Sunday, was largely considered one of Australia's most talented batsmen when he started out for New South Wales at the age of 18. He became the youngest

batsman to score a century in the Sheffield Shield Final when he scored 116 against Victoria to lead his side to victory. It was his maiden First Class century. On Tuesday, when playing for his adopted side South Australia against his former side New South Wales, Hughes was struck by a bouncer from former colleague Sean Abbott. Hughes fell forward onto his face. He would remain unconscious until his death in the afternoon on Thursday in Sydney. Hughes struggled to make the Australian team, after being "found

out" against the short ball by Andrew Flintoff in the 2009 Ashes, and had to settle for being the first alternative for the national side. That didn't stop him from scoring 86 from 75 balls in a win against New Zealand and his third test century against Sri Lanka in 2011. He was selected for the one-day squad in 2013, where he became the first (and only) Australian to score on a hundred on debut. He would add one more in the same series. In his final game Hughes was on 63 not out before that fatal ball. His team mate Kane Richardson paid

tribute, saying "Even in your last innings they still couldn't touch you. 63*" Hughes died from vertebral artery dissection, an injury that has only ever been recorded a hundred times. And only once due to a cricket ball. The injury was described by doctors as "extremely rare and a freak injury". He leaves behind his mother, father, brother and sister. And a grieving cricket world.

KUNAL WAGLE
SPORT EDITOR



Photo: Mike Hutchings/Reuters



Imperial Athletics dominate University of London Champs

GARETH HOLDEN
SHIV PATEL
IC CROSS COUNTRY

On Sunday 23rd December, Imperial College Cross Country and Athletics club along with the ICSM (Imperial Medics) athletics club competed in the annual University of London championship at the Lee Valley Athletics centre. Having (somewhat unfairly) lost out to LSE last year in the battle for the top spot, our team was hungry for a chance to take back the championship, which has been won by Imperial for 10 out of the last 12 years.

It became apparent as the medals started pouring in that this was our year. By the end of the day we had racked up a massive 12 gold medals, 10 silvers and another 9 bronze to take the championships, pushing our arch-rivals LSE down to 3rd place and winning twice as many golds as 2nd place UCL!

Star performances in the field came from Stephanie Koumbas and Erik Tropp who won gold in the high jump with an all-Imperial podium in the men's. George Cross led an ICSM dominated men's shot put and Ines Kubler revealed her hidden strength to take gold for the women.

It was also the women who stole the show on track. Fresher Alex Mundell wowed the competition with two golds in the 400m and 800m, a sign of what we can expect over the next 6 years! Final year medic Sian Mitchell took gold in the 200m and 60m hurdles. However, the athlete of



Photo: IC Cross Country

the day has to be Emma Watkins who could barely stand upright under the weight of her 5 medals, including a gold in long jump.

In a very tense men's 60m final, Chris Chung managed to edge out James Roughneen and Sidney Chan to win gold and complete an impressive Imperial 1-2-3. Gareth Holden faced an inopportune fire alarm delaying the race start in the men's 400m but managed to take home the silver medal. This, of course, led to the inevitable fire alarm selfies and a certain photo of one Movember participant (who shall remain nameless) that will surely not be forgotten. In the much anticipated relays, the Imperial women's team and the men's 1st team claimed the silver medals, both narrowly missing out on gold.

Of course, no athletics event would be complete without the standard club curry to round off a good day of UCL-bashing. The real competition of who could brave the vindaloo was won by James Roughneen who didn't even break a sweat (almost). The trophy proved to be the perfect vessel for toasting our success and ensuring sufficient levels of merriment all round. The last leg of the day (pun intended) involved a trip to Be at One, Hammersmith where two for one cocktails went down very well. This rounded off what was a spectacular day for Imperial Athletics and a fantastic team performance to mark record levels of participation! It's not too late to get involved in ICXCA, there will be many more events in the new year. Email run@ic.ac.uk or find us on Facebook.

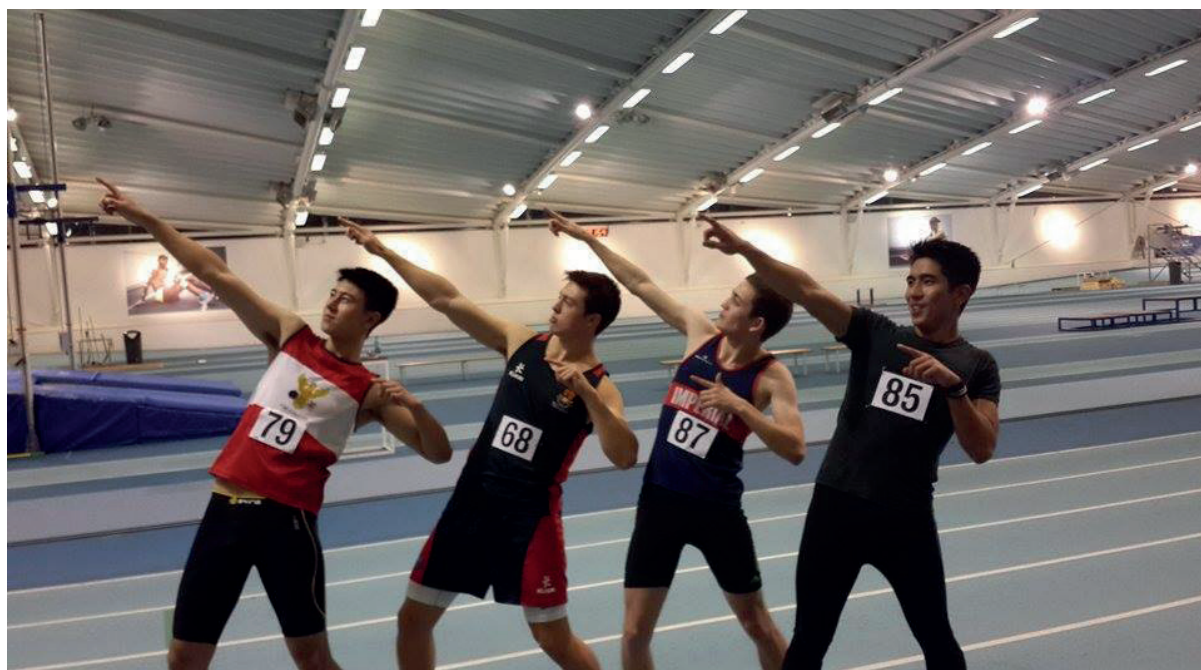


Photo: IC Cross Country

Phil Hughes, Lewis Hamilton, and SPOTY – the World Sport Column

KUNAL WAGLE
SPORT EDITOR

In the early hours of Thursday, Australia batsman Phil Hughes was pronounced dead at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. He had been struck on the side of the head

Aguero provided two goals as Manchester City came back from 2-1 down to beat Bayern Munich 3-2 to keep their hopes of qualification alive. But it was another frustrating night for Liverpool, as Ludogrets scored in injury time to draw the match 2-2. Liverpool go into the final game knowing a win over Basel at



Photo: Getty Images

by a bouncer from New South Wales bowler Sean Abbott in a Sheffield Shield match on Wednesday. In response, Cricket Australia chose to abandon the round of domestic matches being played this week. They also chose to cancel India's warm-up fixture ahead of the series in Australia. Pakistan and New Zealand chose to extend their test match by a day and suspend play on Thursday out of respect, while England and Sri

Anfield will send them through. In the Premier League Wayne Rooney scored as Manchester United beat Arsenal 2-1 at the Emirates.

In tennis, Andy Murray has announced his engagement to girlfriend Kim Sears. The couple met at the US Open in 2005. In January, Murray joked on Twitter that he would be getting married after Wimbledon, a statement he retracted an hour later.



Photo: Getty Images

Lanka will have a minute's silence ahead of their match on Friday. An obituary for Phil Hughes is on page 39.

In Formula 1 Lewis Hamilton won the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at the Yas Marina Circuit to win the World Championship. Nico Rosberg, who was the only person who could catch Hamilton, was only able to finish 13th, after his car had power issues.

In the Champions League Chelsea produced the "perfect" performance as they beat Schalke 5-0. Sergio

In actual tennis, Roger Federer helped Switzerland win the Davis Cup for the first time in their history with victory over Frenchman Richard Gasquet. He had lost his opening match against Gael Monfils.

The BBC has announced the nominees for the Sports Personality of the Year award. They are: Gareth Bale, Charlotte Dujardin, Kelly Gallagher, Charlotte Evans, Lewis Hamilton, Rory McIlroy, Jo Pavey, Adam Peaty, Max Whitlock and Lizzy Yarnold.