



Felix

Keeping the cat free since 1949

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issue 1595

January 30th 2015

Something to sing and dance about

The International
A Cappella competition
finally hits campus

Features, pages 10 and 11



Medical students bled dry: final years face adverse financial struggle

Survey shows how fifth
and sixth year students are
unable to stay afloat

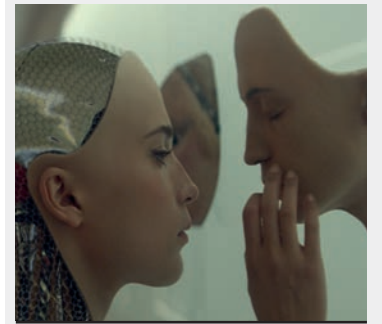
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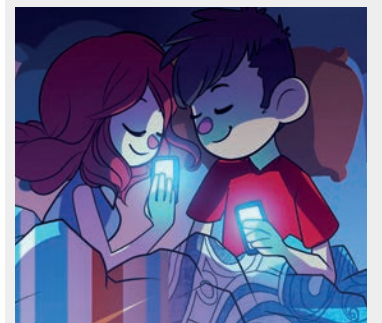
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Felix Editor || Philippa Skett

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What's on this week:

ACC Bar Night

Theme: Superheroes and Villains
20:00, you know where.

Wednesday 4th February

£8.50 online and includes 4 free drinks and bombs, or £9.50 on the door.

Send any unwanted drinks to the *Felix* Editor, probably found dancing on a table in the cat costume.

Ssh, no tears, only dreams now.

SKETT'S BOX OF SHAME

We couldn't spot any errors in issue 1594, which is probably an error in itself.

Do let us know if you could find any.

We must support those who will care for us

THIS WEEK'S EDITORIAL

This week we are covering the lack of funding available for medical students in their final years, as a recent survey has found that some are seriously struggling to make ends meet. Jennie Watson, the Imperial College School of Medicine Students' Union (ICSMSU) Welfare officer and the driving force behind the survey, came to *Felix* when she found that the situation may have been more worrying than once thought.

Going through the data was grim, especially when looking at students' income and outgoings, along with the free text responses students had submitted. However, what does seem odd is how this issue has seemingly never been raised before. Do many students just suffer in silence, and chalk it up to the experience of being a poor student in London?

However, what is more shocking is how the lack of funding for these students compares to the large bursaries showered down on other undergraduates. With the bursary



change for the next academic year looking to reward students with the lowest household income £4000 more than the College estimates should be enough to cover total living costs, one could argue that the system could be a lot better balanced.

Just as the bursary change this year ensured those with less bursary because of higher household income now get a bit more, maybe addressing those who are arguably under the most pressure, and at such a critical point in their medical degree, is the next step.

It is great that Imperial offers all these student support funds,

but maybe College should also be investing in making sure these students don't reach such a dire point as to have to apply for such funds in the first place.

Obviously we need to consider the fact that students who filled in the survey may be biased, in that those already struggling are more inclined to fill it in, but at the same time, average figures don't lie. You don't have to ask clinical medical students to find out how high rent is nowadays, how much travel is and how easy it is for money to simply run out before the next loan instalment.

With Imperial attracting more and more international students who are already paying extortionate fees, and the number of home students choosing not to study in London because of the cost, the system needs to shift in order to keep us comfortably in the capital and make it worth travelling to study here in the first place. We know Imperial isn't quite made of money, but I reckon it has a bit more rattling around in its big old endowment purse that students would be extremely grateful for.

The Felix Sex Survey 2015

Tell us what shocking things you get up to

www.felixonline.co.uk/sexsurvey

100% anonymous and confidential

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News

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Coursework might be nullified over “plagiarism”

Philippa Skett reports as Business Economics module is investigated

Students were informed on Monday that the marks from an online coursework may be nullified after reports of “widespread plagiarism.”

Over 400 students completed the online coursework for the Business Economics module, which consisted of twelve multiple-choice questions, to be completed within two hours. Effectively an exam, students were not formally invigilated; it has been described as an ‘open book’ coursework that was to be completed individually and could be done at home or on campus. Students completed the online coursework earlier this month.

The coursework for the Business Economics module is worth 30% of the overall module mark. The course is taken as optional, for credit course, which is run by the Business School but is taken by undergraduates from various degree streams. If taken for credit, the module is worth a significant portion of the year’s overall mark.

An anonymous source informed the mathematics department that students had been using a Google document online to share the questions from the online coursework on a Facebook group for students taking the course.

Questions in the test would appear in a random order with randomised multiple choice answers, and people posted the questions to the Google

document until a complete set of the questions was available for participants to view as the session progressed.

This prompted Professor Jonathan Mestel, The Mathematics Department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies, to send an email out on Tuesday to maths undergraduates in third and fourth year, detailing the alleged plagiarism and how “it is likely that this part of the assessment will be nullified.” The email also asked for those who may know more about the situation to come forward, and that they will be kept informed of any other developments.

Professor Mestel has also confirmed to *Felix* that although they know what Facebook group it was, it was not the one used by the mathematics undergraduates.

The Business School was only made aware of the allegations of plagiarism after the email was sent by Professor Mestel, and are still in discussions over what to do as a result of these allegations.

When *Felix* contacted Jeremy Fernando, a senior teaching fellow from the Business School and the point of contact for these undergraduate modules, Fernando said that: “We still need to gather more information, as we’ve only heard this third hand. The only information we have is from Mestel.”

Professor Mestel said to *Felix* that

they are now waiting on the Business School, although they take allegations of plagiarism very seriously. “We are now waiting to hear what the business school thinks is appropriate, and it is likely all departments will be taking the same action once something is decided.”

This is not the first time this exam has faced complications: the online test was run before Christmas, but was postponed as Blackboard, the College’s Virtual Learning Environment, crashed. The test was scheduled to start at 18:00, but within ten minutes students were complaining of images not loading and missing formulae and eventually Blackboard went down completely.

Felix approached the Mathematics Department Representative, Arjit Gupta, who told us: “Unfortunately, I do not know a lot about this issue yet and am currently investigating. I am confident that the department will ensure fairness to all students, regardless of whether or not they are taking this course.”

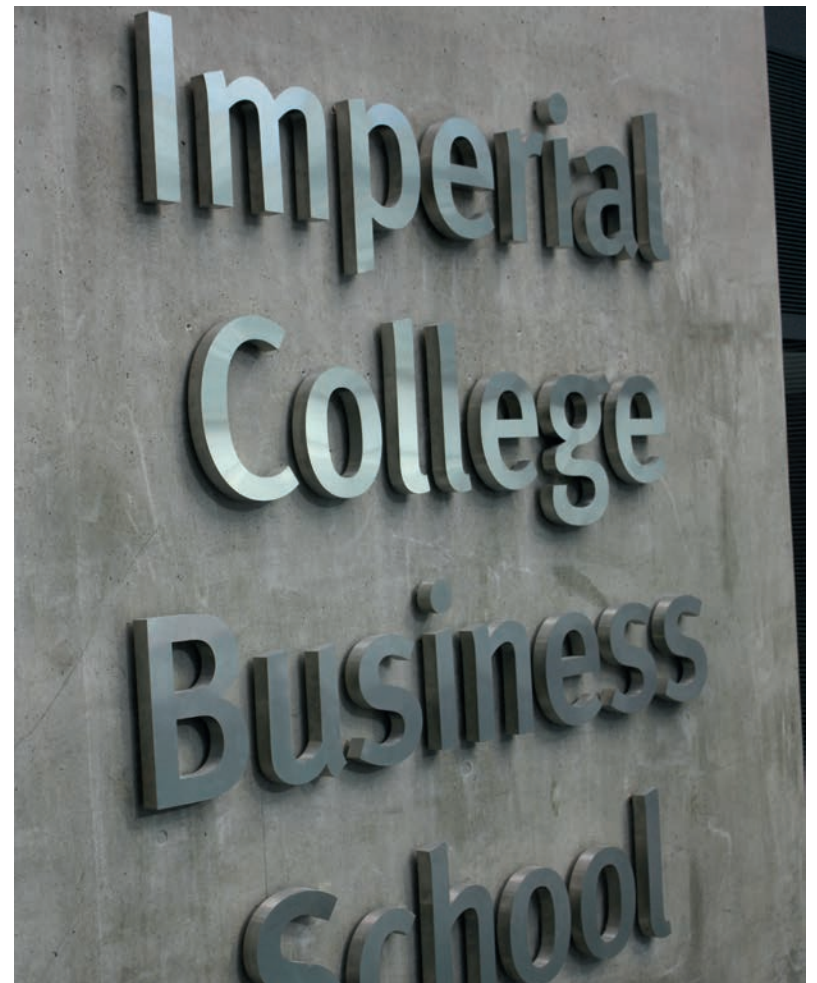
A statement released from the Business School to *Felix* said that it is “formally investigating an allegation of collusion in an open book online test for undergraduate students.

“The investigation is still ongoing, but we are aiming to conclude it as quickly as possible and any outcomes will be considered together with the other relevant academic departments.

“All students assigned the test have

been contacted to inform them of this development, and are invited to discuss any immediate concerns with

the relevant Business School staff. They will be kept up-to-date as the investigation proceeds.”



The Business School are “formally investigating”. Photo: Imperial College

Imperial appoint its first Vice President for Advancement

CAROL ANN CHEAH
NEWS EDITOR

Imperial College London announced Sarah Porter Waterbury as its very first Vice President (Advancement) on 27th January. The new role, which she will take up in April this year, sees Mrs Waterbury in charge of all things encompassing alumni relations, events and development.

As New York University’s current Vice President of Development and Campaigns since 2009, Mrs Waterbury has previously held appointments at Harvard Business School, Tufts University, the American University of Beirut, and the Children’s Hospital Boston. Growing up in Latin America and the Caribbean, she graduated with a BA in History from Princeton University. She began her career working in JP

Morgan’s private banking division for Central and South American clients.

Appointing an Advancement leader at this level is a common practice among North American universities; Imperial is one of the first UK universities to do so.

Alice Gast, President of Imperial College said: “It is a privilege to introduce Sarah Porter Waterbury to the Imperial community. We are very fortunate to have found someone with Sarah’s experience, talent and vision. She is one of the outstanding advancement professionals in the world.

“She will lead the development of Imperial’s advancement function and its alignment with our academic mission. Sarah will serve as an advisor to our community and as somebody who can grow and build our culture of philanthropy.

“She will build relationships herself and support all those who do so on

behalf of Imperial.

“The College already has some of the world’s most exciting academic, corporate and philanthropic partnerships, joining us with people who are as passionate as we are about the impact science, engineering, medicine and business has on the world. We have the ambition to discover, lead and innovate on a grander scale. Sarah will play an integral role in this growth.”

Mrs Waterbury described the appointment as an honour. “Above all, Imperial stands for academic excellence that has an impact on society – these two factors serve as a beacon for its supporters, and for me.

“I look forward to joining Imperial’s phenomenal community of staff, students and alumni as we work to excite and inspire supporters and would-be supporters of Imperial’s impactful research and education activities.”

Police ask for more information on Kensington stabbing

CAROL ANN CHEAH
NEWS EDITOR

Two men in their mid-20s were taken to hospital after a stabbing near Notting Hill Gate station in the early hours of Monday morning. They are both said to be in stable condition, but the first was described as serious and the second as critical.

Officers received a call from the London Ambulance Service to Kensington Mall at around 03:30, where they found one man suffering from knife wounds. They also found a second man with similar stab injuries metres away in Royston Court, on the other side of Kensington Church Street.

Kensington Church Street was closed between Bedford Gardens and Notting Hill Gate for several hours

to facilitate police investigations, causing severe delays in the area as buses had to be diverted down narrow streets. No arrests have been made so far, but police are currently appealing for eyewitness information on suspicious behaviour in the Kensington Church Street/Notting Hill Gate area.



Site of the stabbings Photo: BBC

Survey reveals damning truth about medics' financial hardship

Philippa Skett investigates as ICSM survey says that 97% final year students are in the red

Recent survey results have shown that students in their final years of medicine face extreme financial difficulty, with one in two students saying that their financial situation might affect their ability to complete their degree.

A shocking 87% of students in their fifth and sixth year of medicine said they have financial concerns, and 50% of the respondents also said that the pressure may affect their physical or mental health. Only 3% of students are able to cover all their outgoings with the financial aid available, with those surveyed facing an average deficit of £141 a week that is covered by parental support or part time jobs.

Students in their clinical years (the final two years of their degree) see their maintenance loan from Student Finance slashed, and, despite being eligible for a NHS bursary, students are still struggling to make ends meet.

From the students surveyed, students are receiving on average around £2,000 from the NHS Bursary and another £2,000 from Student Finance each year, amounting to roughly £98 a week. However students are also seeing annual outgoings amounting to roughly £12,000 – putting many students seriously in the red.

The survey, run by Imperial College School of Medicine Student Union (ICSMSU), asked current students about their incomes and outgoings, and how they were coping with their finances. Over 100 students from the current fifth and sixth year of medicine responded. The survey was promoted in all-student emails, on various ICSMSU Facebook pages and on twitter.

Using the data from those who responded, students in these years

are paying on average £141 a week on rent, £25 on travel, £40 on food and are spending around £33 on everything else.

However, fifth and sixth year students do not get as much financial aid as the lower years, leading to a greater deficit and more stress as a result. Matched with the academic demand of these clinical years, the lack of summer holiday available to work full time to save money, and the intense timetable that leaves little room for part time work, students are struggling more than ever.

Final years also have to arrange and undertake an Elective: a compulsory element of their degree, which often requires travelling abroad.

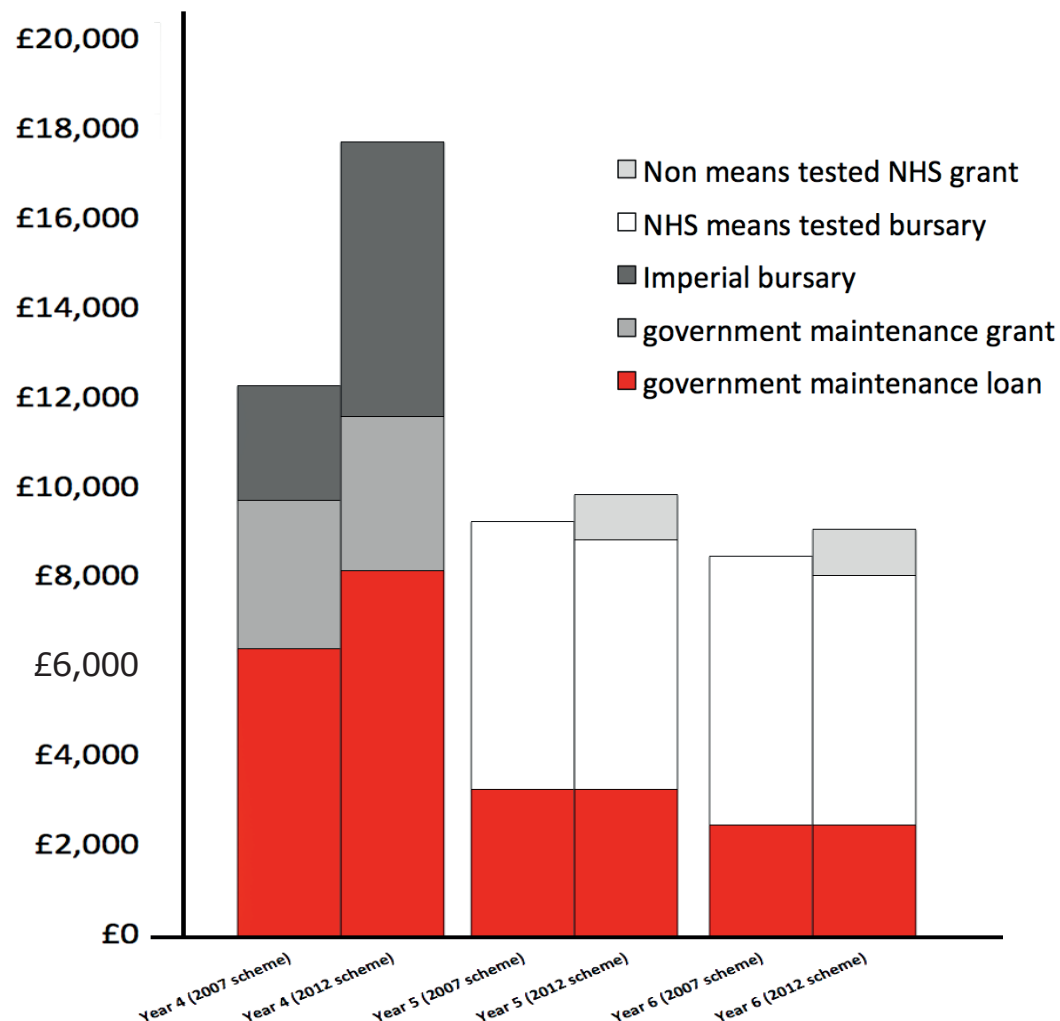
One respondent said: "Working at two part time jobs leaves me with little time to study. I manage to pass my exams each year but I don't have the opportunity to put enough time into my studies to do any better."

"Two years ago I was diagnosed with depression and I believe a lot of it was to do with financial difficulties."

Another said: "Constantly being worried about making ends meet is exhausting: I'm sick and tired of always thinking about it. Currently I tutor six times a week, but as a fifth year this is unacceptable and leaves me with little or no time to study myself... Even despite this, I am still constantly in the red."

47% of students who responded to the survey have a part time job, work roughly nine hours a week and earn on average £12 an hour. However only 18% of students manage to remain in the black when balancing income, including bursaries, loans and wages and outgoings.

Said another respondent: "I am currently only able to continue



How the maximum funding available to students changes over the years, and also under the different funding schemes Graph: Philippa Skett

with my studies thanks to savings I accrued from previous employment before and during the earlier years of medical school.

"Continuing with fifth year was only possible financially in thanks to a large extension of my overdraft, to around £2,000."

Students currently in their clinical years, which are the final two years of medicine for Imperial students, aren't eligible for a maintenance grant from Student Finance, and their maintenance loan is also significantly reduced too. Instead, they receive an NHS means tested bursary, which they do not have to pay back.

The maximum students can therefore claim in loans and bursary funding is £9,131 for those in fifth year, and £8,366 for sixth year students.

The NHS also pays their tuition fees for these final two years.

However, when comparing the survey results to Imperial's own estimations for the cost of living, 92% of these medical students do not receive enough money through financial aid and part time work to cover Imperial's predicted living cost.

Imperial estimates that students should expect to pay around £291 a week to cover rent, travel, leisure, academic-related and food costs. The weekly outgoing of the students surveyed was significantly lower than this: students are managing to live on

an average of £237 a week (including rent), with many struggling to stay afloat.

An overview of the NHS bursary provision took place in 2012 when the tuition fees increased, although current fifth and sixth year students are still subject to the terms and conditions of the previous 2007 Scheme.

Those that started in 2012 or later may fare considerably better due to the introduction of a £1,000 grant that for which everyone, regardless of household income, is eligible. However, the maximum bursary students can receive will reduce by about £300.

The government loan also decreases further between the fifth and sixth year; current fifth year students will see the maximum loan available decrease by approximately £250 when they move into their final year this summer.

Most students have to turn to their parents for financial support to make up their financial shortfall. However, many students who replied to the survey also said they were uncomfortable doing this, or their parents were struggling to make ends meet too. Around 1 in 3 of those who responded said their parents were unwilling or unable to offer any sort of financial support.

Said one respondent: "I am completely reliable on my parents,

who have other children to pay for and other expenses to worry about. I feel guilty about the increasing amount they need to provide for me.

"The loans available are incredibly low in a time where we pay for accommodation throughout the year, travel more/further and have an elective to organise."

Said another: "My finances are a constant worry, to the extent that I very nearly took steps to take sabbatical years to save money by working full time on two occasions. I resent that I have become more of a burden on my parents as I have got older."

It is not just the parents of medical students too who are struggling to cover the cost of their children's education; a recent national survey ran by Experian, a global service information group, found that 1 in 10 students' parents are borrowing or using credit cards to cover their children's living expenses.

9% of the students who responded have already applied to the Faculty of Medicine's own hardship fund for this academic year. Medical students can also apply to the College's central student support fund too if needed.

Felix spoke to Dr Michael Schachter, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine, who also deals with students who are facing a financial struggle. Schachter told Felix how the Faculty of Medicine

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News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah and Kunal Wagle



One of the main Medical School Campuses is Charing Cross Hospital. Photo: Imperial

had already allocated over £25,000 from its own hardship fund to students in the past six months, typically allocating between £500 and £1000 depending on the needs of the student.

Said Schachter: "Since the summer, when year 5 and 6 of the medical course start, I have seen a massive increase in the number of students asking to see me because of severe financial difficulties, 300-400% more than the year before.

"This was totally unexpected but is clearly linked to the fact that the NHS bursaries are significantly less than students had received in the first 4 years of the course, but also less than

most students had been anticipating: this is most apparent in fact from the transition from year 5 to 6.

"The sort of immediate problems I have been told about include not having money for the next month's rent, having about £100 after rent for 3 months food and everything else, and working 30 hours a week in addition to a very intensive course effectively to survive.

"The really alarming thing is that even this worrying situation is likely to be an underestimate of the actual problem. Clearly unless something is done the same situation is likely to recur next year too.

"The School is working urgently

with the College and ICMSU and ICU to avoid this or at least minimise its impact."

The results of the survey were collected and analysed by Jennifer Watson, a fifth year medical student herself, and the current ICMSU Welfare Officer.

Jennifer told Felix why she set the survey up in the first place: "I started looking into the situation after several of the welfare cases that came forward during the summer were related to financial worries.

"I was basically shocked by what I found. I admit, when I read through all the results, I cried a little going through the free text responses."

ICMSU President, Dariush Hassanzadeh-Baboli, spoke to Felix about how the survey's findings may resonate with all medical students, not just those at Imperial. Said Dariush: "Jennie has put in a huge amount of effort into gathering this information. Clearly it is a big issue not only for ICSM students, but medical students nationwide.

"The lack of funding in the final two years of med school is very concerning, particularly as the work load increases dramatically and time to earn some extra cash dwindles significantly.

"We hope to see some rapid changes in the very near future."

Just what funding is available for clinical students?

NHS student bursaries are available to students on pre-registration health professional training courses, which include students in their fifth or sixth year of studying medicine. A fees-only bursary from the NHS covers tuition fees, and these are paid directly to the university, much like Student Finance pay for any other home or EU undergraduate's tuition fees. Students do not have to pay this back. The NHS also has an "extra weeks" allowance, that provides £107 per week when academic years are longer than 30 weeks (excluding holidays).

For living costs, the government maintenance loan available for current fifth year students is £3,263, and for final year students is £2,498. This isn't means tested. There is also an additional bursary available that is allocated to students based on the income of their family home. Students in both years can claim up to £5,868. Medical students in their clinical years are not eligible for Imperial's own bursary scheme, which is described on the Imperial website as "One of the most generous of all UK Universities."

Imperial has recently altered its bursary scheme for the 2015 academic intake, although not without controversy. After announcing the initial plans to award more money to students from higher income households, at the expense of those who come from households that have less money, Imperial College Union Council denounced the alterations as "Anti-Robin Hood."

Despite this outcry, students starting Imperial in 2015 from low-income families are still eligible to receive £6,000 in bursary alone for the first four years of their degree. When factoring in maintenance loans and grants, the maximum amount of money students could receive exceeds £15,000, despite Imperial also stating that undergraduates should expect to live off £11,223 (for a 39-week long academic year).

The maximum students can therefore claim in loans and bursary funding is £9,131 for those in fifth year, and £8,366 for sixth year students.

News

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Outcomes of Union Council email vote released to members

June Yin Gan covers the resolutions of the controversial council papers, despite three votes cast after deadline

The results of an online vote taken last week by members of Union Council were released on Monday.

However, it appears that several votes were counted despite being after the stated deadline for votes to be submitted.

The fifth Union Council meeting took place on 13th January, the first Tuesday of term. 21 members of Council were present, out of a total of 55, which meant that the meeting was not quorate and therefore there would not be enough people to vote and to make any decisions.

Instead of a physical vote, the decisions were instead passed by an email vote that was set up the following week. Council members were told that they had until 12:00 Friday 16th January to reply with their decisions on three of the papers. The email vote was answered by 27 members, including three cast after the deadline.

The most debated paper by far is that regarding publishing a voting record of any decisions passed by Council. The standard procedure has previously been a vote by show of hands, or by secret ballot in the case of a confidential vote.

However, publishing votes would hold the elected Union officers accountable to accurately represent the opinions of the wider Imperial population.

Social Clubs Committee (SCC) Chair Tom Rivlin, told *Felix*: “I just agreed with the principle of the proposal [to publish people’s votes]... I represent ‘constituents’ who chose me to represent them. They have the right to know if I’m doing what’s in their best interests.”

In contrast, an ordinary member who wished to remain anonymous stated “members might feel cornered into voting according to popular opinion, instead of voting according to what they feel is the correct path of action”.

Royal College of Science Union (RCSU) Secretary Philip Kent also offered an opinion “arguments have been made for this making the Union more democratic – personally I would rather Council put more effort into increasing student awareness and engagement with Council rather than spending hours on something which I suspect few people will ever look at”.

Dariusz Hassanzadeh-Baboli, Imperial College School of Medicine Student Union President (ICSMSU), proposed additional responsibilities to the Deputy President’s role and the creation of a Sponsorship Officer, which would outline clearer end-year goals for the Deputy President and bring more money to the ICSMSU Executive committee. He also proposed the removal of one of two Social Secretaries, as one person could easily achieve the responsibilities.

The last paper presented was on increasing the frequency of Union General Meetings (GM), the purposes of which are to enable all members of the Union to vote on policy decisions and to hold officers to account. Ironically, neither the last GM and the Council meeting met their quora of 200 and 27 respectively.

An email detailing the vote’s results was released to all Council members on Friday last week, and included time stamps to confirm when the online votes were received through an online Google form. When concerns were raised about the security of the voting method, Council Chair Paul Beaumont agreed to verify the votes with all Council members.

Three votes made by students, one as late as three days later, were still counted. Had they been disqualified, the email vote would have also failed to make quorum, and the papers would have to be discussed at the next meeting.

The email vote passed the changes to the ICSMSU constitution (26 for, 2 abstentions) and agreed to publish individuals’ voting records (13 for, 9 against, 6 abstentions), while the paper on increasing GM frequency was rejected (9 for, 12 against, 7 abstentions).

Although many of the absences were due to start-of-term exams, Council Chair Paul Beaumont expressed disappointment at the turnout, telling *Felix* last week that “it is a pity that some members of Council do not attend at all”.

Said the Union on the votes accepted after the deadline: “The deadline was an indicative date for when Council members were instructed to have recorded their votes, it was never detailed that votes counted after that date would not be counted.

“The vote was ratified at the point the Council Chair did the count and decided to accept all votes cast.

“The votes cast after the initially publicised time did not affect the outcome of any of the votes, but did enable the vote to reach quorum.”

Prince Charles opens new centre at St. Mary’s

PHILIP KENT
DEPUTY EDITOR

A new centre for innovative surgery has been opened by Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, at St. Mary’s Hospital. The new centre, created and run by Imperial College London, has been set up to develop new surgical techniques – specifically ones which can make surgery quicker and easier.

The Surgical Innovation Centre, as it is called, is directed by Professor the Lord Darzi, who said “The NHS is under considerable pressure in meeting the challenge of shifting patient demographics, the burden of lifestyle disease and financial constraints. Innovation through better technologies, processes and design can help address the challenges facing health care delivery globally.”

The centre features two state-of-the-art surgical theatres and is also the country’s leading centre for bariatric surgery (carrying out operations such as gastric bypass procedures).

Developments seen by the heir to the throne include surgery through a person’s belly button, which prevents

scarring, and ‘cyclops’, which is an expanding ring which can be inflated inside the body to remove growths.

A number of techniques for medical teaching have also been created at the centre, including a full-scale touch-screen skeleton model.

As part of the same event, the Prince of Wales also visited the Health Innovation Exchange (HELIX) pop-up studio, a collaboration with the Royal College of Art, which utilises design techniques to treat diseases and prevent common healthcare issues.

At the HELIX studio, an app for analysing children’s breathing patterns to detect signs of asthma was also demonstrated to the Prince.

Prince Charles told reporters, “I was fascinated going around, trying to understand how you managed to create all these innovative inventions. My great great great grandfather Prince Albert would have been very proud.”

In the past year, nearly 2,000 patients have been treated at the centre as part of usual NHS procedures. The centre can also provide same-day consultation, diagnosis, and treatment.



Yes, this is the only council photo we have Photo: Cem Hurrell



Dat Prince tho Image: IHMC

News

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News Editors ||| Carol Ann Cheah and Kunal Wagle

Great Hall packed as hundreds flock to see the A Cappella Semi-Finals

Philippa Skett watches as the nine singing troupes take the to stage

The International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA) Semi-Finals took over the Great Hall last Saturday, seeing three of our own groups competing and the Techtonics placing fourth.

Throughout the evening, nine different student a cappella groups performed in the Great Hall, which was completely packed to the rafters. Teams had traveled from all over the country to perform, including one from St Andrews University in the north of Scotland and two teams from Exeter in the south.

Each team had 12 minutes to perform their set, with many groups performing three or more songs whilst on stage, many also doing a mash-up of songs by various different artists.

The Techtonics opened the show, with Ezra Kitson, first year Biologist, kicking the evening off as lead vocalist for their first song, Best of You, made famous by the Foo Fighters. The Techtonics were followed by the all-male group from Trinity College, Dublin, known as the Trinitones, and the Accidentals, an all-female group from the University of St Andrews. The Accidentals came in third place.

All the King's Men were next up, who won last year's Semi-Finals, and made it to Boston for the Final in 2014. This all-male group from King's College London won Outstanding Arrangement for their set, alongside placing first.

After the interval, The Scopes and the Imperielles, Imperial's own mixed and all-female groups respectively, also performed, with Tammy Huggins, a second year Biochemist, later winning Outstanding Soloist. The Scopes delivered an impressive mash-up of top 90's hits, whilst the Imperielles' set included exceptional renditions of Sia's *Chandelier* and a mash up of **Massive Attack's** *Teardrop* and **Lorde's** *Royals*.

Exeter's all-male group, Semi-Toned, delivered a brilliant rendition of **Disney's** *I'll Make a Man Out of You* and won the prize for Outstanding Choreography for their entire set, along with placing second. Meanwhile, Durham University's mixed group, the Northern Lights, won the award for Outstanding Vocal Percussion for their entire set.

The MC's for the evening were the Son of Pitches, a former student a



9 out of 10 men on this stage are currently dating the Felix editor. Ok this is a lie Photo: Xuan

Chen

cappella group from Birmingham University. They have since gone professional after getting to the ICCA Finals a few years ago.

Whilst the judges deliberated, they entertained the audience with a half-hour set of their top hits, including an improvised song about a "bobsleighbing manatee" in the style of reggae-opera. Sadly, a second promised improvisation about "erotic protractors" was scrapped as the judges returned to announce the results.

They did manage to squeeze in a performance of their latest single with backings from a gospel choir known as Sound, which featured a Techtonics alumni (and *Felix* centrefold star), Conrad Godfrey.

The Techtonics spoke to *Felix* after the event. Peter Noden, the President said: "The evening was an amazing experience for the group, performing to a home crowd (who were incredible!) and a chance to meet up with old friends from other

groups. Afterwards we discovered we actually placed fourth overall - just missing out on the top three.

"But the group is not dwelling on the outcome as we have a very busy year ahead, with a second studio album in production and a summer tour to look forward to!"

The Imperielles also spoke to *Felix*, and told us how much fun they had on the night. "Although the ICCAs was a competition, the atmosphere was extremely supportive, and it felt more like a celebration of the immense talent within UK a cappella.

"Performing to such a large audience was really exciting, as Imperial's Great Hall was packed to full capacity. The Imperielles are particularly proud to have won the award for Outstanding Soloist which went to Tammy. Imperielles are soon to be making a music video, so keep an eye out for that too!"

The competition, hosted by the international organisation known as Varsity Vocals, is now in its 20th year.

All the King's Men will be travelling to New York to compete in the Finals in April. It is not yet known who they will be competing against as other groups have yet to advance from their Regionals.

Felix spoke to Matt Shirer, the International Producer of Varsity Vocals, about the event, and how he thought it went. Shirer told us how he was impressed with the high standard the groups performing, and also just how smoothly the event went on the night.

Said Shirer: "Over the years, I have seen groups elevate their level of musical excellence and performance to truly incredible levels, and I certainly expect we will see that in the groups competing next year!"

"While it took quite a bit of effort, seeing and hearing the reactions from everyone at the show easily justified everything that went into it."

George Rolls, from All The King's Men, said "I would say we are particularly happy as Saturday night

was the culmination of a few weeks of particularly hard work. We had lots of nice comments from alumni who had performed with us at our 5th anniversary concert in October. We would also like to pass our thanks to the Techtonics, and Henry Harrod, who did a great job of organising the event and hosting us all!

"We are starting a fundraising campaign, as we would love to go to the finals in New York, but it is a considerable task to get the money to go, so we are all expecting to work very hard over the next 2 months!"

The Scopes said "The Scopes consider their performance a success and intend to celebrate by eating a lot of cake and, in some cases, a lot of cheese.

"This has been their biggest performance to date and they are thrilled to have participated in such a momentous and spectacular event."

Planning for the Semi-Final began in May last year, and has already begun for Semi-Final in 2016.

Comment

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Comment Editor || Tessa Davey

It's time to tackle medics' money problems

Jennifer Watson asks whether the College offer enough support



Many medics are forced to get part time jobs, such as working at the Reynolds Bar. Photo: Faculty of Medicine

Imperial College isn't well known for their regard for the wellbeing of undergraduate students; and there are many at Charing Cross who would argue that College high-ups give even less of a toss about medics. Either way, sitting back and watching students, medic or otherwise, fall into such severe financial difficulty, as illustrated in the recent survey, is an abandonment of their duty of care. It is not a new phenomenon that medics take a massive cut in funding after fourth year. As far as I can tell, this is the first time anyone has tried to tackle the monetary troubles faced by fifth and final year medics.

Medics' final two years are tough and vitally important; we start metamorphosing into doctors. Not only are we in hospitals pretty much all day every day, we are also expected to study at any available opportunity. There is a huge amount to learn and failing to do so could lead to much more than poor grades, but has potential to impact on our competency after we qualify.

A significant number of us are struggling financially to a point where we have no option but to work several evenings a week. Some students expressed guilt over sometimes leaving hospitals early to

get to work on time, others angst over the lack of time they have to study as a result of work commitments. Although some doctors are sympathetic to this, there are plenty of consultants and registrars who are less understanding. The college is also deeply unsupportive.

I ran into difficulties during paediatrics when applying for residency placements (catapulted to distant hospitals, often outside of London for 2 weeks). I emailed the course administrator explaining that if I were sent away from London I would be unable to get to tutoring jobs and thus be unable to make rent. I got a snide response detailing College's student employment policy. It was clear that I was expected to prioritise our academic work. Fair enough – but if the entirety of my funding amounts to less than basic living expenses, I don't have a choice. Don't leave me with insufficient student grants and loans and get snippy when I need to work to keep a roof over my head.

I was already aware of the financial difficulties facing fifth and final years before I was elected to ICSMSU, however as soon as survey results started rolling in I saw it was worse than I could imagine. For many of

my peers, it came as a shock, leaving some students tied to rental contracts that they simply couldn't afford. The survey found that 46.4% of students were unable to cover their rent, despite many working alongside their studies. Surely it is unacceptable that one of the wealthiest institutions in the world is allowing this to happen?

It has been suggested that students supported by their parents are at a massive academic advantage by having time to study and maintain a work-life balance. The current system was built for the historic rich-kid demographic of medical school. Now that more medics come from standard middle class backgrounds funding bodies need to adapt; we can't all turn to the Bank of Mum and Dad. Many students receiving parental support describe strained family relationships and intense feelings of guilt for doing so.

I was angrier than ever reading about the impact to students' wellbeing. Students are forced to put their studies, relationships and physical health at risk in order to keep their heads above water; some students' diets depend on how much money they have. Most shockingly, there are some students who essentially starve themselves, going

so far as to eat one meal a day just to make ends meet. Mental health comes into play as well. It's well known that mental illnesses like depression and anxiety disorders are a pertinent problem in elite universities; the prevalence of anxiety and depression is even higher among medics. This is apparently being compounded by financial anxieties; some students have been prescribed medication (anti-anxiety and anti-depressant drugs) as a result of their financial concerns. It doesn't take a genius to realise that all of this is bound to impact students' grades.

I am certainly not the only person to find this abominable. Consensus among ICSM students is that of anger and a deep dissatisfaction that they have, as one person put it, been "so greatly let down by The System". The Faculty of Medicine has also got behind me and is looking into ways to keep the cost of living down for students, which will hopefully go some way to alleviating the situation.

All I can do with what I have so far is try to persuade Imperial to restructure its bursary scheme and provide more support to senior medics. Unfortunately this isn't an adequate solution. An extension of the survey has revealed that the

problem is endemic in London medical schools. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests it is nationwide, implying that the cost of living in London is not the real core of the issue. Addressing this at Imperial leaves many thousands of medics across the capital and the rest of the country stuck in the same situation.

For me, the ultimate goal is top down reform within Student Finance and the NHS. Student Finance may have concerns about students failing to repay their loans. Let's be honest here, medics mostly have a guaranteed job for life. There is very little danger of them failing to pay off student loans. Imperial contains some of the world's brightest minds and is an incredibly wealthy institution, and yet medics can't afford basic living costs while exercising our right to an education. Any such system is flawed.

Medics and students in other healthcare disciplines commit their entire working lives and make extensive sacrifices to providing an indispensable public service, and yet many are forced into illness and borderline poverty before they can even begin to give back to society. Is it just me, or is there an irony in that?



Want to go for it?

Our elections are open from next week.

Nominations open 00:01, Monday 2 February at imperialcollegeunion.org/vote.

We can help.

We're running a number of information sessions about the elections and campaigning to help you when you stand. Find more information online at imperialcollegeunion.org/elections.

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All information correct at time of going to print



Features

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Features Editor || VACANT

Behold, the UK's finest collegiate a cappella groups

Imperial hosted the UK semi finals of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella. **Xuan Chen** sees what it's all about.

Last weekend Imperial College played host to the vivacious, nerve-wracking, and outrageously outstanding International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA) UK Semifinal competition: a massive undertaking attracting the best unaccompanied singing groups in the world. Nine of the UK's best teams competed for just one place at the ICCA Finals in New York, to face off again against six American groups and a Wild Card category winner from anywhere in the world.

Hands free of all instruments (bar the occasional microphone at big competitions such as these), the performers are free to express themselves through carefully planned choreography as well as natural body language where none is in place. A cappella feels like a contradiction; we naturally assume that with more complicated setups and equipment come better music, so it is a sense of amazement as well as appreciation we feel when witnessing these performances by performers utilising nothing but their voices to evoke powerful emotions in the audience.

The origin of a cappella can be traced back to its use in religious music, all the way back to the late 15th century. It is unclear why exactly the unaccompanied vocal music became popular, but we can guess that it was either popularised by Christian opponents to the use of instruments in church music or the lack of instruments themselves. A cappella seems to have been revived at the opening of the 20th century, starting with the traditional music, then evolving with styles such as Barbershop in the 1930s slowly becoming the kind of performances we recognise.

I manage to find some performers before the event started, to find out their thoughts on the upcoming competition. "The competition this year is very, very good," Sana Mohajer of the renowned all-male King's College London group **All the King's Men** tells me. "The standard is very high – all the groups know each other quite well from various national

competitions," implying of course that these are the standard high-fliers who tour the country on a regular basis.

His group, now in their fifth year, has won all the London regional finals of The Voice Festival UK in addition to the overall competition in 2012 and has previously qualified for the ICCA Finals twice already, as well as touring the whole world.

The three Imperial College home teams could not be more different in style from one another. **The Scopes**, Imperial's mixed team entrants, concisely summed up their styles by comparing the groups to animal personalities.

"I guess we would be fireflies - when we were formed (the founding members are still in the group today) a few years back 'Fireflies' by **Owl City** was the first song we covered. Fireflies suit us as we're very easy going and focus on having fun first of all and don't worry too much about winning competitions like these. That doesn't mean that we don't give it our all, though!

"**The Tectonics** are Imperial's oldest and most well-known group. An all-male ensemble of scientists and engineers into electronic music is definitely unique and interesting, but considering their personalities... definitely something canine. No, wolves would be better to describe them. But they're cheeky on their off days too – cheeky wolves.

"On the other hand, we get the **Imperielles** – the sassy all-female group resident here. This one's easy – swans. They're elegant yet aggressive when you get too close to them: the perfect description."

I ask Beth of the Imperielles what it's like to be living out the film *Pitch Perfect*. Is the first time in such a big competition overwhelming, and you need to suspend your disbelief of the reality? "On the other hand, I've come to terms with it quite nicely," is the reply. "Whenever my friends ask me what this is, I always start explaining with "Well, you know the film *Pitch Perfect*..."

Speaking to each group is very easy; all the members have similar

but distinct personalities and keep a constant stream of playful chatter going on their way to finding an answer – it feels like speaking with one person with multiple voices rather than a group; that's how close they are. I speak to Tammy, again from the Imperielles, about her upcoming solo.

"You have to remember that I haven't been part of the group for very long at all," she tells me. "Less than a year in fact - and now I'm about to sing in front of this massive audience and it would be a bare-faced lie to say that I'm not nervous at all." Tammy went on to receive the special award for Best Soloist in the competition.

I didn't get a chance to speak to Durham's entry, **The Northern Lights**, but did witness their impressive performance on stage. Founded at the end of the 2012/13 academic year, they are Durham's first a cappella group – showing just how much a cappella is exploding around the country over the last decade or so.

The biggest group and mixed group overall, they played it safe with upbeat pop arrangements. Even so, the harmony was fantastic to listen to and the group was relaxed on stage for their biggest competition yet, and they took home the award for Best Vocal Percussion for their beatboxer.

The Trinitones, Ireland's only a cappella entry, put on a bolder performance. Arranging 'Stacy's Mom' into a choral performance made the audience chuckle with delight and making fun of **Akon** along with mashing up his songs was on their agenda too. Just as the Durham group must have felt, being the only Irish entry put them under slightly more pressure than the others. "It's not a question of what people assume – it is a fact that we are representing the whole of Ireland here because we are the only Irish here so it's extra important that we give it our all."

As a cappella expands, however, places like the North and Ireland will inevitably see more groups springing up and thus even more regional



Above: The Tectonics performing at the competition.

competitions to hone their skills in. But when management of the group comes into play, there are bound to be tensions arising from differences of opinion, even among the closest of friends, right? "Absolutely not," argues Rob, the president of the all-male Exeter group **Semi-Toned**. "I scream and shout at them all day but they're so hardworking and understanding it's unbelievable."

Even for modern a cappella, Semi-Toned's arrangements are still outlandishly brilliant, performing variations from **Kanye West** to Disney and *Game of Thrones* in the same routine. Their hard work and creativity paid off, coming second overall, and winning the Best

"The competition this year is very, very good,"

"But they're cheeky on their off days too – cheeky wolves."

Features

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Features Editor || VACANT



competition year is very, good”



competition. Right (top to bottom): All The King's Men, The Accidentals, Semi-Toned. Photo: Xuan Chen

Choreography award too.

Exeter's all-girls group, **Sweet Nothings**, also qualified into this stage of the competition. "There's definitely a bit of rivalry going on here, especially because we're an all-girls team and they're an all-boys team as well," they tell me. "But it's also healthy competition, of course; having another team to simultaneously compete against and support you is really great." Their set was a seriously emotional one, full of deep meaning and heart-wrenching melodies.

Diversity and novelty are one of the cornerstones of a successful a cappella group, giving rise to the more sassy and interesting performances we see

today. The Techtonics take this belief to another level: they deliberately don't have a set style, motto, credo, or any rules at all to stick by when coming up with routines. "It's the members which define the group, not the other way round," they tell me.

Previous members often come to their concerts or watch them busking on Portobello Road on Saturday mornings to see which direction the group has taken since their departure. All the King's Men hold the same view, with Sara telling me that the group plays to each member's strengths and highlights the talents within the group.

"I'm a soul singer, so I get those kinds of solos, but we also have

everything from pop to choral arrangements, simply because we have those kinds of singers who specialise in that stuff."

Indeed, their performance did feature a choral arrangement, as well as hits from **Wham** and **Tina Turner** – winning their arranger the Outstanding Arrangement award. Their amazing display of excellence all around secured them their first place and the coveted entry in the ICCA Finals – but by only two points, 371 to Semi-Toned's 369.

The hosts and guest stars, former competition winners turned professional, **The Sons of Pitches**, were engaging and creative with the audience throughout the evening.

Formed in Birmingham in 2010, which is actually more recent than some of the competition entrants, they received many awards over the years for their singing.

After winning the ICCA's International Wildcard Round in 2013 and competing in New York for the finals, The Sons of Pitches went on to become a professional a cappella ensemble, hosting these sorts of events around the country.

Putting on a simultaneously funny and astounding performance during the judging, there was never a dull moment as they kept singing right up until the judging was finished, meaning that the audience was always witnessing some amazing talent, be

it song improvisation on the spot, renditions of a cappella club remixes, or inviting audience members on stage to perform with them. It was an auditory treat to hear them perform their first single 'Laura' live, with the assistance of a gospel choir which managed to sneak itself on backstage.

With the winners now looking to travel to New York to compete in the final against teams from around the world, it is incredible how far a cappella can take a group of students used to practising in empty lecture theatres or deserted seminar rooms. **Felix** wishes the best of luck to All the Kings Men, and will be waiting eagerly to hear how they get on over in the States.

Science

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Science Editors | James Bezer & Lauren Ratcliffe

Artificial Intelligence with a Consciousness

Lauren Ratcliffe on an Imperial professor's involvement in the film Ex-Machina

Science fiction film Ex-Machina has recently hit cinemas worldwide, a psychological thriller to tantalise our over-active imaginations of a future where artificial intelligence has a consciousness. But how far are we from any of these ideas becoming reality? In Ex Machina audiences are supposed to believe that the artificially intelligent character, Ava, has a sense of self. Young programmer Caleb is asked to test Ava's consciousness and reveals that Ava is a bonafide intelligent humanoid capable of feeling emotions. The suffering she later experiences in the film evokes within us a sense of injustice; if she has a consciousness surely she should be entitled to freedom?

Alex Garland, the director of Ex-Machina, was inspired by Imperial Professor Murray Shanahan's book: "Embodiment and the Inner Life: Cognition and Consciousness in the Space of Plausible Minds". Shanahan's research at Imperial looks into how the human brain function could be used in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). "I am interested in trying to understand how cognition is realised in the brain. To do this I build computer models, which are typically simulations of large numbers of neurones organised in a complex network," he says in an interview at Imperial. After reading the progress in theory of consciousness detailed in Shanahan's book, Garland contacted the professor for advice on the technical aspects of his film.

"the director of Ex-Machina was inspired by Imperial Professor Murray Shanahan's book"

Origins of Artificial Intelligence

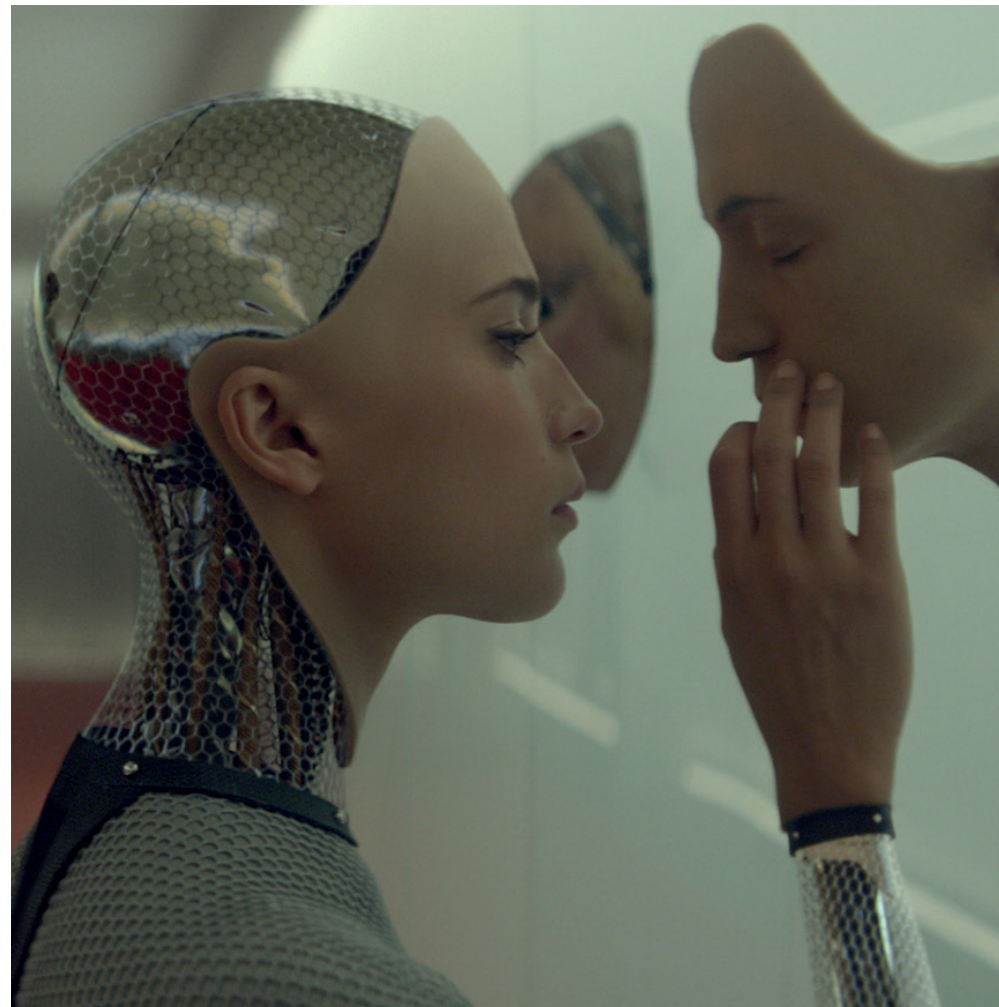
AI and machine learning algorithms are surprisingly ubiquitous in our everyday lives: Google's search predictions, mobile phone voice recognition systems such as Apple's Siri, driverless cars like Tesla Motors' latest dual-motor Model S and even closer to home – number plate recognition technology used for the London congestion charge. However, we are still a long way off being able to use robots instead of all-nighters to desperately complete our university coursework.

The progression of AI from the pages of Isaac Asimov's science fiction stories to driverless cars all started in the 1950s with Alan Turing, a British mathematician and infamous WWII codebreaker. It was Turing who first posed the question of whether machines could think, developing the Turing test, which determines how close a machine's behaviour is to that of a human. It is this that forms the basis for the plot of the film Ex-Machina.

Through the 1960s and 1970s Marvin Minsky, an American cognitive scientist, became a leading thinker in the field and co-founded the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) shortly after Turing died in 1954. Similar to Professor Shanahan, Minsky was scientific advisor to director Stanley Kubrick on the 1968 science fiction film "2001: A Space Odyssey" which brought audiences the AI called HAL9000 aboard spacecraft Discovery One.

After what was termed an "AI winter" between the 1970s and 1990s, when funding was cut short as governments favoured more productive industries, the 21st century saw the advancement of AI technology, albeit in less obvious ways than human lookalike robots. Nowadays, AI research is focused more on behind the scene uses such as logistics, data mining and medical diagnosis. One crazy example is in Japan where an AI has been nominated as a board member in a venture capital firm as it can predict market trends faster than its human associates. AI is also being used in the defence industry, with South Korean forces now using Samsung SGR-1 armed sentry robots to patrol the boarder with North Korea, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There have also been advances in robots that can develop and show emotions. Nao, a robot developed by the French robotics company Aldebaran, is being used as a robotic teacher in universities and schools



Robotic Ava in the new blockbuster hit Ex-Machina Photo: exmachinamovie

across the UK. The uncannily human-looking robot stands two feet tall and can be programmed to listen, see, speak, touch and react. If you search 'Nao robot' on YouTube you can even see troops of them programmed to dance in sync with the pop-hit Gangnam Style. Their abilities extend far beyond the dancefloor however, and they can even form bonds with the people they meet – depending on how they are treated. The longer they interact with someone, the more Nao learns the person's moods and the stronger the bond becomes.

Growing concerns

The usefulness of these technologies, with their capacity to continually learn from the data they collect, is making it ever harder to imagine a future without AI. Increasing dependence on these machines has sparked some concerns, with even Stephen Hawking warning of the perils of AI, saying in an interview with the Independent: "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race ... humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded." The technological singularity hypothesis represents this

view that continued progress in the development of AI will ultimately cause the end of humanity as its power exceeds mankind's intellectual capacity to control.

If you follow popular culture as a guide to AI, then we really should be terrified. Most fictitious depictions of a future where humans and robots co-exist picture bleak apocalyptic scenarios, ranging from robotic conspiracies to take over the world in *I-Robot* to the dystopian Earth depicted in the film *Blade Runner* where robotic 'replicants' have spiralled out of human control.

Whatever your stance on the future of AI, its progress since the 1950s has showcased the incredible capacity of humanity's own intelligence. It has certainly helped advance sectors such as medicine, defence and business. But how long it will take to create robots that have consciousness is still debated. Shanahan comments on the topic saying "the Robotics side of things – Ava's body – we can get to in 10 or 15 years I think ... but Ava's consciousness requires a couple of conceptual breakthroughs before we get there". Therefore despite substantial progress we are still far from making the ideas portrayed in Garland's film a reality, though it's certainly not impossible.

"How long it will take to create robots that have a conscious is still debated."



Nao robots showing what they're made of Photo: Aalto University

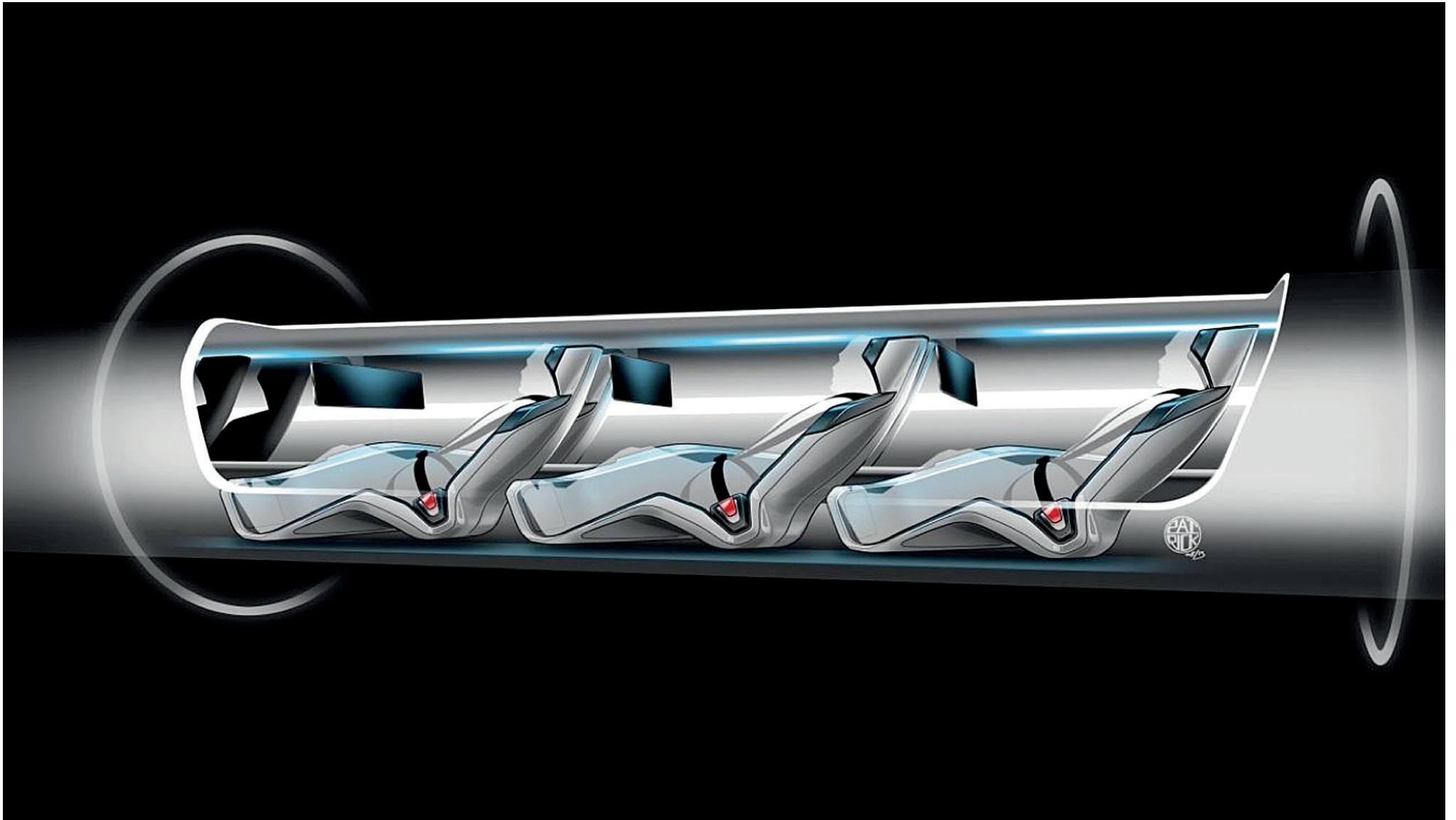
Technology

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Tech Editors ||| Jamie Dutton & Osama Awara

Engineering the Hyperloop prototype

Osama Awara discusses the challenges behind the high speed transport system



A Hyperloop concept for a pod, featuring plenty of room and leg space inclination. Photo credits: processindustryforum

It was in 2012 that the restless entrepreneur Elon Musk first announced his idea for a high speed transport system – the Hyperloop. Described by the magnate as ‘a cross between a Concorde, a railgun and an air hockey-table,’ this next-generation train system aims to transport people at speeds of over 700 mph. This would mean a journey from London to Edinburgh would take half an hour, faster than a jumbo jet while at the same time avoiding all those airport waiting times.

Initially, Musk released his ideas and plans of the Hyperloop for other entrepreneurs and engineers to take up the task of designing and building this feat. Eighteen months have passed, and now Musk has announced on Twitter that he will build a Hyperloop prototype in Texas. Clearly he has grown impatient, which begs the question: how exactly will this prototype be made?

The Hyperloop being built is for test purposes only and not an actual useable transport system. It is to

encourage other companies and students to come up with the pod designs themselves. For a second time, Musk is trying to give people a piece of the pie.

One of the greatest challenges is designing the Hyperloop so that it can reach such high speeds. This means that the biggest threat to the speed of any mobile pod or carriage is friction. Classical train systems experience high levels of resistance due to the contact of the train wheels with rail tracks.

The Hyperloop aims to avoid this by having the pods floating in the air by magnetic levitation, similar to the Shanghai maglev trains in China. Part of engineering is observing; if an engineer can create something new out of existing creations, then he is a good observer. However, the difference comes with the introduction of air bearings.

The air bearings allow the pod to levitate while at the same time the pod will force air from the front of the pod to the rear through holes,

using similar techniques to the well-known air-hockey game – an existing creation.

One issue that arises is that when the capsule is travelling at high speeds, if its cross-section fills too much of the tube, the air won't have the time or space to travel around the capsule. This would lead to a build-up of air at the front of the capsule – an undesired effect called choked flow. Choked flow leads to huge amounts of friction that would prevent the capsules reaching such high speeds.

A proposed solution to this is to use an air compressor, which will pump air from the front through a nozzle to the rear. This essentially creates a vacuum space at the front of the capsule, reducing the pressure in the tube and hence the resistance.

When objects travel at high speeds, it is necessary to avoid bends and inclines in order to ensure that there are minimal excessive G-forces acting on the passengers.

Experiencing an excessive G-force could make the journey a danger to

health, let alone a very uncomfortable ride. With this, the Hyperloop tube that connects one city to another must be kept straight, which for obvious geographical reasons would be difficult to achieve. Texas was chosen to locate the test track for this reason, as the amount of free space there is more than anyone can ask for a Hyperloop test playground.

Careful urban planning would be required to practically build a Hyperloop tube linking one city to another, which may potentially pose the biggest challenge to a successful infrastructure.

The test track is certainly one big step forward to the development of the Hyperloop. It is up to big companies, researchers and even students to bring forward ideas and build designs of pods to be used in the rail system of this grand design.

It would be very interesting to see what proposals are brought forward and how they would fare against one another, it is usually the simplest of designs that fare the best.

"A journey from London to Edinburgh would take half an hour."

"When objects travel at high speeds it is necessary to avoid bends."

Music

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Music Editors || Grace Rahman & Amna Askari

Girls in Peacetime not as twee as it sounds

Philip Kent reviews the latest offering from Belle & Sebastian

Twee is a word often used to describe Stuart Murdoch's indie band, whose ninth album *Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance* was released on Matador on 19th January. However having listened to the album a number of times since it was released one is immediately forced to consider whether this label still holds true.

Belle & Sebastian has developed significantly since 1999's *Tigermilk*, the most startling change being in 2010's *Write About Love* where the emotional and sombre ballads of their earlier works were lost. That album marked a turning point for the band as it became more electronic, more upbeat, and more happy; yet felt unfinished as if the band did not know where it was going.

Many critics have cited this as a 'reinvention' of the band – I disagree. Whilst this new album places a heavy focus on love and relationships (like practically all their other works), the stories told in the lyrics feel more mature and question the world we are in, rather than who we are.

Throwing in the political anger prevalent in a number of the tracks, and combined with the direction taken by *Write About Love*, it becomes apparent that the band is growing up, moving from the adolescent nature of their earlier releases to stories about the lives of twentysomethings.

This is by no means a criticism. Whilst the enjoyment of the band's older works is unaffected by their recent dramatic direction change, the listener can observe vastly different emotions behind the storylines in what is presented to them today

"It becomes apparent that the band is growing up"



You get loads of bandmembers for your money. Photo: grimygoods.com

versus (for example) the band's outstanding *If You're Feeling Sinister*.

The album feels far more approachable than Belle and Sebastian's earlier releases, and this is likely thanks to the much wider range of musical influences present in the tracks. Gospel makes a welcome appearance in 'Nobody's Empire', and a strong theme of dance runs through the album. Artists such as **Metronomy**, **Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark** and **New Order** come to mind through slight similarities in the music.

The band did put out three singles prior to the January release – 'The

Party Line', 'Nobody's Empire', and 'The Cat With the Cream' – all songs that lend far more closely to **Belle & Sebastian** albums of old than this new album as a whole. Because of this I reach the only criticism I feel appropriate – it does not flow, a startling disappointment considering how well constructed earlier releases are.

Ultimately, this does not take away from the absolute pleasure of listening to *Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance*. Murdoch again demonstrates his excellent ability to craft lyrical poetry, and the score – whilst less cinematic than earlier works –

emotionally moves you in the way people have come to expect from the Glaswegian band.

Yet, the album sounds confident in a way **Belle & Sebastian** has never been able to manage before, and for this fact they must be congratulated. *Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance* is well worth a listen and an outstanding achievement for the band. If you have tried Belle and Sebastian before and have found them a bit too "twee" or insular for your liking, try again; you may just like their newly found voice.

Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance is out now on Matador records.

"The album sounds confident in a way Belle & Sebastian has never been able to manage before."



So that's why mums like Hozier. Photo: stereogum.com

Gigs of the week

JESSIE WARE - O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON - 31ST JAN
Sassy as hell and newly hitched Jessie returns to her native South London with offerings from her new album, *Tough Love*. It's certainly in a different direction to her debut, *Devotion*, which was a soulful highlight of 2012. However, the uber fans that made her add extra dates to the London leg of this tour don't seem to care about her recent collaboration with **Ed Sheeran**. Watch out for the fabulous merch, designed by Ted's Draws.

PALMA VIOLETS - SEABRIGHT ARMS - 31ST JAN
This overexcited fourpiece provide riotous fun in an intimate venue. Sure to be mountains of fun, but wear contact lenses and comfortable shoes.

HOZIER - SHEPHERD'WS BUSH EMPIRE - 1ST FEB
His lover's got humour. If you want to sway all evening to mum-friendly crooning from Andrew Hozier-Byrne

in a room full of lovers, then this is for you. In all seriousness though, he's just made it in America, so this might be the last we see of him for a while.

LA ROUX - KOKO - 3RD FEB
Now consciously uncoupled from musical partner Ben Langmaid, Elly Jackson brings the fabulous *Trouble in Paradise* to Camden.

CHILDHOOD - XOYO - 5TH FEB
As part of the NME Awards season, various darlings of the infamous music rag are playing shows all over London. Tonight is the turn of angsty young rockers, **Childhood**, who are still riding the wave of 2014's excellent *Lacuna*. Tickets are still available and are a total snip at only £11.60.

GRACE RAHMAN

Games

games.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Games Editor || Max Eggl & Calum Skene

3 Space Sims: Ready for Lift-off

Max Eggl compares three games you might find spaceial

Elite: Dangerous

If you are talking about space games, the Elite series is one that stirs good memories for many a gamer. Sadly, the last entry in this illustrious series was released back in 1995, meaning that many of the newer generation of gamers never really had the opportunity to play this. Therefore when Elite: Dangerous was offered up on kickstarter, it wasn't long before it reached its target goal.

Now available on PC, what makes this game different from the other entries on this list?

Well obviously it's available, which No Man's Sky or Star Citizen can't claim. The galaxy that you play in is modelled on our own Milky Way with about 400 billion star systems, where 150,000 of those are modelled on real data. You are given a small amount of money and a ship and make your own story. Currently you are only limited to your ship, but updates are planned that will allow you to walk around and interact with NPCs. The game is also fully online, meaning that even the solo game-play will require an internet connection. On the other hand, the MMO component features a persistent world, where specific areas are instances to a certain number of players.

This game is for you if you want play a space game, and you want to play it now. Overall it has gotten really good reviews, and while the learning curve may be a bit steep, it does look really like something that could be immensely enjoyable.

"This game is for you if you want play a space game, and you want to play it now."



Photo: outofthedarkness.info



Photo: forbes.com

No Man's Sky

When this game was shown off by Hello Games at E3, it completely blew most people's minds. No Man's Sky looked like the space game we have always wanted, and it has mostly been developed in secret, under the codename Project Skyscraper. This game's universe is completely procedurally generated and will be based on a 64-bit seed key. This means that this game can create more than 18 quintillion planets (18 followed by 18 zeros) for you to explore. However, this does not even include all the possibilities of flora and fauna, which are generated in the exact same way. So not only do you seamlessly get to fly from space to the planet's surface, you can jump out and inspect the animals, name their species and categorize them!

That's the name and aim of the game that is No Man's Sky. While there are some elements of character and ship upgrades, the biggest feature of this game will be its exploration possibilities. Furthermore, there is rather little multiplayer, with the focus being on you having fun (yay offline solo games!). The only ability for you to interact with other players is through exploration updates on what you have discovered, as well as allowing them to visit planets that you previously have visited – however, only once they have hyperdrive capabilities.

Sadly this game is not out yet, and there is no fixed release date, however, a 2015 launch is promised.

This game is for you if you don't really care much about the fighting, and trading and all those shenanigans and prefer to explore things, seeing marvellous new worlds, watch fascinating creatures and name them anything you want. What this game will hopefully be is a beautiful journey with views that won't disappoint.

Star Citizen

This is the game that I am looking forward to the most. This game has a solid foundation in old prequels, and was crowdfunded to the ridiculous amount of \$68 million to date, with more coming in daily. Rather than working with procedural generation, the development team at Robert Space Industries have crafted over 60 unique star systems, and they look incredibly beautiful for it. However, exploring the entirety of a planet, or even manually flying to their surface sadly aren't features that are currently planned in the game.

Star Citizen is all about hyperrealism, from the ship's thrusters that align themselves in a manner that real thrusters would as well to the persistent world economy that is fuelled by the supplies and demands of the players. Furthermore, this game doesn't just focus on the piloting of the spaceships, but also has an incredibly visual walk-around mode that allows you to walk around your ship, onto trading hubs or planet surfaces. The game will also have a very well integrated FPS element, meaning that not only do you get your space fix, but also your pew-pew-laser-fps fix. The coolest thing of all? This all happens in a universe that is persistent and influenced by the players playing it. The economy is just an example of how your actions can have a direct impact on the game!

While this may be my most anticipated game, it is also the one that has the latest release date, namely sometime in 2016. However, the developers are releasing modules that give you parts of the game now, meaning you can have a pop at some features.

This game is for you if you enjoy super realistic games, without necessarily needing the full exploring thing. However, instead of exploring you can still indulge in cornering the market, becoming a pirate in the fringe regions or smuggle goods across the galaxy. It is your adventure.

Why is Space such a good Gaming setting?

MAXIMILIAN EGGL
GAMES EDITOR

Last week, I was talking about the next big trend in gaming. I really enjoyed writing that article, and I really felt that I wanted to focus a bit more on what is the genre that allows you to really do almost anything. Given the ever increasing power of our PCs and consoles, the endlessness of space is become more and more of a world that we can explore. Sure, procedurally generated worlds like Minecraft are also endless, but they still feel somewhat 'samey'. There are only so many caves, forests and oceans you can see if they are based on the same planet. That is the magic of space. So you have one gigantic planet, with caves, forests and oceans but then you can just get in your ship and jet off to a completely different one, where everything is completely different! You don't just have one endless world but an endless amount of endless worlds. Can you start to see why I find this scenario so fascinating?

Another aspect that draws me to this genre is the technology that permeates these games. I love technology and the creative minds behind these ideas that could soon become reality. I mean how do laser guns, warp drives and teleportation not sound amazing?

However, if I really think about it, neither the endlessness of the game's world nor the technological fantasy are the factors that decide why I fall in love with these games. The reason I really love to start up Space Engineers, Sins of a Solar Empire or FTL is the fact that I am able to see things and experience things that I will never realistically be able to. But then again, you could say that about any fantasy game. I will never be a goat who licks stuff or be a Dragonborn. What is different about space games is that what I am looking at is stuff that actually is real in some way. If I had been alive in a later millennium I could possibly be flying around the Milky Way, smuggling goods and fighting off space pirates.

Anyhow, what you have to the left here are three games that I mentioned in my previous article, and felt that I wanted to go into depth exploring their differences, strengths and weaknesses. Have fun!

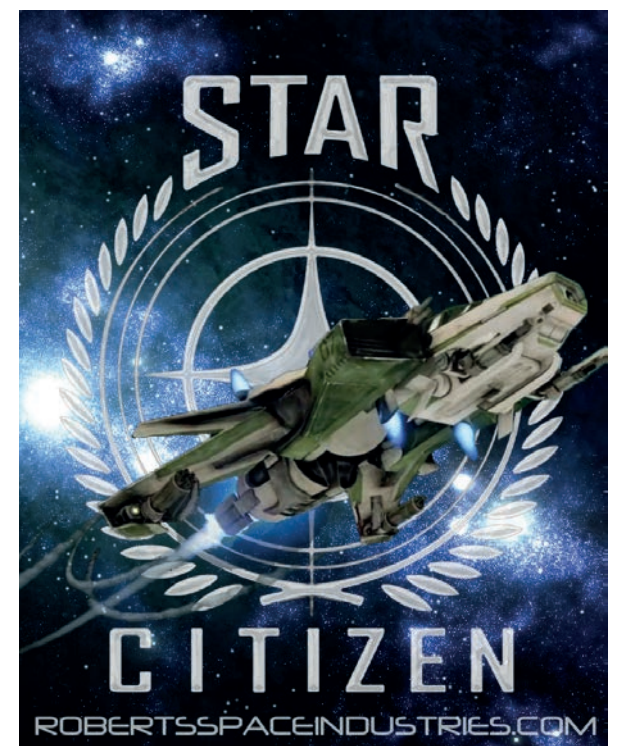


Photo: gamebreaker.tv

Television

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Television Editors || Guila Gabrielli & John Park

The Best Show Not On Television

Joshua Renken gives a spoiler-free overview of the U.S. Netflix hit show, *House of Cards*

Based on the novels by Michael Dobbs and the British political drama by Andrew Davies, *House of Cards* is a Netflix original series that follows U.S. Congressman and Majority Whip Francis Underwood, played by Kevin Spacey, who after being denied the position he was promised of Foreign Secretary in a new democratic cabinet sets out to take revenge on the administration he helped to elect and take the Presidency for himself. The series also stars Robin Wright as Frank's chilling wife Claire, and Kate Mara as the young journalist Zoe Barnes, who forges a secret relationship with Frank in a desperate attempt to get her professional break.

House of Cards is an American remake of the four-part 1990 miniseries of the same name and signifies a real landmark in the continuing evolution of television production and consumption. Netflix chose to upload each of 13-episode web television series all in one go, dispensing with the television convention of releasing an episode every week. The first two seasons of *House of Cards* have been released on the February of each year beginning in 2013 and the third series will be put up on the site on Feb 27th.

At the centre of this show lies the enigmatic relationship between Frank and Claire Underwood. This pair of two-faced, power crazed sociopaths have created a successful partnership built on a fierce mutual respect and candid communication that allows them to overcome the conflicts that emerge as they rise up the political food chain. Constantly scheming about future events, Frank and Claire often share a single cigarette late at night to discuss their strategies for the next day. Their marriage is filled with sexual promiscuity and secrets on both sides, but somehow their reciprocal admiration and shared sense of ambition overrides these problems to create a sleek and highly utilitarian relationship that works for both of them.

A self-made man with a thick southern drawl, Frank shows little personal regard for political ideology, instead favouring "ruthless

pragmatism". He is a master of persuasion and political manoeuvring who is remorseless in his acquisition of power for power's sake. As Claire says: "He's a man who knows how to take what he wants". Frank has sexual liaisons with both men and women during the series, but he is never explicitly identified as gay or bisexual. At one point after a conversation with his wife, Frank declares: "I love that woman. I love her more than sharks love blood." This comparison suggests a kind of animalistic passion but could just have been included by the writers to draw attention to the Frank's bloodthirsty and visceral obsession with power that Claire encourages and facilitates. She is a constant source of empowerment for him. "My husband doesn't apologize," she tells him after a setback. "Even to me." Some have suggested that Frank is secretly gay, but becomes attracted to women due to the sense of dominance that it gives him. "A great man once said, everything is about sex. Except sex. Sex is about power." This famous Oscar Wilde quote seems especially pertinent when it comes to Frank's sexuality.

Frank Underwood first attended military academy before going onto Harvard Law, where he met Claire. It was her parents that bankrolled Frank's political campaigns early on. His political success stems from his ability to subtly sway people to act in the way that best suits his interests. This is easier to do in some that others, but Frank always finds a way to beat his opponents. In *House of Cards* you are led to believe that Frank and Claire are both ready to do anything that is required, that there is no end to the depths of their depravity.

One of the most refreshing aspects of this series is the regularity with which Frank Underwood 'breaks the fourth wall' and talks directly to the viewer. There are many critical moments in conversations when Underwood will lean in and face the camera, giving a pithy explanation to help elucidate the gravity of the situation. Frank also likes to reflect on other character's misgivings

and weaknesses. After one heated exchange between himself and a former staffer, Frank professes his strong preference for power over money. "Money is the McMansion in Sarasota that starts falling apart after 10 years. Power is the old stone building that stands for centuries. I cannot respect someone who doesn't see the difference."

Frank's straight-to-camera monologues make the experience of watching *House of Cards* feel that much more personal and indulgent to watch than other series. And this component works especially well when you consider the way many people are watching it – individually on their laptops. Frank's intimate disclosures help the audience to see things from his perspective; where other characters are regarded as little more than pawns that he can manipulate. This show is awash with great lines from Frank and his soliloquies work very well to add some nuance to the series.

Frank is one of that strange breed of characters; a likeable villain. One other likeable villain is Shakespeare's *Richard III*, who is coincidentally the last character that Kevin Spacey played before stepping into Underwood's shoes. *Richard III* breaks the fourth wall in the original play and there are actually a great many parallels that can be drawn between *House of Cards* and two of Shakespeare's greatest plays: *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.

Beau Willimon writes Underwood's monologues exceedingly well. For example in a scene where he is alone in a church after a significant service, he speaks the lines: "There is no solace above or below, only us, small, solitary, striving, battling one another, I pray to myself for myself". Almost every line is quotable. Borderline poetry.

The very first words that Frank utters in the first episode are: "There are two kinds of pain. The sort of pain that makes you strong, or useless pain. The sort of pain that's only suffering. I have no patience for useless things." (He strangles a dog to end it's suffering after a car collision) "There. No more pain."

"I love that woman I love her more than sharks love blood."

"Power is the old stone building that stands for centuries."



Photo: Beau Willimon, Netflix

Robin Wright gives a career topping performance as Claire Underwood, the Lady Macbeth of modern day Washington. Claire is a lobbyist and runs an environmental nonprofit organization, while acting as Frank's primary accomplice. She is every bit as hungry for power as her husband and in many ways, comes across as even more insidious than Frank. Claire is clinical and considered in her actions, with a cold exterior and the capacity for barbaric threats if the moment demands. "I am willing to let your child wither and die inside you, if that's what's required" stands out as a particularly memorable instance of hostility towards a former employee. Claire is very much the ice-queen of American politics.

House of Cards does a great job at showing the wheels of democracy in action and shines a light, albeit a dim one, at the ugly culture of private scheming and negotiation that goes on in Washington behind closed doors. It's not pretty, but it's certainly exhilarating and you cannot help but be stimulated by the candid conversation. Favours are constantly being exchanged that range from money, information and public backing to sex or getting people's kids into the right Colleges. Washington is portrayed as a relentless dog-eat-dog arena full of secrets, where people blur the boundaries between private and public incentives to get ahead. In *House of Cards* we see that politics is a dirty game played by smart people. If the idealism and romanticism of *The West Wing* gave you faith in politics,

Television

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Television Editors || Guila Gabrielli & John Park



then *House of Cards* will swipe it away with unsettling rapidity. This is not a show that gives you faith in humanity.

One of the problems with *House of Cards* is that the Underwoods are implausibly effective at getting what they want, to the point where other characters seem slow and uncalculating by comparison. President Walker, for instance, is unrealistically susceptible to manipulation. Given that it appears to take a man as Machiavellian as Frank to make it to the top spot, Garrett Walker is remarkably easy prey.

Another issue with *House of Cards* is that, so far, Frank has not been seriously challenged yet. Sure, he's experienced small setbacks but nothing that has really tested him or pushed him anywhere near his breaking point. Great television series of the past such as *Breaking Bad*, *The Wire* and *The Sopranos* allowed the audience to see the weaknesses in their protagonists, whether they were a hero or anti-hero. But the writers for *House of Cards* have so far produced a plot that only serves obstacles that the audience is confident Underwood can conquer. However, series three is likely to put an end to this.

There is no denying that *House of Cards* is Kevin Spacey's show. It's all about Frank. This makes all the other subplots pale in comparison and you quickly begin to lose interest. The guinea-pig wielding cyberterrorist in series two for instance, and even Zoe's

ex-boyfriend's investigations, is far less interesting than whatever Frank is doing. *House of Cards* has some of the best individual scenes I've ever seen on the small screen but the show bounces around a little more than want it to and the plot feels disjointed as a result.

Throughout *House of Cards* there are some startling moments that come out of nowhere and are never referred to again. A lot of these events are significant to the character's involved but do not contribute one jot towards the overall storyline. Since all of these moments have so far remained unexplored it looks as though the writer's just shoehorned some surprising twists into the script for shock value, much to the detriment of the overall series. It smacks of a last minute attempt to add intrigue but on reflection these moments feel like hollow shocks, with nothing behind them to add to the story.

Credit must go to the cinematographer Eigil Bryld for creating such an enthralling and secretive atmosphere, even when a scene is being filmed in broad daylight. The production quality generally is first class. Several directors have shot two or three chapters, but David Fincher's early influence left a strong impression on the whole show. *House of Cards* is beautifully shot and Jeff Beal's fantastic soundtrack features a trickling piano solo that perfectly captures the sly, calculative mindset of the characters.

Despite being a political thriller,

House of Cards is as much a character study of Frank than it is a series about Washington politics. With a stellar cast and great dialogue, *House of Cards* is a delicious meditation on power and amorality that is confident in its execution and elegant in its presentation. It features a universally excellent set of performances by the cast and Spacey in particular must be praised for owning his demanding character to become one of television's best antiheroes.

Ever since its release there has been a lot of talk about how *House of Cards* is a revolutionary piece of television, but while it is a true pleasure to watch, it doesn't bring very much to the table in terms of commentary that wasn't already there before. This is a show that captured the zeitgeist and turned it up to eleven, instead of challenging presumptions. The series takes the same cynical stance as almost every other political show in the last few decades that wasn't written by Aaron Sorkin. *House of Cards* is a series that tells us mostly what we already know, and it does not go about telling it in as subtle or intelligent a way as, say, *Mad Men* or *Breaking Bad*. In the whole series, the most striking and fresh aspect of *House of Cards* is the dynamic between Frank and Claire.

Despite Frank's morally irreprehensible behavior and twisted morality, there is a curious temptation to will him on, to see how far the Underwoods can get before it all falls apart. Frank is the kind of unscrupulous political operator that we all hope doesn't really exist.

The idea that democracy is a veil for the rich and powerful to exert huge influence is a terrifying one; but crucially, it is a compelling one. We all want to see how Frank's story plays out. Will he become President and succeed as leader of the free world, or will his meteoric ascent end up collapsing like... well like a *House of Cards*?

Best served in the form of late night binges, *House of Cards* is very good at persuading you to click 'Next Episode' when you should probably go to bed. It's a heavyweight piece of television, just as Netflix is now a heavyweight content provider. All there is to say is give it a go. Soon you'll be hypnotized.

Series 3 will be on Netflix Feb. 27th.

"I am willing to let your child wither and die inside you if that's what's required."

"There is no denying that House of Cards is Kevin Spacey's show."

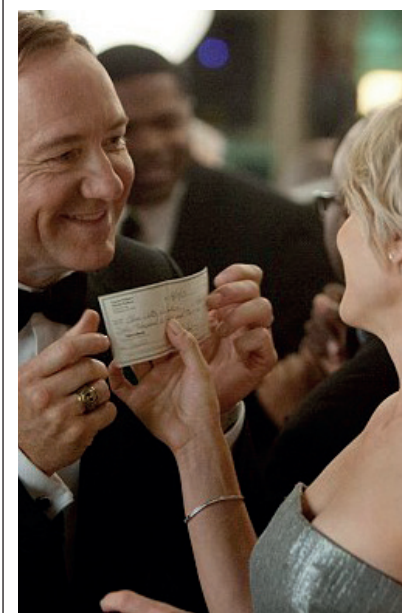


Photo: Beau Willimon, Netflix

Welfare

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Welfare Editors || Diba Esbati & Chanon Wongsatayanont

Overcoming Painful Distance

Chanon Wongsatayanont talks about coping with LDR



Long distance relationship is a challenge, sure, but you can still go to bed smiling with the phone in your hand.

Photo: tabby-like-a-cat

The world is getting more globalised and people seem to end up all over the place, smattered here and there like dots of paint. Unfortunately, this also applies to couples, out of necessity or to chase after an opportunity elsewhere. Both sides mean well and they each want the best for each other, but it's painful for a relationship to be reduced to a window on Skype or a voice over the phone.

Sometimes, the distance is two hours away in another town. Sometimes, it's on the other side of the world with a different time zone. Sometimes it's temporary, only as long as a university degree and you'll see them every holiday. But sometimes the end is so far in the future that you have to accept that this is the way the relationship is going to be.

All forms of long distance relationship (or LDR) are difficult. But with the connected world of the internet, distance between two people will seem closer, evolving into another kind of relationship that doesn't appear as far as before.

I would know. Ever since we've started going out a year and a half ago, my girlfriend and I have mostly spent our relationship separated by a six (sometimes seven) hours time difference. She'll either be in England while I'm in Thailand or vice versa. The longest we've been physically together was three months, and it

was those moments that made it definitely worth the wait.

I'm not going to lie; there were a lot of things we had to adjust to cope with the separation. So, at the risk of seeming like an Agony Uncle, here are some tips that would help you maintain a healthy long distance relationship.

Tell each other how you cope

I avoided saying 'communication' since this broad term has been used to death in all relationship advice posts. What I mean is just talking about what you prefer or are comfortable with. You'd be surprised with what feels 'natural' to each person in a long distance relationship.

Do you like to leave Skype on whenever you get home so you feel that you're always together? Or do you sometimes try to avoid Skype-ing because it emphasises how far away you are from each other, especially when it's daytime in one screen and night in another?

You might think that this would bring on some awkward conversations but I feel that this is valuable in avoiding misunderstanding or wrong assumptions. You don't want to label each other with something that they're not. Skype-ing or texting daily to keep the warmth alive is not clingy. At the same time, Skype-ing only once in a while with the intention of

making every Skype session valuable does not mean they're becoming cold. People have different ways to adjust to the new situation and it never hurts to make that clear.

Update each other

The scariest thing about long distance relationships is how easy it is to drift apart without even realising it. You may forget to talk about what you've been up to for days, then weeks, and before you know it, you have no idea what you're each up to. Then you begin to lose out of each other's references and jokes. Suddenly you notice that someone else began to understand them better than you.

That's our secret fear. However, frequent updates on something so simple as one another's days can do wonders to keep you connected. It makes the distance seem smaller, as you'll be able to relate to what he or she is doing and vice versa. Next time you talk will also be much easier since there'll always be things to pick up on other than how much you miss each other.

Accommodate each other

The two of you will likely have different lives, meeting new people in different settings. You'll be with different groups of friends doing lots of stuff at different times. And that's not to factor in time difference in

some cases. It will be much harder to organize a time to meet since you'll both have to be at home in front of a computer.

But compromises must be made on both sides to make time for each other for the reasons in the previous point.

Share new experiences

No doubt you've had lots of amazing experience with your significant other while you were together but you can start new experiences by beginning a TV series, book, hobby or even start a new class together.

You will most likely already share a lot of that already, but when you're apart it's easy to feel like you can never hang out the same way anymore. True, you can't be there physically, but you can still do things you'd normally do together, just in different locations. The best thing? It would bring back old times and get you talking the way you would if you were together.

And this doesn't all have to be indoors stuff. What my girlfriend and I always do when we travel somewhere new is to create a photo diary and send it to each other. That way, it's almost like you're seeing those new things together.

Gestures

Now what these gestures mean completely on you. Are you the sweet, dependable or fun type of couple? Do you prefer old-fashioned letters and parcels, mysterious flower deliveries or surprise snapchats? These are helpful as reminders of those times you were together.

Looking for ideas? It's the easiest thing in the world. I just searched "long distance relationship" in Google and almost everything is relevant. I mean, the first link is a list of 100 activities couples can do while apart. There's even a whole subreddit where redditors in long distance relationships share their stories or give each other advice.

I can't lie, I know how difficult long distance relationship is. It's horrible to have someone you love confined to Skype, the screen just within reach but physically so far away.

But trust me, there are upsides to it. You will appreciate each other so much more, as each moment you spend together becomes so precious you won't take it for granted. When you've come to the light at the end of the tunnel, you'll both be much stronger for it and you'll be glad you've made the trip.

Mental health helplines and resources

If you are concerned about your own mental health, or that of a loved one, there are people out there you can talk to who can give you advice, or will be there to listen.

Helplines

If you are distressed and need someone to talk to :

Samaritans (24 hr helpline):

Phone: 08457 90 90 90

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

Anxiety Help :

Anxiety UK

Phone: 08444 775 774

(Mon-Fri 9:30 - 17:30)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

No Panic

Phone: 0808 800 2222

(daily, 10am - 10pm)

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

Eating Disorders:

Beat

Phone: 0845 634 1414

(Mon - Thurs, 1.30pm - 4:30pm)

Addiction:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Phone: 0845 769 7555

(24 hour helpline)

Website: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous

Phone: 0300 999 1212

Website: www.ukna.org

College Resources

Student Counselling Service

Phone: 020 7594 9637

e-mail: counselling@ic.ac.uk

Imperial College Health Centre

Telephone: 020 7584 6301

e-mail: healthcentre@ic.ac.uk

You can also go to your academic or personal tutor regarding pastoral issues, especially if you think your mental health might be affecting your academic performance.

Union Page

You Can Create Change

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Campaigning is about creating change, whether this is a change on campus or your course, or in your local area, or even tackling a national issue. This seeks to ensure that students who are passionate are supported to take on the issues they see.

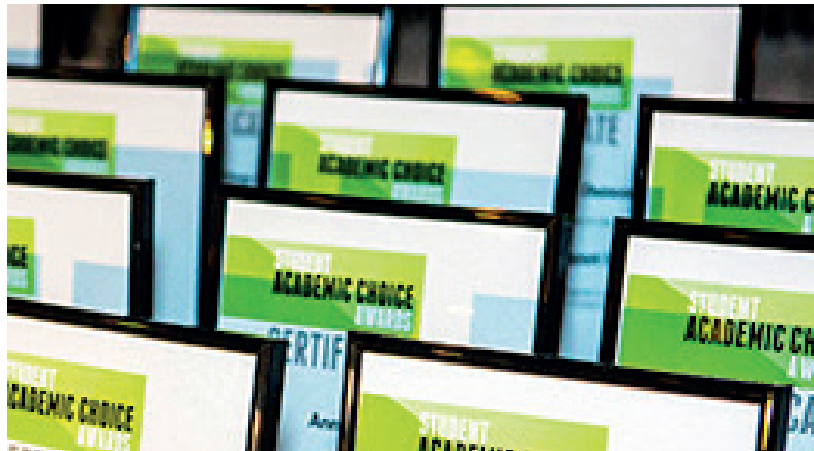
Examples of campaigns which students at Imperial are interested in include:

- ▲ Extending the lunch hour on Friday afternoon to accommodate students of faith
- ▲ Tackling the stigma around mental health at Imperial
- ▲ Finding out the perceptions and reality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in sport.

Campaigns can be led by any student on the issues they are passionate about, as well as this we have 8 Liberation Officers, who are elected each year to lead work in their areas. The Liberation Officers roles are Black and Minority Ethnic, Campaigns, Disabilities, Ethics and the Environment, Gender Equality, Interfaith; International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT).

For more information go to: imperialcollegeunion.org/campaigns

SACA nominations closing soon!



Nominations for our Student Academic Choice Awards (SACAs) close Friday 13 February. Hundreds of students have sent in their nominations already, and we are looking for even more to help recognise the excellence and innovation amongst Imperial's academic and professional staff.

The eight awards available cover all faculties, departments and campuses, as well as all modes of study. Nominate as many people as you like in as many categories as you like - if your nominee is shortlisted, you may win a free invite to the SACAs Award Ceremony!

For more information and to nominate a member of staff, visit:

imperialcollegeunion.org/sacas

The Big Elections 2015



The Big Elections 2015 is your chance to be part of the future of Imperial College Union. We've got more students this year, more positions and hopefully more voters - the largest students' union election in England and Wales is now even bigger!

You can stand... and we can help! You might have a few queries or worries about taking part in our elections. Are you an International student and not sure if you can run because of your visa? Not sure if you can do it because you're a Postgraduate student? Worried you don't have enough experience? Don't worry - it's no problem for you to stand in our election. We're running a number of information sessions before and during the Nomination period so that you can learn more.

We also have sessions that will help you write a winning manifesto, as well as organise and run an effective campaign to help you make the most of the campaigning time during the elections.

For more information about our information sessions go to: imperialcollegeunion.org/elections



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FRIDAY 30 JANUARY

Friday 30 January
20:00 - 02:00
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Free before 20:00
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£2.50 on the door



100% Student DJs on the night
house // bass // dnb // and more



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(hot dogs, chicken wings, nachos & fries)

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Enter the raffle to be in with a chance to win
a Patriots or Seahawks jersey.

FIRST 50 TICKETS SOLD ONLINE ARE £2.50 / £3.00 ON THE NIGHT

COMING UP!

Date	Event	Time	Location
Friday 30	Good Form	20:00 - 02:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Sunday 1	Super Bowl	22:30 - 04:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Every Tuesday	Super Quiz	20:00 - 22:00	FiveSixEight
Every Tuesday	Reynolds Film Club	19:00 - 22:00	Reynolds
Every Wednesday	CSP Wednesday	19:00 - 01:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Every Wednesday	Sports Night	19:00 - 00:00	Reynolds

Arts

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Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Imperial's Hidden Artistic Treasures

Jingjie Cheng gets a behind the scenes look at 170 Queen's Gate

Every morning, students stream into Imperial College from Queen's Gate, turning in at Imperial College Road and passing by a red brick house on their left without as much as a second glance. Few students realise that the Victorian townhouse is both Grade II Listed, and the residence of the President of the College.

Completed in 1889, 170 Queen's Gate, as it is now known, was acquired by the college after the Second World War and subsequently scheduled as a 'building of special architectural or historic interest' in 1958.

It was designed by the Victorian architect Richard Norman Shaw, arguably one of the most influential and prolific British architects whose other works include the Romanesque buildings of the old New Scotland Yard premises along Embankment and the old English houses of Bedford Park; upon closer inspection, one will notice beautiful carvings above the entrance, and a family crest on the front door.

While the upper floors are designated as Rector's Lodging, the ground floor is mainly a venue for corporate events, receptions, seminars or weddings. I had the privilege of exploring its premises recently and what fascinated me was the substantial collection of college-owned art it housed.

In what is known as the Solar Room (shafts of sunlight streamed gently into the room while I was visiting), there is an impressive collection of Russian paintings on display. From portraits, to snowy Russian landscapes, and even to costume designs, the paintings were originally loaned to the college by Professor Alexander Kennaway in 1989 and variously donated to and purchased by Imperial College in 2007. Now a permanent part of the College's art collection, they add sophistication and style to the room, making it look almost like a small art gallery.

In the adjacent drawing room, a painting by John Everett Millais caught my eye – a cofounder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, Millais was involved in a movement that rejected the mechanistic style of artists such as Raphael and Michelangelo, instead advocating for a return to attentive detail, intense colours, and the influence of nature. This particular painting, *For the Squire*, is a painting on loan to the college by one of its professors and shows a girl holding a piece of paper in her hands, looking up expectantly. The natural colours and mundane subject matter is characteristic of Millais' late style.

In the largest room, the Council Room, the walls are adorned with



Sir John Everett Millais, *For the Squire*, 1882

portraits of rectors past and present. Portraits of past rectors are arranged chronologically along the walls, from the second rector Sir Alfred Keogh who is depicted in full military dress uniform (he was the Director General of army medical services prior to becoming Rector) up to Sir Keith O'Nions, shown before a montage of buildings for Imperial West development.

There is also a painting of Prince Albert which was presented to Imperial College by the Queen in 1957 – besides being closely associated with the Royal College of Chemistry and the Royal School of Mines, Prince Albert was instrumental in the development of the South Kensington area as a site for education in science and the arts.

The house as an historic building is a concern of our College Archivist Anne Barrett; she takes care of the paintings, and has meticulous knowledge of the treasures accumulated by the college over the years. Despite having been here for

more than a year, I had never really thought about the rich history and culture that must hide beneath the glitzy façade of the business school or the grey, monolithic buildings on campus. It strikes me as somewhat ironic that these treasures are hidden away, seen more by outsiders renting the venue rather than the College's own students, but Ms Barrett explained that there is a lack of suitable spaces on campus to hang valuable works of art or exhibits in general. Pieces that are displayed, however, such as those in the glass cases on the first floor of the SAF building, seem to go largely unnoticed by students.

Perhaps a greater appreciation of the history of the College will cultivate a stronger collective sense of belonging and pride to this institution in which we spend so much of our time.

Students who are interested are welcome to arrange a tour of 170 Queen's Gate with Ms Barrett.

"I have never thought about the rich history behind the glitzy façade."

"It seems ironic that these treasures are seen more by outsiders than the college's own students."

Editorial: The Diversity Issue

FRED FYLES
KAMIL MCCLELLAND

SECTION EDITORS

Following on from our exploration of hidden art last week, we are looking at diversity in art and whether we, as art consumers, are getting a representative view of art produced throughout our society. In our first article, Jingjie Cheng visits Imperial College's 170 Queen's Gate, the home of the university's president and a popular venue for events. However, unknown to students, the building is a veritable treasure trove of artistic masterpieces.

Next, following a number of highly publicised comments, Indira Mallik examines diversity in art and whether minorities get fair exposure in the arts, or whether there exists an elite club of the privileged few who seem to run the show. Through diversity comes richer culture, but is society becoming stunted by the stagnation of much of the world's popular art?

Jingjie visits Somerset House's new exhibition, *Mapping the City*, seeing how maps can be reinvented to reveal a different story. Whether consciously or subconsciously, we are exposed to maps every day, however we rarely pause to consider their artistic value. This exhibition aims to paint them in a new light, exploring how they can be interpreted to tell us more about the place they represent.

Max Falkenberg lauds Tricycle Theatre's one woman production *Happy Birthday Without You*, a play by relatively unknown actress Sonia Jalaly. It is extraordinarily difficult for one person, no matter how experienced, to be able to command a stage all by themselves and maintain the attention of a captive audience, but Jalaly's character Violet Fox manages to do just this.

Finally, *Dara* at the National Theatre tells the story of a Mughal prince and his struggle of succession with his brothers, on the background of the failing health of his father. Fred Fyles sees if this production, originally performed at the Ajoka Theatre in Pakistan, heralds a renaissance of arts from other countries, covering topics not usually raised in British art, or if falls short of its intended goal.

So that's this week! Next time, we will be discussing the theme of new frontiers, exploring how artists push boundaries or visit far off places.

Arts

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‘Male, Pale, & Stale?’

Indira Mallik analyses the divide between the have and have-nots, and Britain’s arts class war

Last week, the unlikeliest of arguments took place. The participants: the somewhat passé singer James Blunt and Labour’s new culture secretary Chris Bryant. The topic: diversity (or lack thereof) in the British arts sector. Bryant sparked the row when, in his first interview since becoming shadow culture secretary, he addressed the “cultural drought” facing Britain outside of London and the south-east due to a lack of funding. If elected, he said, Labour would work to encourage the arts world to hire from people from a variety of backgrounds. Crossed-words might have been avoided had he not added “I am delighted that Eddie Redmayne won [a Golden Globe for best actor for *The Theory of Everything*], but we can’t just have a culture dominated by Eddie Redmayne and James Blunt and their ilk,” referencing the actor and the singer’s privileged backgrounds – Eddie Redmayne was educated at Eton and Blunt at Harrow. Blunt hit back with an open letter to Chris Bryant, accusing the MP of “telling working class people that posh people like me don’t deserve [success], and that we must redress the balance.” Blunt went on to say that Bryant was peddling an “envy-based” agenda which promoted mediocrity in the name of diversity above merit. Chris Bryant replied in a letter of his own saying “I’m delighted you’ve done well for yourself... It is far tougher [to forge a career in the arts] if you come from a poor family where you have to hand over your holiday earnings to help pay the family bills.”

This exchange, at times rather entertaining (Blunt intermittently refers to Bryant with choice phrases such as “classist gimp” and “wazzock”), has highlighted the need for open and frank discussion about the state of the arts in Britain. Bryant is by no means the only one to voice his opinions on the subject, in October, Jenny Sealey, who codirected the 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony and is now the **Graeae Theatre Company**’s artistic director,

stated that unless funding to projects such as the Access to Work scheme – which aims to provide funding to disabled and deaf people to hire support staff such as sign language interpreters in order to carry on working – is maintained, “theatre will go back to being male, pale and stale”.

Arts funding is where the boundaries between economics and culture have really clashed in these times of ever increasing austerity. Councils all across England have seen their arts budgets slashed; in a particularly dramatic case the council in Newcastle-upon-Tyne published a draft three-year budget in 2012, which projected a cut to funding for arts organisations of 100% effective from 2015. This would have meant the closing of some of the country’s most respected institutions; **The Northern Stage**, one of the top ten producing theatres in the country; and **Live Theatre**, where Lee Hall, writer of *Billy Elliot*, learnt his craft). Though the council has gone ahead, cutting its cultural budget completely, effective from April, the arts in the city were saved by a last minute intervention from then Shadow Culture Secretary Harriet Harman who secured £600,000 a year (half the original budget) for a new charitable Culture Investment Fund, to which arts organisations in the city can apply for grants.

While institutions can be saved last minute by politicians, individuals are rarely so lucky. Cuts in arts funding has meant a loss of jobs, as well as a re-evaluation of ambitions for many young actors, directors, playwrights and technicians, who find themselves unable to pursue their craft because of falling wages. Last year, Academy award winner and veritable national treasure Dame Judi Dench lamented the fact that young actors are being squeezed out of the profession, saying “anyone who’s in the theatre gets letters countless times a week asking for help to get through drama school. You can do so much, but you can’t do an endless thing. It is very expensive.” Fellow actor David



Eton-educated Eddie Redmayne, winner of this year’s Golden Globe for Best Actor. Photo: Lawrence K. Ho / Los Angeles Times

Morrissey has also spoken out, saying that the arts is increasingly engaging in “an intern culture” in which young graduates are expected to work for free in order to gain experience and valuable contacts within the industry. This was backed up by a recent report commissioned for Art Council England into diversity in the arts, which found that “there are important diversity issues around who is able to volunteer including the use of unpaid internships as a way to gain experience.” Furthermore, the National Centre for Social Research found that higher levels of volunteering were generally associated with lower levels of deprivation, indicating that unpaid internships are the preserve of the moneyed classes

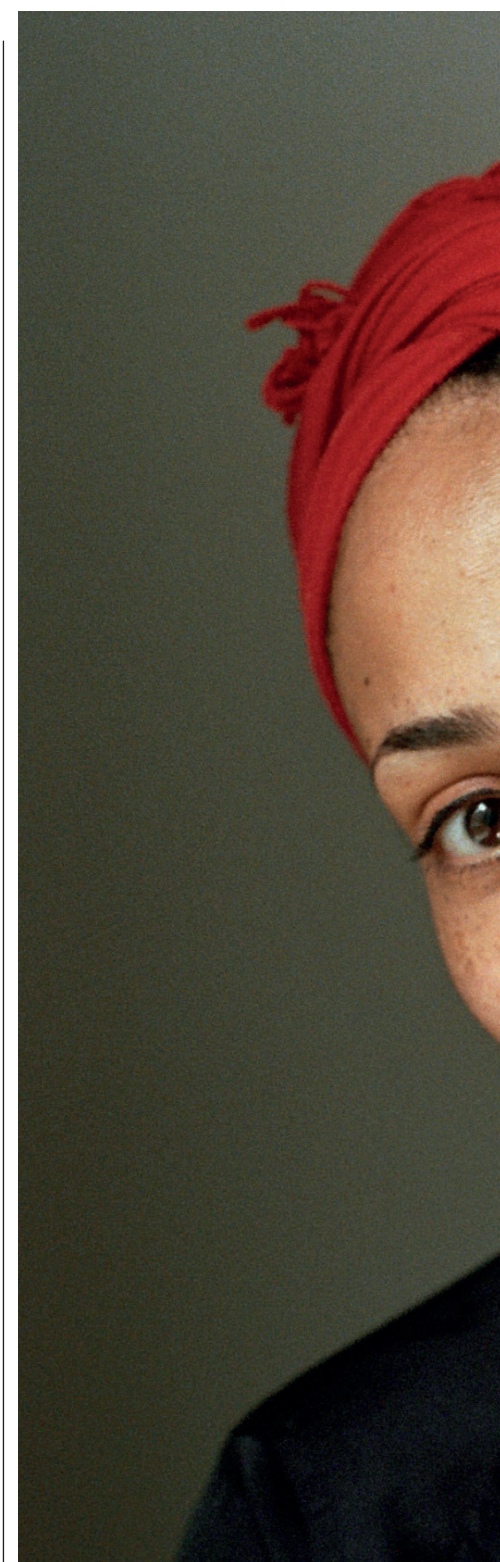
David Morrissey went on to say “if I was starting out now, it would be a lot harder, because my parents could never have supported me through that ‘Is it going to happen?’ period”.

The lack of opportunity to pursue training in a sustainable way is partly due to the demise of repertory theatres due to arts funding cuts. According to Dame Judi, ‘rep’ theatre was “where you went to learn and make your mistakes and watch people who knew how to do it”.

This is where the arguments of James Blunt and others, who think that those with talent will find a way to succeed no matter the circumstances, fail. The fact is that privilege acts on the likelihood of success in both subtle and sure ways. No one will deny that the ever growing ranks of the public school old boys such as Benedict Cumberbatch, Eddie Redmayne, Damien Lewis, Dominic West and yes, even James Blunt, have had to work hard for their success; no one is saying that they got record deals or parts in movies because their chums from Eton or Harrow lobbied the big production companies. But young actors and musicians and artists from their background are given the opportunity to fail, to work for little or no money, the time to hone their craft safe in the

“The fact is, privilege acts on the likelihood of success in both subtle and sure ways”

“Young artists from privileged backgrounds are given the opportunity to fail”



British author Zadie Smith, whose work has b

knowledge that they will not starve. This opportunity is rarely afforded to their working class counterparts, who may have to work 40 hours to make ends meet and then practice their art in the evenings.

The tragedy is that the British arts establishment is going backwards in terms of representing the society as a whole as a direct consequence of the economic downturn. Julie Walters, who is from a working class background, recently said that she worried that “the way things are now, there aren’t going to be any working class actors. I look at almost all the up-and-coming names and they’re from the posh schools.”

“Don’t get me wrong ... they’re wonderful”, the actress added, “it’s just a shame those working-class kids aren’t coming through. When I started, 30 years ago, it was the complete opposite.”

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been consistently critically acclaimed. Photo: Dominique Nabokov

Unfortunately, this should come as no surprise. In 2012, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that the UK has some of the lowest social mobility in the developed world. It found that social mobility in Britain hadn't changed since the 1970s and in some respects had gotten worse. Walter's words were echoed by *Call the Midwife* actor Stephen McGann.

"Sometimes today it feels like we're going the other way. Opportunities are closing down. If you're a messy kid from a council estate today, I think the chances of you making it as a successful actor are a lot worse than they were."

Those in leadership positions within the arts sector share such concerns, with Dominic Dromgoole, artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, saying that the "thinning of the social spectrum is a

real concern".

The question is: should we care? The answer, emphatically, is yes. This economic exclusion of the poorer sections of society leads to an exclusion of ethnic minorities, who are more likely to come from a lower socioeconomic group. With recent census data showing that British society is becoming more diverse than ever before, it seems odd that the arts, which are meant to reflect society, should go in the opposite direction. Crucially, cutting out of such a significant portion of our society from the arts not only does a disservice to the young artists and performers seeking to join the sector, but us, the consumers of culture as well. How can we get a variety of voices when there is only one group in the room? Do we really want to engage with a culture that is increasingly 'male, pale, and stale'?



Turner Prize winner artist and filmmaker, Steve McQueen, cited as someone who has shaped British culture by Sir Peter Balzalgette. Photo: Thierry Bal

For many of us, the answer is no, and this is echoed by the statistics. In 2013, Arts Council England (ACE) commissioned a report into "equality and diversity within the arts and cultural sector in England". It found that the percentage of people engaging with the arts (including museums, theatres, galleries and public libraries) at least once a year was just 67.3% for those from a lower socioeconomic group, in contrast over 85% of those from a higher socioeconomic group engaged with the arts. The report also showed that with respect to audiences and participation in the arts the gap between Black and minority ethnic people and white people has widened. Research suggests that one most common reasons that Black and minority ethnic people fail to engage is because of concerns about feeling uncomfortable or out of place. Alienation of minority communities only contributes towards deepening of divisions within society, and disengagement with the arts can have significant impact on the rounded development of children, as well as their subsequent success in all areas of endeavour, including gaining admission into top universities.

In December 2014, Sir Peter Balzalgette gave what he termed "one of the most important speeches in his capacity as chairman of Arts Council England", announcing a "fundamental shift" in the organisation's approach to increasing diversity in the arts world. In his galvanizing speech, he spoke of how much of British culture has been shaped by "those who once stood outside – who have come to Britain from other countries, or those whose perspective and voices have not always been included in the mainstream." He went on to cite artists who have categorically defied the 'male, pale, and stale' stereotype, including Zadie Smith, whose novel

White Teeth he said [best] described our society on the cusp of the new millennium', Steve McQueen, the Turner prize-winning artist whose film *Twelve Years a Slave* was the first film produced and directed by a black filmmaker to win an Oscar for best picture, and Paul Cummins, the disabled artist who created the "extraordinary, elegiac display of ceramic poppies around the Tower of London". He went to say that the arts world was not "reacting fast enough to changes in society" and needed to reflect immigration as well as the invisible parts of society – the disabled and the elderly, saying "all need to be brought to the conversation".

His solution to the problem is the 'Creative Case for Diversity', a new tougher enforcement of the Equality Actions Plan that legislates for diversity. He said that ACE would be publishing "workforce diversity data for individual national portfolio organisations and major partner museums" from 2015 and threatened that unless the ACE-funded organisations make progress with "the diversity of their programmes, their audiences, their artist and their workforce" that there would be "a reckoning". In short, their funding would be axed, and the organisations removed from ACE memberships from 2018.

It remains to be seen whether funding cuts (or at least threats of such) can tackle a problem partially created by funding cuts, but from this year big changes are expected to take place. Balzalgette ended by saying "young talent, whatever its background or class will see the kind of work that convinces them that the arts belong to them -and that they have a way in. We can't give people creative talent. But we can and must give those with talent creative opportunities." This sentiment at least, we should all be able to agree on.

"Do we really want to have a culture that is increasingly male, pale, and stale?"

"Alienation of minorities only contributes towards deepening divides in society"

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Mapping the City – Cartography Reimagined

Jingjie Cheng explores what Somerset House's newest exhibition can offer

*If self is a location, so is love:
Bearings taken, markings, cardinal
points,
Options, obstinacies, dug heels and
distance,
Here and there and now and then, a
stance.*

These words of well-loved poet Seamus Heaney resonated in my head as I explored this new exhibition of street art and graffiti at **Somerset House**. Despite being done in vastly different media and in all forms of presentation, one idea united the eclectic collection – all of them explored the artists' relationships with their surroundings. It was about giving physical form to experiences and interactions between man and space and making sense of the myriad ways that places shape us.

Take, for example, Martin Tibabuzo's *Mi Mundo/Meine Welt*, a delicate paper globe on which a world map had been drawn. If one looked closely, the map was strangely inaccurate, and while meticulous, was unorthodox in style. Tibabuzo had begun to lose his memory in the early 2000s and was advised to perform memory exercises. This was one of the results – he had created this world map entirely from memory. This was his personal take on the world, the world as he remembered and understood; at the same time, his own experience of memory loss is inextricably associated with the art he created.

It is always interesting when functional objects are used as a basis for art – it forces us to look at what we encounter every day in a new

light, and the results can sometimes be quite fascinating. Susumu Mukai's whimsical fantasy land *Regent's Canal* is based on the walks he used to take there, but coloured with his imagination. I saw it as the map of his mind's world superimposed onto the map of his surroundings, rendered in intricate detail. Along with the creations he brought to the real world, he also brought in his cultural influence – the creatures reminded me of Japanese folklore.

The small exhibition, which runs till mid-February, is a collaboration between Somerset House and collaborative arts organisation **A(by)P**. While there no doubt are gems to be found in the exhibition, much of it were artworks one might walk past without a second glance. Some reminded me of unfinished experiments, such as Jurne's four pieces which trace some random shapes on maps of the Bay Area and Paris, supposedly to show that being "open to having experiences and open to unpredictability can lead to fruition and growth" – I failed to see the link or anything innovative about it.

Although the small interconnected rooms provide a very intimate exhibition space which seems appropriate for street art and graffiti, the sheer number of artworks crammed in the small space is somewhat disorienting, especially since many of them are large and loud. The riotous atmosphere, however, did remind me of the natural home of street art and graffiti, which might be the point.

Maps and the streets, to me, have great potential for innovative use



Augustine Kofie, *Overcast Angeles*, 2014. Courtesy of Somerset House

in art, and I was disappointed that this exhibition did not have more meaningful ideas. Much of modern art focuses more on the concept behind the art rather than the skill of execution itself, and a lack of artistic skill can be excused if the idea is clever. However, much of the artwork in this show seemed half-hearted, as

if the artists were happy to stop at the mere representation of space without exploring further concepts such as time, identity or displacement. Is there more to one's experience in a city than making colourful woodblocks of one's running route? Or dripping paint around New York to trace out your own name?

If you love energetic, experimental and raw artworks, you might find the exhibition a visual feast. But if you are like me and prefer more polished, aesthetic works, this is most likely not for you.

*Mapping the City at Somerset House.
Until 15th February. Free admission*

One Woman's Triumph of Theatre

MAX FALKENBERG
ARTS WRITER

Smart, sexy and absurd. One woman shows do not get any better than this. For an hour of complete hilarity, Violet Fox recounts her struggles to be an ever more extraordinary artist for her exceptionally ordinary audience.

Written and performed by the unbelievably talented Sonia Jalaly, *The Story of Violet Fox* explores the frayed relationship with her mother through songs, impersonation and satire.

A series of crazy, imaginative skits, Violet Fox's charming physicality makes you want to laugh and cry

"Her charming physicality makes you want to laugh and cry from start to finish."

from start to finish.

If everyone had the commitment, passion and stage presence of Jalaly, I'm convinced I would never see another bad performance in my life. Jalaly's ability to impersonate almost anyone to perfection and sing with such variation and breadth is unreal. Okay, maybe not anyone, just some of the most famous theatrical female stars in Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Julie Andrews etc. With every impression, her performance just gets better and better. I never thought I would say this, but this show made me warm and fuzzy inside. What more could I possibly want? With an eye for even the most subtle cultural observations, a mixture of audience interaction and

direct participation give the show an energy so difficult to achieve in one-man shows.

Like every comedy performance, even the smallest details have a major effect on how the audience responds. Generally, Jalaly has this down to a T, her actions are so careful and so well thought out that the majority of the time her performance blends perfectly with the story she is telling. Very occasionally, either the pacing or the continuation of the story is somewhat lacking. However, for a young, unknown actor, she has exceeded expectations so much that any criticism really comes as an afterthought.

Yes, the ending maybe drags on for thirty seconds too long; yes,

"The funniest and most carefully thought out show I have seen this year."

maybe the occasional scene is just too absurd; but any realistic assessment of the show can only find these issues trivial.

With fantastically hilarious scenes in broken French and mad games of musical chairs, this show is definitely the funniest and most carefully thought out that I have seen this year. That said, I only got to see this show after Jalaly had been performing it for almost a year. In that sort of time, as is the case with every comedy performance, sketches can be cut and new material added to tweak a show into its perfect state.

Does this diminish her achievement? Of course not, but other performers should definitely learn from her.

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Dara: Somewhat Lost in Translation

Fred Fyles heads to Hindustan for the National Theatre's new play

Nicholas Khan (Mir Khalil), Esh Alladi (Gvernor Khan), Sargon Yelda (Aurangzeb), Simon Nagra (Mullah Farooq), Rudi Dharmalingham (Danishmand) in *Dara*. Photo: Ellie Kurttz

The first challenge that presented itself to writer Tanya Ronder and director Nadia Fall, when planning on bringing a production of Pakistani play *Dara* to the **National Theatre**, was how to tell a story that is a legend in the Indian subcontinent, but largely unknown in the UK? *Dara*, originally written by Pakistani playwright Shahid Nadeem, had an outing in India a couple of years ago, where most are familiar with the struggle between brothers Dara Shikoh and Emperor Aurangzeb for the throne of the Mughal Empire. While some aspects of the play are translated well, notably the set design and performances, on the whole much of the nuance and drama is lost on its journey to the South Bank.

Taking place across the Muslim Mughal Empire, which stretched from Agra to Bengal, Gujarat to Afghanistan, *Dara* opens in the year 1659, two years after emperor Shah Jahan's illness triggered a battle for supremacy between the eligible princes, of whom Dara and Aurangzeb were the major players. Defeated by his brother's army, Dara is captured, shackled and paraded before his beloved people, and tried as an apostate of Islam. While that is the basic gist of the story, it belies the complexity of the script, which zips between time-zones frequently, and

explores the stories of a number of other characters.

While this certainly makes for a dynamic plot line, the speed with which things move on means that it can be difficult to follow the plot. We are shifted through time and space so fast that it feels like we are developing motion sickness; dates and places are projected on the back of the stage with such high frequency it becomes hard to know where we are, who the people are meant to be, or why we should care. In one – admittedly extreme example – a character you'd think would be pretty central to the plot is introduced in one scene, ends that scene by starting to cough, and is dead by the next. When the action is this rapid, we are afforded no opportunity to get to know the characters, much less relate to them.

That being said, the performances from the cast in general is very solid, in particular those of Aurangzeb, played by Sargon Yelda, and Itbar, the imperial eunuch slave, played by Chook Sibtain. Sibtain imbues his character with just the right amount of sympathy and righteous anger; he is clearly conflicted between a feeling of duty towards his masters, and a resentment that bubbles just below the surface at those who have enslaved and mutilated him – he is an injured bird, imprisoned in a

gilded cage. You would expect Zubin Varla, who plays Dara himself, to be the strongest actor in the company, and on the whole his performance is solid. There are some moments that threaten to dip over into melodrama, especially when his sonorous voice begins to take on a somewhat hammy tone, but he recovers himself in a blistering court scene, coming towards the end of part 1, which must be at least 45 minutes long. Varla, reduced to rags, rages against his captors, furious not because of his debasement, but because of their misunderstanding of his appreciation of *Sufi* Islam.

Unfortunately, this marks the pinnacle of the drama, and in the second half things descend into a somewhat chaotic series of images and scenes, which add up to an unsatisfying conclusion. The character of Dara in particular seems to lose the fire that burnt inside him during the first half of the production; instead of the relatable, princely character we saw during the courtroom scene, we are left with a man who no longer responds to any kind of stimulus. While I appreciate that this is supposed to be part of his Zen attitude towards life, it means that the character is laconic to near-brain death; it is indeed difficult to sympathise with a character who

is unable to express any kind of emotion.

Another factor that interferes with our sympathies towards the characters is simply how one-dimensional they seem; while I appreciate it is difficult to bring characters who have entered into legend into living, breathing actors, Dara and Aurangzeb are really not much more than a collection of tropes. What should be an exploration of different paths of Islam ends up simply being a tale of radicalism vs. multiculturalism, a debate which has long ceased to be a fresh topic for the arts.

While the staging at the **National Theatre** is always of a good quality, I feel that for this production further comment is warranted; the set they have put together for *Dara* is nothing short of stunning. Comprising mainly of white marble, the set has a classical feel, almost like a Greek stage transported to Agra. The ornate detailing found on the screens used to divide the stage and the decorative motifs on the balconies is clearly influenced by the design of the Taj Mahal, commissioned in memory of Dara's mother and seen by his imprisoned father from his cell window.

What is striking about the set is simply how large it makes the

stage seem, inflating the **Lyttelton Theatre** to what looks like twice its normal size. While the characters are indeed dwarfed by their surroundings, the stage never seems imposing or stale – you can really imagine people working, living, and loving within the walls of the palace. Scene changes are 'assisted' by performances and dancers, who seem to add little to the overall production; that being said, the decision to bring in a trio of musicians, playing harmonium, *santoor*, and percussion, is an inspired one, adding another dimension to the play, making the action seem just that more dramatic.

Overall, despite the impression I may have given above *Dara* is a very competent production; competent, but not excellent. Issues with the pacing, characterisation, and plot-line – which may be linked to Ronder's decision to add in a number of key characters who were not in the original text – make it somewhat impenetrable, meaning it is very hard to sympathise with the characters, much less care what they have to say. The stage is excellent, and it is so refreshing to see an all-minority cast putting on a production at a major London venue, *Dara* does not live up to what it promises.

Dara is on at the National Theatre until 4th April. Tickets from £15

Six degrees of superheroes Stoner detective

JOHN PARK
SECTION EDITOR

BIG HERO 6

Directors: Don Hall, Chris Williams

Screenplay: Jordan Roberts, Daniel Gerson, Robert L. Baird
Cast: (voice) Scott Adsit, Ryan Potter, Daniel Henney, T. J. Miller, Jamie Chung, Damon Wayans Jr., Genesis Rodriguez, James Cromwell



Photo: Don Hall, Chris Williams, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

robotics.

But a mysterious fire and subsequent explosion leaves Tadashi dead, plus an important part of Hiro's work stolen by a masked villain who intends on mass destruction. The identity of the bad guy is not difficult to suss out, but for a film aimed mainly at children to attempt an intricate plot twist demonstrates an admirable addition of originality into what otherwise would have been a straightforward plot. It also puts a very human face onto who is finally revealed to be behind all the destruction, which adds a surprising layer of a smart background story to the overall plot.

In order to defeat this powerful antagonist, Hiro is going to need all the help he can get. And aside from his older brother's team of science geeks who undergo impressive transformations to superheroes in their own right, all based on the various experiments and gadgets they were each working on initially, a crucial member of the team comes from Baymax, an inflatable healthcare companion, and a project Tadashi was working on before his passing.

Being a robot there is a limitation placed on how closely Baymax

can interact and empathise with everyone, and a bulk of the film's humour comes from the awkward misunderstandings that take place in the early process of Baymax integrating with the rest of the humans.

When the gang gets together the film knows just the right kind of fun to have with these fun, vibrant characters. The diversity in the use of colours further injects some much-needed light-hearted entertainment and the pace with which the narrative moves is a healthy one. The film very rarely slows its pace down, and it hardly finds the need to do so. There is an immediate sense of a well-functioning team, all equipped with clever skillsets, coming together to do their part in saving San Fransokyo.

The only weak link comes in the end. Rather than ending on a poignant, thought-provoking note, it chooses to take the easy way out – admittedly a happier version of the available options, since there has been a significant death in the plot already. But it makes certain aspects of the film seem less consequential. But even that cannot stop *Big Hero 6* from being an absolute triumph of an animated feature, a bold, action and humour-packed ride.



Photo: Paul Thomas Anderson, Warner Bros. Pictures

JOHN PARK
SECTION EDITOR

INHERENT VICE

Directors: Paul Thomas Anderson

Screenplay: Jordan Roberts, Daniel Gerson, Robert L. Baird
Cast: Joaquin Phoenix, Katherine Waterston, Reese Witherspoon, Josh Brolin



Paul Thomas Anderson continues his quest to make one polarising film after another. His films are designed to challenge, frustrate and question, and even the simplest sounding plot can have the potential to be an overbearing, incomprehensible chore in the hands of Anderson. But there is a certain level of intrigue and fun to be had in trying to follow and keep up with

everything that is going on in this over-crowded crime drama that echoes the great Hollywood neo-noirs.

Even from the get-go *Inherent Vice* has a different feel to it. The sound and cinematography both feel outdated, surely a deliberate move to add that extra touch of an old-school feel to the film. We start with a warning and a cry for help. Shasta (Katherine Waterston) visits her ex-boyfriend, private investigator Larry 'Doc' Sportello (Joaquin Phoenix), and informs him of a plot to have wealthy real estate developer Mickey Wolfmann (Eric Roberts), her current boyfriend, institutionalised by his wife Sloane Wolfmann (Serena Scott Thomas) and her lover whose identity is not known. Shasta then disappears, and so the weed-smoking hippie Doc decides to take a closer look. He also receives an enquiry from Tariq (Michael K. Williams), who requests one of Mickey Wolfmann's bodyguards to be tracked down for an unsettled financial issue. But that is not all. Hope Harlingen (Jena

A humble, low-budget offering from down below



Photo: Julius Avery, Hopscotch Films

JOHN PARK
SECTION EDITOR

SON OF A GUN

Directors: Julius Avery

Screenplay: Julius Avery, John Collee

Cast: Brenton Thwaites, Ewan McGregor, Alicia Vikander



Brenton Thwaites has filmed a variety of genres in a relatively short period of time, and this

is his turn to get down and dirty in a prison thriller. Set in Australia, JR (Thwaites) lands himself in jail for a minor crime. Being the fresh, new inmate, he must fend off some unwelcome advances from a group of men with voracious sexual appetites. But before things get worse, young JR catches the attention of Brendan Lynch (Ewan McGregor), Australia's most notorious criminal, who is supposed to be incarcerated for a lot longer than JR. But this supposed friendship and protection come at a price.

There is a plan in place to break Lynch out of prison, and a man on the outside helping him orchestrate this is crucial. So guess what JR will be

Malone) is searching for her missing husband Coy (Owen Wilson), a saxophone player who mysteriously disappeared. Somehow these cases are all interlinked.

Having seen the film, it is still not 100% clear as to how this is the case. But as more supporting characters drift in and out of the film's narrative, the audience gets to see that there is an overlying big story that somehow connects everything and everyone.

Doc's investigation leads to all sorts of weird and wonderful places and also to confusing clues that go with them – the DA's office where his lover Penny Kimball (Reese Witherspoon) gives some sound advice, a brothel, a mysterious boat, a drug trafficking plot, and a dentist's office (huh?) all feature in his search for the truth. It soon becomes clear that it is not just about discovering who is behind the crime that matters, but the why as well.

There are some quality performances to feast your eyes on. Phoenix gives the role his all, as the mildly eccentric, but entirely capable PI hopped up on a never-ending supply of cannabis among other recreational drugs, and the tough, macho Josh Brolin rocks up in the role of LAPD Detective Christian 'Bigfoot' Bjornsen to constantly lock horns with Doc, in a performance to be remembered. Martin Short also deserves praise for his incredibly brief but hysterical turn as a highly disturbing dentist who preys on the young, helpless patients he is referred.

Anderson is in no rush to get anywhere with solving the mystery. He takes his time to chill out every now and again and have a laugh with his cast of quirky actors, and some brutally honest third-person narration. It is a film that will often test your patience, but it does not promise high rewards either. So you be the judge. Love it or hate it, this is Anderson doing what he does best.

2015 Screen Actors Guild



Winner: Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture – Birdman (Andrea Riseborough, Emma Stone, Amy Ryan, Naomi Watts, Edward Norton, Michael Keaton)



Winner: Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role – Julianne Moore



Winner: Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role – Eddie Redmayne



Winner: Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role – J.K. Simmons



Winner: Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role – Patricia Arquette

The Fury of the Mockingjay



This week, Imperial Cinema brings you not one, but two offerings from the land of film: the third entry in the *Hunger Games* franchise, as well as a WWII tank epic.

First up, Jennifer Lawrence returns as Katniss Everdeen, the unwilling figurehead of a rebellion against the evil Capitol in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part One*. After her dramatic escape from the arena at the end of the previous film, Katniss is now forced to choose where her loyalties lie – to protect her family, or to become something more: to become the Mockingjay.

After that, it's time for David Ayer's scorching war film *Fury*. Set in the last days of the war, it follows Logan Lerman as Norman Ellison, a new recruit into Brad Pitt's tank crew. As the Allies push onwards into Germany, Norman is forced to question his moral code – are the Germans really as evil as he's been taught to believe?

Mockingjay: 18:30 Tuesday 3rd February and 21:15 Thursday 5th February.

Fury: 21:00 Tuesday 3rd February and 18:30 Thursday 5th February.

Tickets are £3 for members, £4 for non-members, or £5/7 for a double bill.



Photo: Julius Avery, Hopscotch Films

doing once he gets out after serving his time? The escape goes smoothly, but things are far from over for those now on the run from the law. It all seems like a pretty great, glamorous life to begin with. The criminal life does indeed have its perks. Shady lawyers make it possible to move money and weapons around, as well as providing a more than comfortable place for them all to stay. There are trust issues however, and loyalties are tested as time goes by.

Making matters more complicated is the introduction of a love interest, probably the least well-written

character in the entire film. Tasha (Alicia Vikander) and JR form an incomprehensibly close bond in a very short period of time, one that is forced upon the characters for the sake of the story having something else to concentrate on. Despite the talented young actors that they are, both Thwaites and Vikander cannot sell the blind romance that motivates these young characters, mostly because they have very little to go on.

Everything remains very small in scale. The prison breakout scene, and further action scenes that are shown are done so with minimal flashy

effects and with as much focus paid to spending less. It is a welcome change from regularly seeing everything go up in flames, with sequences appearing tighter, more intimate and character-driven.

McGregor keeps his act ambiguous throughout, being the supportive mentor figure when the situation calls for it, but at times letting his fiery temper and inclination towards violence take over, showing the side that most possibly landed him in trouble in the first place. He is a frightening, dominating force not to be taken lightly, and has no problem

whipping the young Thwaites into shape.

It is about always staying one step ahead of the game; trying to break free from the toxic clutches of a criminal whilst also surviving to live to tell the tale.

Whether the power couple succeeds or not in doing this is hardly a mystery, but the way they go about putting one up on Brendan is a touch on the flimsy side. It tries to end on a slick, smart note but there is too little of either qualities for it to be considered a satisfactory finish, but overall there is tense fun to be had.

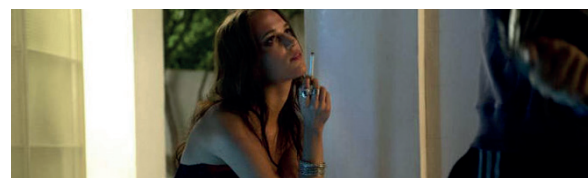


Photo: Julius Avery, Hopscotch Films



Travel

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Travel Editor || Yung Nam Cheah

Top 5 places to visit when in Brussels

Yung Nam Cheah shares her favourite spots in the capital of Belgium.

Only a two hours train ride away is the dazzling city of Brussels, full of gastronomical and architectural treasures. The capital of Belgium is known to be small, but the three days I spent there wasn't enough to visit everywhere I wanted to (though if you go all out on the transport, you might be more fortunate than me!). Here are my top five favourite places (though they are more like a concentrated area of sights) in the historical city:

Grand Place

The most famous square in Belgium, the rectangular shaped Grand Place is declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is unique in the fact that the square is surrounded by historical buildings starkly different from each other: most notable of them all is the Flemish Gothic City Hall taking up the South West side, with a 99 m tall tower topped by the statue of Archangel Michael. Opposite it is the House of the King, noted by its dark grey colour, it was the administrative building of governors but now a small museum telling the history of Brussels, especially that of the Grand Place and house a gorgeous collection of costume for the famous Manneken Pis statue. Next To the SE is the House of the Dukes of Brabant, a row of six buildings with a uniform façade of golden gilded marble arches. The rest of the square are made up of unique guild houses, each different to the other.

Hills of Arts

Virtually next to the Brussels Central Train station is Hills of Art, a small urban park that leads up to the Royal Palace and overlook the lower town. The first things you will see are the



From left to right: The Grand Place at night, glowing under the yellow spot lights; Statue of Charles Buls, accompany by his dog Photo: Yung Wing Cheah

equestrian statue of Albert I facing his queen, Elizabeth of Bavaria across the road. Behind Albert I are a neatly trimmed geometric grass patch lined with hedges and trees either side, leading up to a large fountain and staircase reaching up to the museum district with the Royal Palace visible from afar.

Before you head up to admire the spectacular view of the Lower town, you should head to the NE corner of the park and visit the Carillon. This sun-shaped Art Deco clock mounted on the limestone building house many small figures representing Belgian national hero and chimes hourly.

Petit Sablon Square

A tiny green space nestled next to

the busy main street leading towards Justice Palace, the Petit Sablon Square stands out immediately with its columned fence and statues. The 48 Neo-Gothic columns surrounding the park are each topped by a statue holding a symbol representing a guild; you can easily entertain yourself by walking around and guessing which one represent what. At the high point of the park are the statues of Count Horn and Egmont, commemorating their execution in the Grand Square in 1568. With a small fountain, geometric grass patch, the square makes a nice rest stop between sights.

Cinquantenaire Park

Bordering the east side of the EU district, a fair distance away from the

town center, the park was built for the 50th anniversary of the independence of Belgium by Leopold II. Rectangular shaped and symmetrically laid out, this urban oasis is set atop the 2km long Belliard Tunnel connection Etterbeek district to downtown. The western end is home to several Congo monuments, with the east dominated by the Military Museum of Belgium and Cinquantenaire museum set either side of the Triumphal Arch of Tervuren. If anyone is a car lover, the Autoworld behind Cinquantenaire museum is not to be missed.

Garleries Saint-Hubert and Statue of Charles Buls

The Galeries Saint-Hubert is the first covered shopping mall in Europe

built in 1847. The glass high ceilings, two-tiered pastel beige neo-classical corridors are enhanced by the red stoned columns and grey tiled floors. It now hosts many restaurants, chocolate shops as well as a bookstore and theater. Its main corridor is 200m long and connects to three smaller ones. Walking inside feels like you were back in the 19th century and the air oozes a sophisticated atmosphere lacking in modern day malls. Situated on a small square on the southern exit is a statue of Charles Buls accompany by his dog sat on a bench in front of a fountain. Charles Buls was the mayor of Brussels during the reign of King Leopold II in the late 19th century. The statue was created in 1999 by Henri Lenaerts, to commemorate the much loved mayor.



From left to right: The Hills of Art overlooking the Lower town; Petit Sablon Square with its neatly trimmed hedges; Triumphal Arch of Tervuren at the end of Cinquantenaire Park Photo: Yung Wing Cheah

Travel

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Travel Editor | Yung Nam Cheah

Is buying travel deals on Groupon safe?

Yung Nam Cheah break down the process of booking so you know what to expect

With groupons becoming more and more universal, one can virtually buy anything from clothes to household appliance to restaurant deals at a discounted price. However, a lot of people hesitate in the face of travel deals.

For those of you less familiar with the concept, groupon is a platform for merchants to offer deals to consumers at a lower than normal price. A few of the more well-known brands are Wowcher, Amazonlocal, Living social and of course, Groupon. Most of the travel offers massively discounted flights, as well as accommodation and breakfast at a hotel (say goodbye to dodgy hostel and communal showers!) to a popular destination such as Berlin and Budapest.

Some even throw in tours for an extra ten to twenty quid such as river cruise, horse riding and even all inclusive deals.

The price usually hover around 100 to 200 for Europe destinations depending on the length of stay, normally from 2 to 5 nights. Deals to America, South East Asia and other exotic places are sometimes available too, starting around 500. Despite the obvious draw, some people are afraid of fine print and hidden charges; and that's reasonable. I had many reservations when I first saw them, and it wasn't until a friend taking the plunge that I realized with the right expectation, this really will become the new way to travel in comfort affordably:

1) Read the fine print

This might sound obvious, but

sometimes people get too excited by the prospect of it and forgot to check. It should state the period available to redeem the voucher as well as what is included and what isn't. Make sure you know the refund/ cancellation policy so you can get your money back if things go south.

2) Call ahead

Call to inquire the availability or make sure you are relatively free during the stated time period. Sometimes the date you want might not be available – especially if it's a holiday period.

3) Make time for the call

These tour operators often have a dozen calls coming in at one time. You need to expect them to take a while to answer you, as well as having to call you back to confirm certain details.

4) Be prepared to pay extra

Most of the time the flights included in original price is at an ungodly hour in the morning or late at night at Luton. So if you want to make the most of your trip and the groupon, be prepared to pay around 40 pounds per person to upgrade to Ryan air or Easyjet at Gatwick or Standsted. Trust me, you will save half, if not all of the money from not having to taxi to the airport.

5) Check hotel locations

This is especially important for with multiply hotel offers. Usually the hotel will be centrally located, and it might be worthwhile to visit its website and check its rating on

"Be prepared to pay extra for flights... to make the most of your trip."



Is the price for real? Is this some kind of trap? Is it worth the hassle? This are just some of the questions we ask ourselves looking at groupon deals Photo: Flickr/ Aikawa Ke

Tripadvisor. Some deal will offer a choice of hotel, if you have your heart set on one of the hotels calling the travel agent ahead to check its availability to avoid disappointment. Beware that some travel agency will try to give you another hotel - do not give out your groupon code until you have the dates and hotel you desire.

6) Hand luggage only

Though this one might be obvious, but unless you throw in another extra 30, you will have to adhere to the hand luggage restriction of the airline. However don't worry; most people are on the same boat After that, it's really just printing

"With the right expectations, this will become the new way to travel. in comfort"

out the hotel voucher and checking in online at the right time. Although my friend and I experienced a slight hiccup with check in because the travel agency booked for us, although fixing it was as easy as calling them and they checked in for us and emailed us the document. If you don't like the hassle of calling the travel agent, and believe me, I hate calling people at a restricted time period too, then you should check out Voyageprive. It's a luxury travel website offering 4 to 5 star hotels and you can forgo the whole calling process by simply choosing options online.



Be it your favourite hang out or travel adventures, we want to hear it! Photo: Yung Nam Cheah

Write for Travel Felix!

Greetings travellers!

Now that January is almost over, hopefully the blueness that came with the start of term would pass over a little as well! However we are still two months away from Easter, meaning we still got a while to go. Sometimes you find yourself sitting there, reminiscing the good times you had during your break... Why not turn those into writings and share you experience with everyone else?

Travel writing is one of the most enjoyable thing you will ever do. You get to put your feelings and adventures into words that will induce wanderlust in other people, giving them tips that you wish you had and inducing envy with your oh-so-gorgeous photos.

It is also a less gloating way of rubbing your holiday in your friends and family's face.

To get your started, here are a few pointers on how to be a good travel writer:

- 1) Be factual. You will be surprise at how many people get their facts wrong and run around misleading everyone. Wikipedia and Google is just a click away, go find out if that building is Baroque or Romanesque.
- 2) Give information. Just saying a museum is wonderful and runs an exhibit on ancient Egypt is not enough. Put the opening times, admission fees and website link on.
- 3) Keep it short and sweet. Don't get carried away and write a 1000 words essay on Belgium Fries (though I wish I could!)

YUNG NAM CHEAH

Fashion

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Editor || Cécile Borkhataria

Chanel haute couture spring/summer 2015: the luxe rebirth of the beanie

Cecile Borkhataria looks at the floral themed show held in Paris

On Tuesday, Karl Lagerfeld pushed the boundaries of haute couture fashion yet again at the Chanel haute couture fashion show. The exclusive catwalk event was held at the Grand Palais in Paris, with attendees ranging from the likes of Hollywood starlets like Kristen Stewart, to French femme fatales Vanessa Paradis and Charlotte Gainsbourg.

The event saw the Grand Palais transformed into a giant tropical forest of white paper trees, with bursts of colours from origami flowers and banana leaves. The show opened with 4 male models dressed in summery beige shorts and waistcoats, carrying water cans and proceeding to “water” the flowers. As the show began, more flowers opened up from the paper trees above, conveying a sense of birth and a new beginning.

The show saw colourful tulle and chiffon flower details incorporated in many of the outfits, reflecting a cohesive underlying floral theme throughout the collection. The collection saw a re-vamped version of the classic Chanel tweed suit, with long midi length pencil or A-line tulle skirts, complete with matching cropped jackets.

Lagerfeld also opted for explosions of pastel coloured sequins, with one of the finale looks incorporating black and pink rosettes on a sequin embellished midi skirt, with a matching pink sequin cropped bustier.

The accessory of choice featured throughout the show was the hat - either large brimmed straw styles enveloped in rich dark coloured tulle, or beanies embroidered with sequins and chiffon flowers, some of them with retro black net veils. Indeed, Lagerfeld has managed to re-define the beanie and showcase it as a luxe couture item. No doubt the likes of Zara and H&M will be rushing to re-create the look soon, which is set to be a staple new look in the fashion world. Lagerfeld's creative direction under the hefty Chanel name make his designs desirable and oft imitated, with fashion lovers and retailers alike displaying a strong urge to channel his looks. For example, last year's haute couture fashion show saw the emergence of the couture trainers trend. All of the models wore pastel coloured trainers with jewelled accents, sequin embellishments or lace details. The trend soon became a

huge success, with labels such as Nike and Uggs attempting to re-create the luxury sporty look.

In addition to introducing the luxe beanie, cropped tops and cropped bolero jackets featured heavily throughout the show. Lagerfeld even claimed, “The new cleavage is the stomach.” It looks like the mid-riff trend is here to stay for a while.

The overarching floral theme even saw huge 3-D floral embroideries at the bottom of coats or across shoulders on jackets. Lagerfeld called the show “the flower women of the 21st century.” Although the theme of the show was jovial and colourful, it was conceived with the intention of appeasing the sombre mood in Paris as of late. Lagerfeld felt that the theme was important in light of the recent terror attacks targeting writers of the Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris. Lagerfeld told interviewers “especially after this dark, awful beginning to the year there was something like this needed...there's something about flowers.” Lagerfeld also remarked that he is lucky to be sheltered by the fashion world, adding, “I'm lucky... I live in a very protected world [in fashion]. I can keep something like a dream reality but it's not a reality of daily life.”

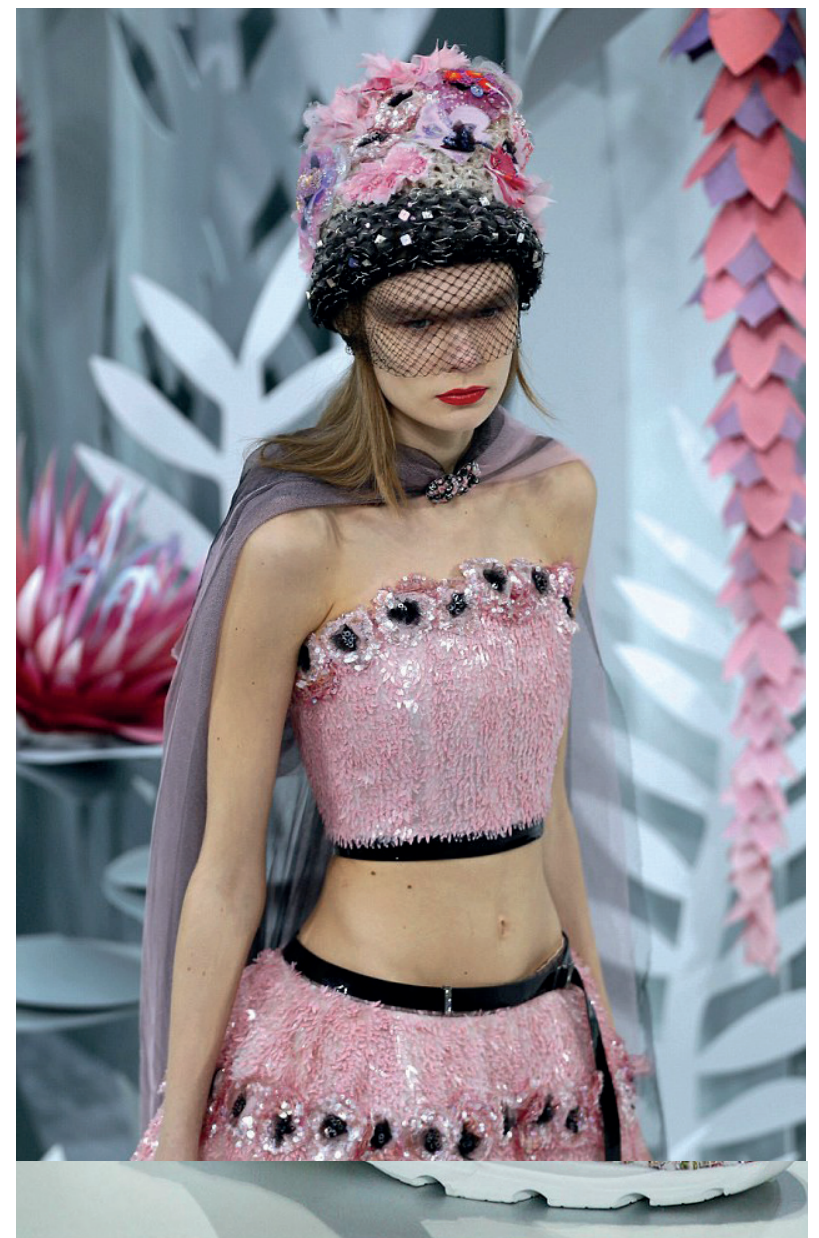
The show truly pushed boundaries in terms of new trends in the couture world, including too-long black patent belts draped all the way the lengths of the long skirts.

As usual, the finale look of the show saw a model paraded down the catwalk in a wedding gown, and this time she was not heavily pregnant, as the bridal model was for last year's show. The dress' long trailing skirt was swathed in white and subtly pale pink tulle rosettes, giving it a stiff quality. In contrast, the top of the dress was a simple white peplum shape with cap sleeves. The bridal model was followed by the male models featured at the beginning of the show, carrying large bouquets of colourful roses behind her, a quirky alternative to traditional flower girls.

The shows of Paris haute couture week had a decidedly fearless undercurrent to them. Raf Simons, the creative director of Dior, made a link between the spirit of the couture workers in the ateliers and the proud protestors on the streets after the Paris attacks. The underlying message of the week was simple: vive the Paris fashion houses and vive la France!

"Lagerfeld has managed to re-define the beanie"

"The new cleavage is the stomach."



Above: model showcases one of the finale looks of the Chanel spring/summer 2015 haute couture show. Below: Trainers worn at the Chanel spring/summer 2014 haute couture show Photo: AFP/Getty Images

HANGMAN



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Outrage as students fail to cheat on open book, online exam

Sources from inside a local London polytechnic have revealed to Hangman they are “shocked and saddened” that an open book, online test, taken by students in the comfort of their own home and without any invigilation, was not plagiarised.

Instead it is thought that students diligently sat down, turned off their internet and phone and took the exam within the allotted time, with most, if not all, studying beforehand.

The module, An introduction to Economical Management Studies, is offered to all students at the polytechnic, and the online test makes up 95% of the overall module mark. The other 5% is awarded if students fill in their name correctly at the beginning of the test.

Hangman has been told that this behaviour has been condemned as “stupid,” “idiotic,” and “completely unexpected considering the nature of the test.”

Said one course convenor from the social studies department: “We ran this hoping the students would band together, share the results and all come out with full marks.

“Instead it seems they all managed to scrape a 2.2 honestly and fairly. I can only imagine what impact this may have on our league ratings. Can universities be relegated?”

The exam, taken by approximately 400 students from various humanities courses including media management, golf management, managing management and also biology, was set online, and featured five multiple choice questions that they had five hours to complete.

The questions covered topics including pocket money management, how to apply for job seekers allowance and the perceived monetary worth of Kim Kardashian.

Hangman spoke to a second year travel and tourism student, who took the exam on Monday. We met him

in a local coffee shop, where he was skimming through his photos from his recent trip to the Phi Phi Islands.

“Yeah, it’s just that, we have a lot of time to study and not really any pressure to like, you know, do well. I don’t have any grand, high pressure grad schemes lined up, so why would I be tempted to cheat, you know?”

Hangman spoke to another student, this time a third year reading General Studies. She told us: “As I only have four contact hours a week, and you know, no crippling international student fees to deal with, I thought, why bother taking advantage of a completely flawed, opened ended system, one that was just waiting to be milked for all it was worth?”

“I don’t mind getting a 2.2, I actually enjoy university, have a great social life and don’t even bother going to the library.

“Even if I leave with no job, the amazing experience I would have had will be worth it.”

Terror at A Cappella concert due to spontaneous ovary explosion



Tragedy unfolded on Saturday as what started as a joyous celebration of A Cappella ended in a bloodbath, where no one could have possibly anticipated the effects of bringing attractive boys to Imperial.

The preliminary signs that suggested there was trouble within the audience became apparent as the Trinitones began their set. The Irish lads, hailing from Trinity College, put on a 12 minute set that included a disturbing amount of hip thrusting, which, according to the judges, was just below the threshold of the maximum amount of thrusts allowed in a competitive A Cappella competition.

There were signs that the thrusting had increased the agitation within the audience; however, it was not until All the King’s Men from Kings College arrived on stage did the organisers realize the gravity of the mistake they had made.

Unbeknownst to many of the show’s producers, there is a scientific phenomenon where a hormone named ‘tecthonicstosterone’ is produced exclusively in desperate single women when the harmonic resonance of an all-male A Cappella choir hits a D Maj-7 chord.

This hormone then causes a biological ovary implosion leading to

70% aca-fatality rate and as you can imagine, the results were horrendous: eight ambulances had to be called to the Great Hall only one minute into the Tecthonic opening song, sang by fresh faced Kizra Etson, a first year emo (ecology, microbiology and ornithology) student.

Another twelve paramedics were dispatched during the hair-flipping heavy set of Semi-Toned, an all male group from Exeter. An impromptu medical tent was sent up on the Sheffield walkway distributing dry knickers, hand fans and photos of Noel Edmunds for women to look at to calm down.

The producer of the show, told Hangman: “Usually we expect one or two members of the audience to die from the high levels of campness, but nothing on this scale.”

One student who did not enjoy the show was the Deputy President (Heterosexual) Kris Caye, who spent most of the night on Tinder. He did perk up when the all-female team from University of St. Andrews took to the stage, although was unable to focus on the set as was responsible for mopping up under the seat of the Felix Editor. Caye said to Hangman afterwards: “It was exhausting, although if I didn’t stem the flow people in the back rows may have been literally washed away.”



The scenes of group work and collaboration the uni was hoping for

HANGMAN



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Diary of A Fresher aged 18 3/4

Friday 23rd January

I went to the union tonight with all my coursemates, as we had an online exam earlier today. It was so easy though lol as we all just put the answers on this google doc on our facebook group for our department, and then we shared them all around so I completed it in basically ten minutes. Still any excuse to drink, right?

I had like six snakebites but was still a bit nervous when American girl turned up. We spoke for a bit then she went out to Ministry of Sound but I just got a burger king then went home.

Saturday 24th January

OH GOD FEEL SO GUILTY ABOUT THAT TEST. Like, it is 30% of that module and we all cheated. Maybe I should tell the department? Can they track who upload stuff to Facebook? Surely not, college can't find out who did all those Imperial facebook pages, but like, surely Imperial can track this stuff down being second best in the world or whatever?

Spent today in the library guilt eating jacket potatoes. Sent a snapchat to American girl but can see she hasn't opened it yet. Maybe her phone is broke.

Sunday 25th January

Confessed my crime to American girl on the top of the number 9 bus when we were stuck in traffic in Knightsbridge. She reckons that what I did was a sin, but God will forgive me.

We held hands for a bit, but she seemed a bit nervous. I tried to impress her on the tour of all my London knowledge but realised I actually haven't been out in the city that much, so most of the stuff I told her was actually stuff I learnt about some buildings in Rome during my year 10 trip.

I don't think she caught on.

Monday 26th January

Told the department. They went ape shit, but I said it wasn't me. They are now saying they might cancel all our marks! But I reckon I got my first actual first of the term!

Tuesday 27th January

American girl came to my kitchen this evening and I made her a meal using my slow cooker. She seemed impressed, and later on in my room I had a massive boner and she touched it for a bit, and we made out.

It was good as this time she didn't taste of vomit, although she said because she is a Christian she can't do anything really sexual to do with her front bits. A website said she might be open to anal though.

Wednesday 28th January

Spent today thinking about anal sex and cheating on that exam. Dedicated about the same amount of time deliberating over both.

Thursday 29th January

It was too cold in my room today so I put on my shorts and tank top and went to the fifth floor of the library. I walked up the stairs, and made awkward eye contact with Dorothy who was sitting by the window on the second floor.

She quickly glanced away, maybe because she can sense that I have moved on with American girl and one day we may go to fifth base. She has turned me into a player, and I am not ashamed.

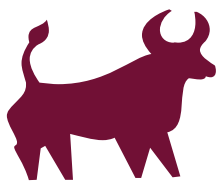
Had a dangerwank when I got back to halls, as I knew roommate's lecture was due to finish five minutes before I started.

HOROSCOPES



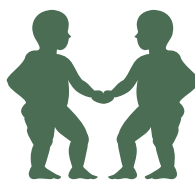
ARIES

This week one of your friends decides to buy a black light and barges into your room only to be blinded with the power of a thousand suns. The remainder of your student loan is used to pay them compensation and you must now live on mayonnaise for the remainder of the term - find a better way to dispose of your cum rags.



TAURUS

You have jumped on the get-fit bandwagon as your new year's resolution and in order to aid your exploits this week you impulse-purchase protein powder. You misread the instructions and consume the whole barrel, rendering you a solid ball of muscle only able to roll.



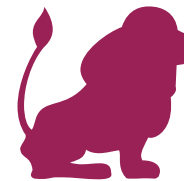
GEMINI

This week you will discover that your boyfriend is Swedish. This is deeply distressing to you as you have post-traumatic stress disorder from the fact a dwarf once ate your hands in an Ikea store right next to smalland.



CANCER

This week you find a lump on your testicles. After a lot of sobbing, you call your loved ones and tell them, leading to more sobbing and a heavy sense of isolation. You draw up your final will and testament, only to discover its malignant! Unfortunately you are then crushed by a giant crab.

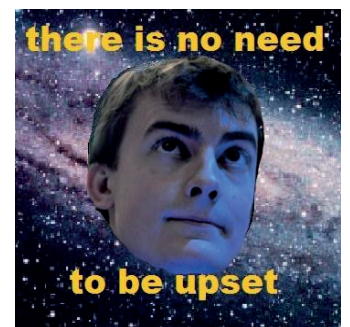


LEO

You decide to go to the inter-collegiate A Capella awards in order to stalk/see one of the Imperielles; unfortunately you forget the correct acronym and instead go to the ICKKK's. It's ok though because Kris Kaye is there and lends you his spare hood.



VIRGO



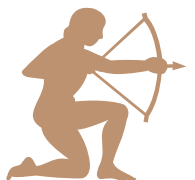
LIBRA

This week you get blood all over your bedroom causing further sexual tension with your hall senior and the cleaning staff alike. From henceforth you'll remember to wrap the hamster to your bed before you penetrate it.



SCORPIO

This week Philippa Skett has run out of any interesting or of any remote journalistic value, so asks you to do an agony aunt column. On a related note, your family disowns you after you apply a car battery to your mother's sister's nipples in search of advice. Clearly you've misunderstood the task.



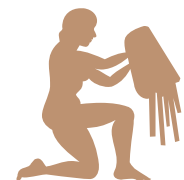
SAGITTARIUS

This week, the tattoo you gave yourself using a ball point pen and a blowtorch has gotten infected. The pus makes your manly image of Led Zeppelin's Icarus look like he's mid-ejaculation. You are forced to ask mum for money for "personal issues" and now she thinks you have an STI.



CAPRICORN

This week after much pre-exam angst you decide to get Tinder, after finding an attractive girl you start chatting and send nudes in return. Unfortunately when she replies you realize it was your mum and realize that you should probably stop masturbating. Maybe 5 minutes more.



AQUARIUS

This week, cycling is your new hobby, prompting you to go on a ride through Hyde Park; however you accidentally stimulate your prostate due to a strangely phallic saddle and an aggressive speed bump. You subsequently have traumatic flashbacks to your time in the Scouts.



PISCES

This week, to get an edge in exams you decide to take some methamphetamines, unfortunately the only drugs your foreign roommate has are unknown to you and seem risky. You settle for eating 5 tubes of toothpaste, throwing up in the exam and voiding your script.

Puzzles

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

Puzzles Editor | Michael Faggetter

Word Search

Paul G.

Find 62 sports and games hidden in the grid horizontally, vertically or diagonally. All the words to be found of six letters or less are listed below, but it's up to you to discover the longer ones. No sport is nested inside another: for example, if WATERSKIING is found, then SKIING does not count unless it is somewhere else in the grid.

- | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| AIKIDO | DARTS | IAIDO | PELOTA | RUGBY | SOCCER |
| BANDY | DIVING | JUDO | POLO | SAMBO | SQUASH |
| BOULES | GA-GA | KENDO | POOL | SIPA | SUMO |
| BOWLS | GOLF | KUNG FU | QUOITS | SKEET | TAG |
| BOXING | HOCKEY | LUGING | ROWING | SKIING | TENNIS |

When all the words have been found, the 30 remaining letters, taken in order, will spell out the names of two League One football clubs.

V B A D M I N T O N L O O P P C J U T Y
 O I S I G O G N I G U L C E A M A F A D
 L L A A A N T N A I O L T N R T I G G N
 L L M O I I O O I P E L O T A D A N N A
 E I B W N L D P C V I E P A S E L U O B
 Y A O K G G I O G R I S U T C C A K L E
 B R X Y N N K N A N O D S H E A I L H G
 A D I S K I I N G G I S H L N T E L T N
 L S N O H T A R A M N P S O D H G A A I
 L H G C O F S K E E T I K N I L N B I N
 A U S C C I S D S E G E N O N O I T R I
 B T N E K L C K S C N C A G N D E T L
 E T Q R E T R R Y D R I I E G A R K A O
 S L L U Y H U W O D S A A M R G A S E P
 A E L E O G O L F Q I A M T M L O A K M
 B C A E B I O D U J U V S B N I B B W A
 O O B Y P E T A N Q U E I U L U W X O R
 W C T A N W S S I N N E T N M I O S N T
 L K E D S H O W J U M P I N G O N M D R
 S G N I D I L G Y M N A S T I C S G O A

Weekly Quiz

QuizSoc

- 1) Things You Didn't Know Have a Name**
What's the name of the little plastic thing at the end of shoelaces?
- 2) Obscure Nerd Trivia**
In Dungeons and Dragons, how many Hells are there on the plane of Baator?
- 3) Other Languages**
To which language do we owe the words giraffe, syrup and alchemy?
- 4) Making Your Science Degree Work For You**
Which kind of baryon is composed of one down quark, one up quark and one strange quark?
- 5) In The Last Week**
In which European country did the leftist party Syriza win the elections, promising to end austerity?
- 6) Science of Not-So-Old**
Which 19th century inventor was dubbed "The Wizard of Menlo Park"?
- 7) Questions About Good Songs**
In the song *Stairway to Heaven*, our shadow is taller than our what?
- 8) TV and Movies**
Which 2014 movie featured Academy Award winners Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway and Michael Caine?
- 9) This Day in History**
Which king was beheaded on the 30th of January 1649?
- 10) ...and if you got all the others right, their initials spell out...**
What is the fancy, Greek-derived word for a painkiller medicine?

This quiz has been brought to you by QuizSoc, who will bring you a new quiz every week in Felix. **Watch out for the large number of points available in the FUCWIT league!**

Contact QuizSoc at quiz@imperial.ac.uk for more information on membership, events and services.

FUCWIT

It's never too late to join the FUCWIT puzzle league! You never know what might happen if you find yourself in the #1 position at the end of the year...

This week, there are big points available for the QuizSoc quiz so here is your chance to catch up!

Send in scanned copy of your completed puzzles to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk. Points are awarded for each correct solution, Bonus points (in brackets) are awarded to the first correct answer! Good Luck!

Points available this week:

Word Search	3 points (+1)
Weekly Quiz	4 points (+2)
Crossword	3 points (+1)
Sudoku	1 point each (+1)

Leaderboard

Individuals:

1. Adam Stewart	95
2. Catmelon	39
3. Jem Ong	29
4. Kebab King	21
5. Fengchu Zhang	3
6. Gabriel Quek	2

Teams:

1. Fully Erect	75
2. L3Gendary	45
3. Mindsuckers	48
4. Dapper Giraffe	15
5. AnyonebutKofi	8
6. Aerodoku	2
7. Guang <3 Le	1

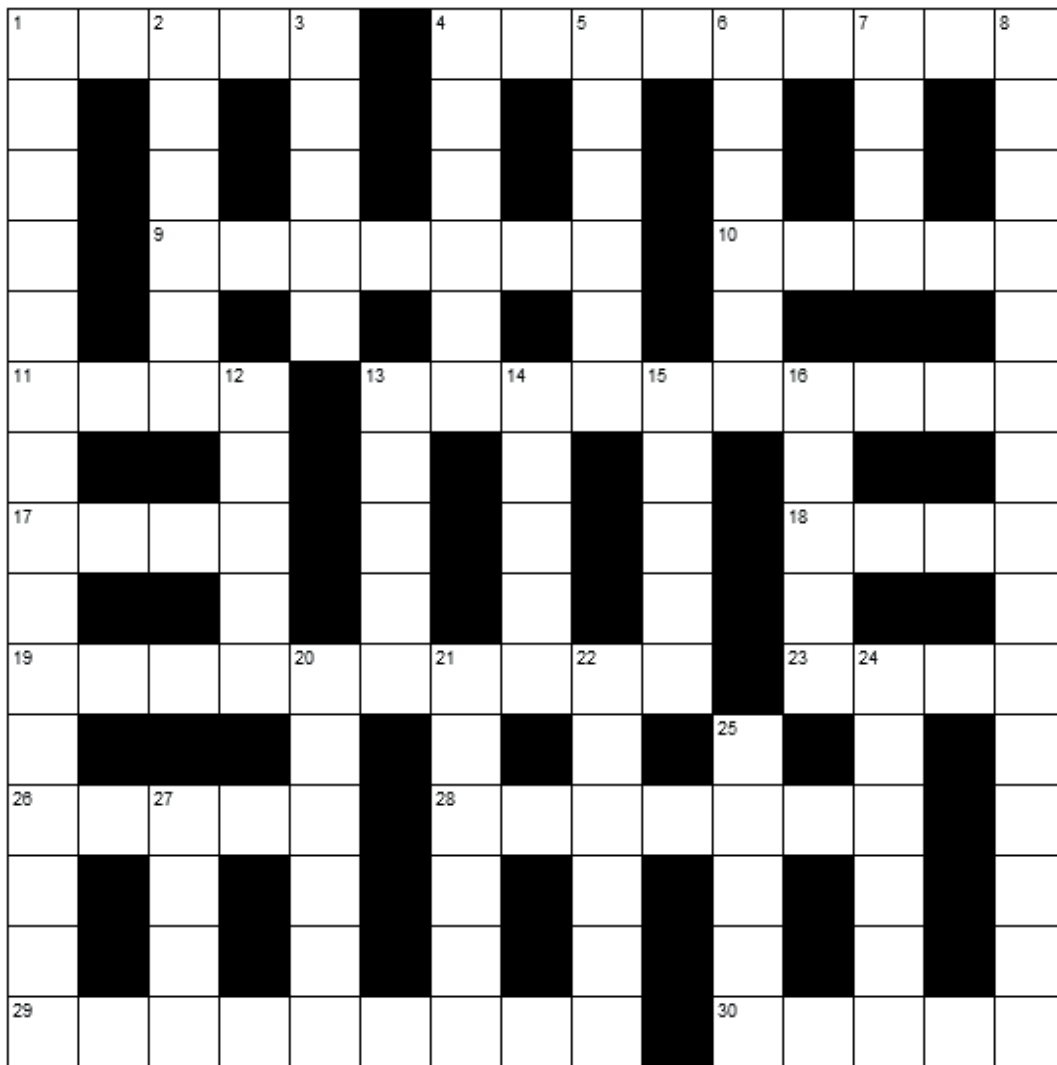
Puzzles

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

Puzzles Editor | Michael Faggetter

Crossword

Jamie Dutton



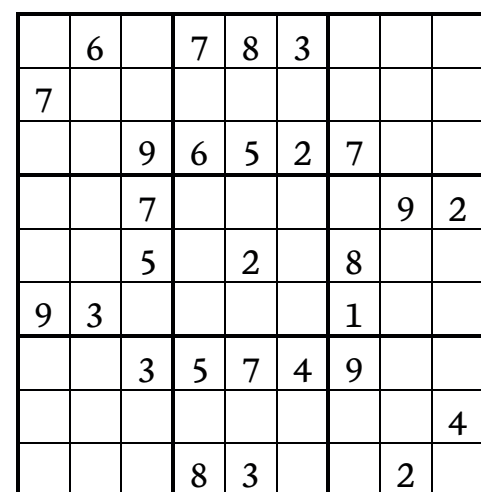
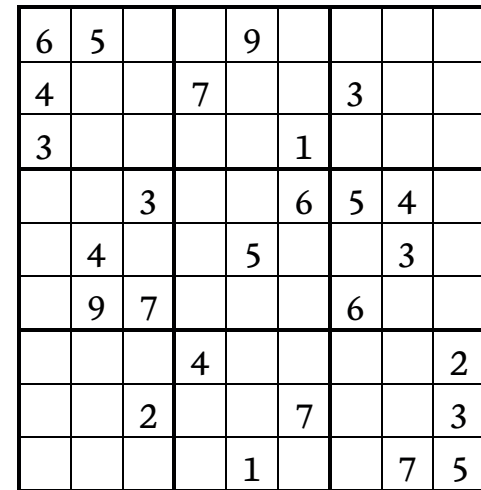
Across

- 1. God of the underworld (subsumed by Hades) (5)
- 4. Trouser flaps (9)
- 9. Freedom from personal reincarnations (7)
- 10. Scent (5)
- 11. Reminder (4)
- 13. Picturing, considering (10)
- 17. Break (4)
- 18. Leave out (4)
- 19. Without knowledge (10)
- 23. _____ & Stitch – Disney Film (4)
- 26. Constructs (5)
- 28. Surname of The Lord Kelvin (7)
- 29. Nirvana band member (surname) (9)
- 30. Amend (5)

Down

- 1. Referred to as infrequent (4,2,1,4,4)
- 2. Baby swan (6)
- 3. Handheld weapon (5)
- 4. Nirvana band member (surname) (6)
- 5. Hindu festival (6)
- 6. African antelope (6)
- 7. Goldfish in Pinocchio (4)
- 8. Easy, unambiguous (15)
- 12. Ben _____ – British comedy writer (5)
- 13. Greek muse (5)
- 14. Spiderman symbiote (5)
- 15. Tear (5)
- 16. Nirvana band member (surname) (5)
- 20. Commotions (6)
- 21. Ceremony (6)
- 22. Amorous (6)
- 24. (British) Remove electron from an atom (6)
- 25. City in Japan (5)
- 27. City in Ukraine (4)

Sudoku



Last Week's Solutions

Weekly Quiz

- 1. Hanged
- 2. Imgur
- 3. Rachel Greene
- 4. Seven
- 5. Uber
- 6. Tangerine trees
- 7. Impa
- 8. Shingle
- 9. Milton Keynes
- 10. Hirsutism

Anacrostic grid

MACCHIATO

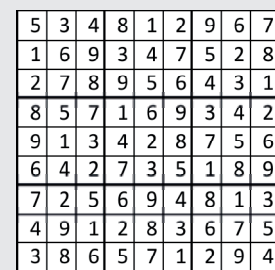
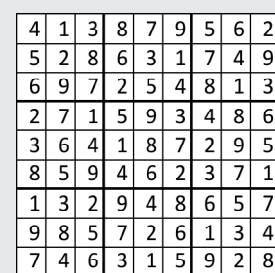
- 1. MANE (AMEN)
- 2. AMONG (MANGO)
- 3. CHEOPS (EPOCHS)
- 4. CONKERS (RECKONS)
- 5. HEPTAGON (PATHOGEN)
- 6. INSTEAD (STAINED)
- 7. ADRIAN (RADIANT)
- 8. THING (NIGHT)
- 9. OPEN (NOPE)

Word Search

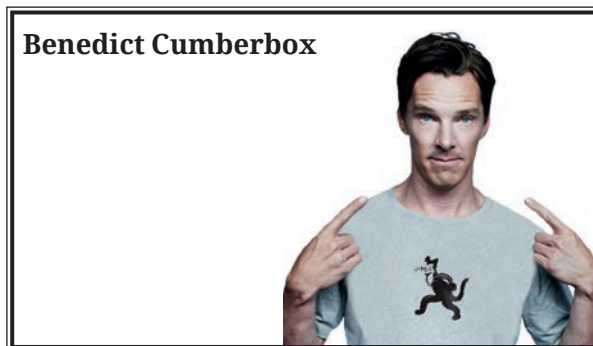
Bonus Words:

- 1. Roux
- 2. Aspic
- 3. Broth
- 4. Brisket
- 5. Artichoke
- 6. Fennel
- 7. Wasabi
- 8. Cloves

Sudoku



Benedict Cumberbox



filbertcartoons.com

Clubs and Societies

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C & S Editor || Ben Howitt

Society Funding in Review

Ben Howitt explains where, how and why clubs get the money they do.

The Union has, according to the 2014 Impact Report, a turnover of just over £4.4 million. When you take out the bar and retail outlets, as well as staffing, overheads etc, that leaves approximately £1.4 million running through the clubs' coffers on a yearly basis – as reported last year at budgeting.

With all of that cashflow, spread over 350 societies, you might reasonably ask where all of the money comes from.

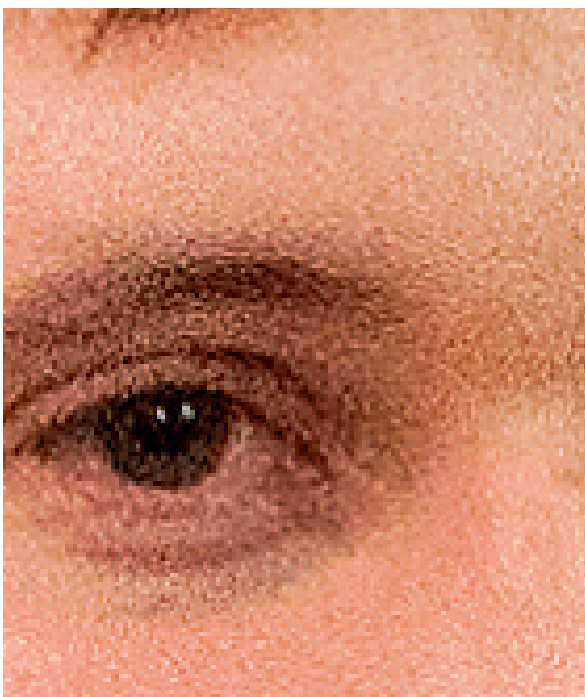
Imperial's Grant

Each year, we are given around £330,000 by the Union to give out to clubs. The majority of this gets allocated during the Spring Term, once everyone's had a chance to settle into their roles.

Each club Chair is expected to write a budget for the coming year, factoring in cost and any other income sources (including members' own contributions). These budgets get looked over by Management Group Chairs and Treasurers and the DPCS/DPFS, before coming to a meeting of the Clubs, Societies and Projects Board (CSPB).

After three meetings, one to discuss any appeals or issues with budgets, budgeting is complete – at least, that's the aim. Some money is always kept aside, for...

"The Union has ... a turnover of just over £4.4 million."



The DPFS is always watching. Photo: Thomas Lim



The Exploration Board funds expeditions with scientific and recreational benefit. Photo: Gemma Milman

Top-ups

It's hard to plan your expenditure for the next academic year when you're halfway through it. There are unexpected breakages of equipment, necessary purchases and other times when money has to be spent to keep a society running.

Money for contingency comes from the Activities Development Board, a subcommittee of CSPB. As of this year, there is also money set aside for the Activities Development Fund, which is intended to support new clubs that get created, and existing clubs looking to run new activities.

Harlington

The Harlington Fund was created in 1989, to manage the funds from a gravel extraction at the Harlington playing fields.

Typically, there is around £50,000 a year to be allocated for clubs' big purchases – things that are expensive enough that there's no way the Union could subsidise.

Harlington is based around improving student activity in the long term, and its guidelines ensure that the money goes to good use.

"As a general principle, funds will only be used to finance new or improved facilities, namely capital assets or equipment, and not to meet running costs."

The principles also rule out, in general, funding for students' personal equipment and for expeditions, so that funding has a long term impact.

The board on the committee consists of the Vice Provost (Education) (Debra Humphris), a past President of ICU (Ashley Brown) and the current Union

President (Tom Wheeler).

£60,000 funding was awarded last year out of £100,000 worth of applications. After the first term, there is £40,000 left in the pot for this year, although the applications already received would, if all were approved, take the fund into negative.

Projects funded by Harlington have included the purchase of microphones, new equipment for clubs in their early stages, and replacement of sports kit.

In January 2014 a one-off spike in funding was also awarded for the redevelopment of the Union Concert Hall, to the tune of £215,000.

IC Trust

Imperial College Trust (formerly Queen's Gate Trust) is an independent charity. A bit like the ADB (see Top-ups), it provides funding at various points over the year to promote charitable work and fund research connected to the subjects taught at College. It's split into three main categories: Tours, Conferences and the Exploration Board.

The main way that societies see IC Trust money is through the tours funding that gets handed out once a term by CSPB. This is used to fund the travel to and from club tours, usually with around 20 tours in a period (Autumn, Spring and Summer).

There are some fairly specific rules on the allocation for tours; for instance, if your club runs the same trip to the same place every year, you are expected to budget for it in the annual Grant. In previous years, there has also been a rule that a society can only submit one tour application in a period. The policy is under review by

Hack's Corner (How to Write a budget)

For the first year in a little while, CSPB has a budgeting strategy. The weird exceptions that pop up year on year (you know who you are!) have been discussed. Before budgeting closes on Sunday, here are a few pointers on making sure your budget is readable, realistic and effective.

Firstly, make sure that all of the funding you are requesting is explicitly linked to your core aims and objectives – subsidy is not available for anything else.

A balanced budget should contain a mix of CSPB-A, CSPB-B and CSPB-C. Remember that CSPB-A is for core, essential items only – and that illegitimate A items may well be moved straight to CSPB-C. There is a budgeting policy to follow, meaning that CSPB-B funding will be available in the second round.

It's important that your sums make sense – and all budget lines should have, at the end of the description, a 1 sentence sum summarising the cost and subsidy requested, e.g. "5 people x 3 trips x £30 @ 40% subsidy = £180".

As regards subsidy, be as realistic as you can. Look at what was granted last year, and base the estimate on that. While 75% subsidy on accommodation would be lovely, it's just not going to happen.

Also, remember that your budget should approximately balance – so your predicted income, membership fees, sponsorship and subsidy should roughly match the expected cost. There are obviously exceptions to this related to ticket sales, but as far as possible try to explain where the non-subsidised income will be coming from.

For expensive activities, or especially busy clubs, it is worth mentioning activities that you don't subsidise, to highlight all of the costs you have as a society. These should appear in your budget lines, as it gives CSPB information on the cost to your members during club activity.

Clubs and Societies

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

C & S Editor | Ben Howitt

CSPB, though, and this clause is up for discussion.

Funding is also given out by ICTrust to assist students in attending conferences to present their research. This is more useful to the Graduate Students' Union, and to individual students, but Departmental Societies get a look in too.

Perhaps more tantalising is the Exploration Board, which takes as its mission statement "to support projects that reach a balance between straightforward scientific research

and an adventurous holiday." More specifically, it funds expeditions with scientific merit, with recent destinations including Mongolia, Peru and Svalbard.

The board has recognised 98 expeditions since its creation in 1955. Over a third of these took place in 2001-2010, after a quiet few decades starting in the 1970s.

Sport/Arts Imperial

Many clubs, particularly those in the

ACC, compete in BUCS tournaments, for which extensive funding is awarded by Sport Imperial. Funding is also allocated in a second round to non-BUCS sports with benefit to the College.

A similar scheme, Arts Imperial, runs to assist the various performing arts societies on campus, as well as to administrate the Blyth centre, which provides practice facilities for instrumentalists at the College. The funding available from Arts Imperial is significantly less, owing to

the increased difficulty in obtaining sponsorship for clubs not competing on a weekly basis.

Departments

As well as money from the College, a number of societies (particularly Departmental societies) get funding directly from their departments. This usually takes the form of subsidy for a specific event, like an alumni dinner. Departments can also help out clubs by offering room space for meetings.

Self Generated Income

Perhaps the principle method of obtaining cash to run activities comes under the admittedly broad title of 'Self Generated Income' (SGI).

This can take the form of ticket sales, membership fees, sponsorship arrangements, or simple donations from alumni or generous members of the public.

If your club has found a clever way of raising money for activity, get in touch at felix.clubsandsocieties@ic.ac.uk

Lots of space, not much foot traffic

Ben Howitt attends this term's Refresher's Fair.

On Wednesday 28th January, the Union's annual Refresher's Fair was held in the Great Hall. The event featured 24 clubs, societies and projects, ranging from RCC Synchro to ACC Tennis and A&E Dramatic Society.

The event was also attended by a number of Imperial's services and external companies, including Image Scotland and Nandos.

From conversations with those attending, the main takeaway from the event appears to be that while the event was in general well organised, the lack of publicity meant that attendance from current students was extremely poor, rendering the point of the day – to recruit new members – less than effective.

When asked about how the day had gone Abi De Bruin, the Deputy President (Clubs & Societies), said "it's good to see so much engagement from student volunteers".

The event was indeed well attended by societies, with spaces in fact running out fairly quickly. A number of new clubs and societies attended, including Vehicle Design, Lib Youth and Imperial Obstacle Course Racing

(IOCR).

Lib Youth seemed dissatisfied, placing the blame on the marketing of the Fair, and claiming that they had "wasted the day". By contrast, IOCR had a pleasant experience, having benefited extensively from their location at the Fair: directly next to Nandos.

The Nandos stand was, arguably, the runaway star of the day, featuring – in addition to their normal offers – a 'Wheel'o'Chilli' and a large chicken costume.

Despite this, Abi made a fair point with regards to student engagement. Many of the volunteers I spoke to over the day seemed positive, outgoing, and enthusiastic. Recruitment for incoming committee members was proceeding well too, with numerous first years attending to represent their new societies.

It is possible that attendance was limited owing to the fact that exam season had only just finished, or to a lack of society publicity – certainly, there was less social media presence than the Fresher's Fair at the beginning of the year.

However, there seems to have been



A Nandos representative staffing the 'Wheel'o'Chilli' Sideshow. Photo: Ben Howitt

a breakdown in communication. Many people, when asked, were unaware that the event even existed,

and fewer knew that it was taking place on the Wednesday.

It is a shame that this opportunity

to promote student activity was so poorly attended, and I hope that more efforts are made in the future.

New clubs this term

The New Activities Committee has made no less than 25 new clubs and societies so far this year, with more midway through the process.

Here's the first of the new student groups to be agitating for your attention at any opportunity.

If you don't see what you want here or on the Union website, why not create it? There will be an article next week on how societies get created.

Tandem

We are a society for both men and women, which aims to work with businesses and Imperial College London to promote awareness of gender equality in the workplace. We want to help students understand that it is no longer a "female issue" but an issue which concerns us all.

This term we will be launching our web presence. We will also be conducting a number of interviews on gender equality, and hosting a panel discussion in March with representatives from various different industries.

Empower

Empower is the female support network that aims to foster professional skill development whilst promoting self-confidence and wellbeing.

Coming up this term are *Percept* – a safe space for men to discuss gender equality in a non-confrontational group, and the *Women in Science* campaign, to raise awareness of female scientists.

Finally, we have *Beautiful Beings*, a campaign which tackles the portrayal of women in the media and aims to shift the focus towards achievements over "blemishes".

Medecin Sans Frontieres

MSF society is a group to raise awareness, debates and fundraising regarding the work that the charity (Medicines Sans Frontieres) does. There are a number of members from medicine and other courses.

This term, we are hosting the National MSF Conference – the Humanitarian Forum at Imperial on March 21st this year. We had a fundraiser last week with music, comedy, a raffle and other entertainment which raised £1000. For the third year running, we are organising the annual MSF London Funrun – last year raising £7000.

Vehicle Design

Vehicle Design is a society that aims to give students the opportunity to be creative with their ideas for new and innovative vehicular technology. It acts as a platform, supporting student led projects and providing an environment in which any design, however big or small, may be implemented.

Starting last term, we already have three major projects underway: the CubeSat Project, the EcoMarathon, and the Solar Challenge. This term, we will be really making headway as the projects begin to gain momentum.

Clubs and Societies

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C & S Editor || Ben Howitt

The greater good vs. your degree

How Chang Hong on planning the first Enactus week at Imperial

It feels like winter break has just ended. I thought I was ready to take on the new term after the recharge.

I have never felt so wrong. Coursework, examinations, socials, societies and sports. How am I supposed to juggle them all? Drowning... drowning... drowning...

If you are feeling exactly this, you are not alone. I am part of Enactus, a society promoting entrepreneurial action at Imperial, and I am planning the upcoming Enactus Week (2nd Feb - 6th Feb) amidst all the school work to be done. I know it is not easy but let me share with you how I manage.

Get organised.

It is important that you pen down all your responsibilities and commitments. Next prioritise these tasks and put them into your daily schedule.

This is crucial so that you do not procrastinate and leave the tasks undone. I do this once a week every Sunday night to plan for the week ahead so that I am able to align and prepare myself for what is coming next.

Let your creativity flow.

Following Osborne, there are two main guiding principles for brainstorming: 'Reach for Quantity' and 'Defer Judgement'. No ideas are ever too crazy and indeed, it is often the crazy ideas that will attract the greatest crowd.

Try also to choose events that are interactive so that you can engage your audience more! For example, we are planning to have Vietnamese speciality taster sessions and soap making sessions!

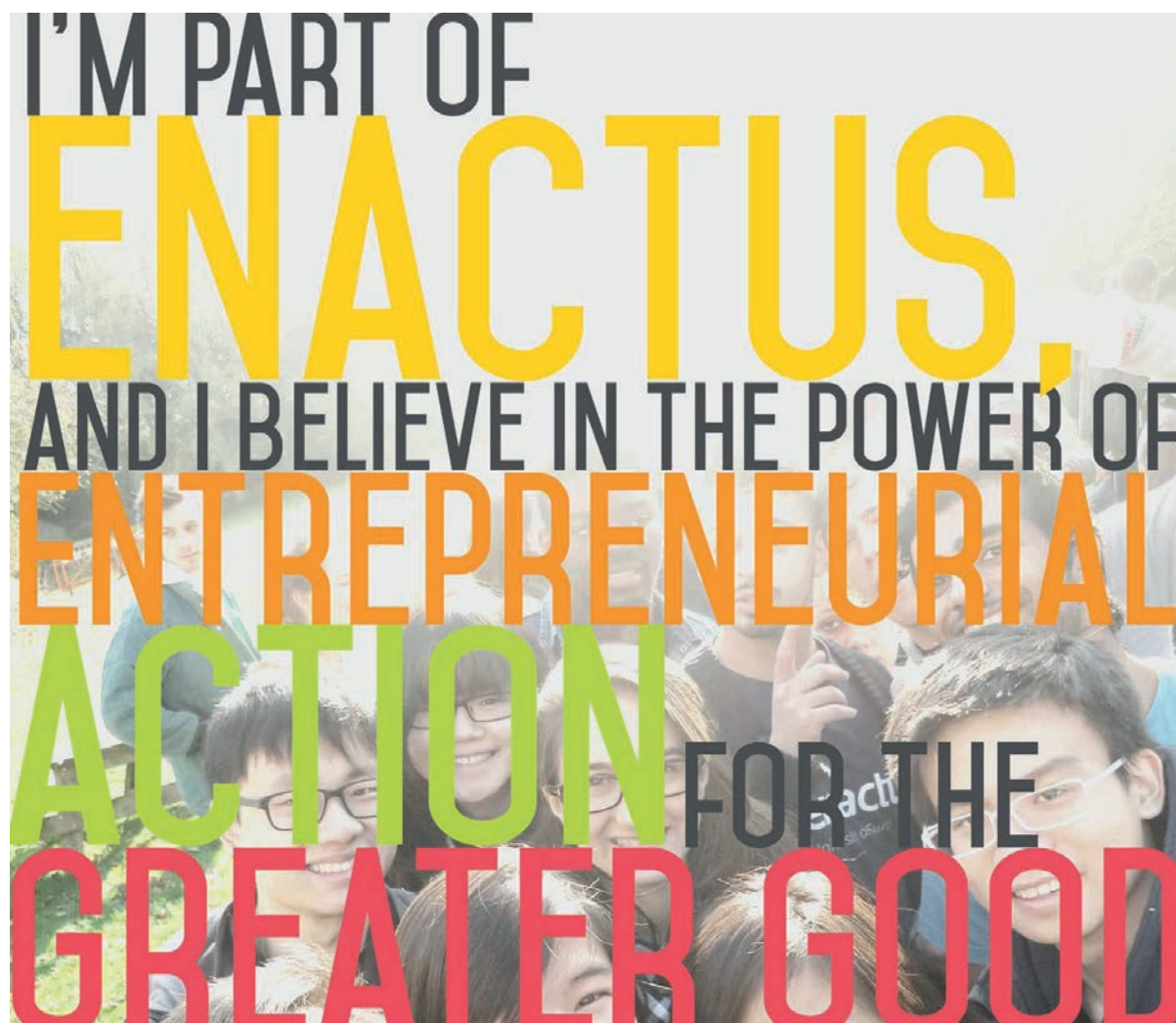


Image: Enactus

Preparation.

Prepare everything that you need for the event. Often the small things that are easily missed out will make or spoil the event.

Hence, visualise the event in your mind, jotting down everything that you envisioned, from venue to tables and publicity materials.

So plan early, plan meticulously; and if you're planning an event at Imperial, bear in mind that room bookings must be done at least 2 weeks in advance!

Get excited!

The success of an event is determined by the enthusiasm of the organisers.

Show the crowd you love what you do and you believe in what you do! The smile on your face is infectious and you have the power to put a smile on the participants' faces as well!

So what are you waiting for? Get started, get planning and, if you have any time left over, head down to visit our stalls at the JCR during the first week of February!

Enactus: What's On

Enactus is a group of Imperial College London students aiming to use entrepreneurial action to channel their talents, passions and ideas toward creating good in the world.

Enactus week runs from 28th February to 6th February. All events are to be held in the JCR.

Unseen Tours: Photo Mania

Monday 2nd February, 12:00-14:00.
Guess where our photos are taken, and learn something new about these famous London attractions, as if you are on one of our Unseen Tours.

Kenterprise: Of Kenyan Soapmaking and Recyclables

Thursday 5th February, 12:00-14:00.
Watch one of our beneficiaries, Mrs Irene, make homemade soaps for her business! Brook Safi will also be there collecting recyclables.

Commercial: Fuss Free Lunch

Friday 6th February, 12:00-14:00
Having a tough time deciding what's for you? We are offering free Vietnamese snacks and pasta at our commercial project's taster session.

Investment Society

Investment society's main aim is to provide an environment for students to learn from each other, through stock presentations and discussions. A company is pitched to the members at our weekly meetings, and the members vote on whether we will take up a position in our virtual £100,000 portfolio.

This term we'll be continuing with our weekly Tuesday meetings, and we'll be handing over responsibility to individual students who will gather reports and provide the material for the meetings. We'll also be publishing a monthly newsletter!

Krishna Consciousness

The Krishna Consciousness Society at Imperial offers a platform to evolve the mind, give direction in life and reveal a deeper level of insight by connecting with like-minded people.

The main activities that the KC society will hold are workshops, where a guest speaker will chair enriching and thought provoking discussions about topics that students can really relate to such as relationships, habits, stress, lifestyles, faith and doubt. Another event that we are keen to run again is 'Engineering a Better World'.

Socratic Society

Promoting philosophical discussions amongst the Imperial College population, the Socratic Society aims to provide a platform to encourage interactions between leading philosophers in academia and anybody interested in learning more about philosophy.

We aim to nurture a culture for philosophical discussions at Imperial by running trips to other philosophy societies around London, host various guest speakers and to run socials to get to know each other, to provide a forum for exchanging ideas.

ICSM Careers Network

The Medics Careers society has been split into a number of new societies, forming the ICSM Careers Network.

From an external point of view, whilst all the societies have similar aims (i.e. to provide specialty-focussed activities to interested students) one could easily be led to believe that all these careers societies do the same type of events. This is far from the truth; the activities range from GP Soc's weekly debates to Radiology Soc's final year teaching to conferences hosted by O&G Soc and Heart Soc to the very successful volunteering

schemes such as: Paediatric Society's Play Team (student volunteers provide out-of-hours play time for in-patient children at St Mary's Hospital) and Psychiatry Soc's Open Minds (teaching school children about mental health awareness).

The future of healthcare depends on collaborative cross-discipline participation – how else are we going to cure cancer?

STEVEN TRAN

There will be an extended feature on the Medics Careers Network in next week's issue.



Talking points from the Australian Open

Kunal Wagle discusses the goings on at Melbourne Park in the World Sport Column

Is Venus Williams back?

Venus Williams reached the Quarter-Finals of a Grand Slam for the first time since the US Open in 2010. She has struggled since then, and was diagnosed with Sjögren's syndrome, an auto-immune disease, during the US Open of 2011.

Nick Kyrgios does it again

The Australian boy wonder, who is only 19, wowed the home crowd with his progress at the Australian Open this year. Kyrgios completed a truly stunning comeback against Andreas Seppi to win having been two sets down in the fourth round. His run was ended in the Quarter-Finals by Andy Murray in straight sets, much to the dismay of the crowd in the Rod Laver Arena.

Rafael Nadal's form

It's been a mixed Australian Open for Rafael Nadal. He looked very convincing in his first match against Mikhail Youzhny, only to need five sets to get past qualifier Tim Smyczek in the second round. He seemed to have got rid of the cobwebs from that with a couple of emphatic victories, only to be dumped in equally emphatic fashion against Tomas Berdych in the Quarter-Finals. His Australian Open tally remains at one.

Upsets galore

If there's anything this edition of the

Australian Open will be remembered by, it's the number of upsets that have occurred. Four of the top eight seeds in the Women's Singles failed to reach the Quarter-Finals, while only seven of the top 16 reached the Fourth Round. There were fewer shocks in the Men's tournament, but the most notable one was Roger Federer. The legend lost in the third round against Andreas Seppi in four sets.

Bouchard misses out in a big match... again

Eugenie Bouchard is fast gaining a reputation for missing out in the big games. The young Canadian star reached the Quarter-Finals before being comprehensively beaten in straight sets by Maria Sharapova. In grand slams, Bouchard has only ever beaten Angelique Kerber out of the top ten, and has not come close in other matches against them. She may have two semi-finals and a final to her name, but it could be argued that she has had fairly open routes to the latter stages.

Murray back to his best?

Andy Murray has looked very good at this year's Australian Open. He was dominant in his first three rounds, before dropping a set against Grigor Dimitrov in the fourth round. Followers of Murray (and those who have nothing better to do than turn British Eurosport on) will have noticed that his first



Nick Kyrgios (left) lost to finalist Andy Murray (right) in the Quarter-Finals in Melbourne Photo: AP

serve percentages are significantly improved from last year. This has been attributed to him going back to a previous style of serve. His coach Amelie Mauresmo also seems to be flourishing now that she is working as part of a significantly smaller team.

Is Djokovic Unstoppable?

Novak Djokovic is on a very good run. He hasn't lost a set throughout the tournament so far (although that could change in the semi-final against Stanislas Wawrinka), and barring an out of character performance on

Friday will almost certainly be facing Andy Murray in the final on Sunday morning.

Madison Keys: Future Star?

Madison Keys is another player for the future, and she gave a glimpse of what we can expect in future years at the tournament. Having defeated the 29th seed in the second round, the unseeded American then dispatched Petra Kvitova in the third round, as well as Venus Williams in the Quarter-Finals. She pushed Serena Williams all the way in the first set

before fading in the second. At only 19, we can certainly expect Keys to be around for a long time to come.

Another explicit outburst?

After Stanislas Wawrinka's on court altercation with Roger Federer's wife at the ATP World Tour Finals last year, there has been more attention on what people in the player's boxes say. On Thursday morning Andy Murray's fiancée drew criticism as a video emerged of her mouthing a lot of words, a lot of which were allegedly explicit.

Getting down and dirty with Imperial College Cross Country

On Wednesday 21st January, 17 determined runners from Imperial College's very own cross country and athletics club braved the cold and travelled to Alexandra Palace for the first London College League race of the term. They were greeted with ankle deep mud. Before the race even began, Anna Lawson returned from her warm up with knees and hands already covered in mud. Soon the runners reluctantly took off their warm layers and made their way to the start line. The gun sounded and the race was on! A mass of students from unis around London charged off onto the course, with/without losing their shoes to the muck. A flat circuit around the lower park grounds (as flat as you can get in a mud bath)

was followed by the hill. The Hill, which Alexandra Palace is infamous for, will make even your strongest runners weak at the knees. Once this had been conquered, it was a fast and perilously steep downhill back into the sludge once more. Two laps for the girls, and three laps for the guys. A final sprint (if you could actually move without your feet slipping beneath you) and then over the finish line.

Imperial's very own Sarah Johnson brought our women's team home and came an outstanding second place in the women's race overall. She was shortly followed by Alex Mundell (4th), then by Ellie Johnston (16th) and the rest of the women's team. The men's race saw Chris Bannon take a clear win with tactical

surge up the final hill. He was followed by great runs from Chris Thomas (16th), Rupert Hepton (38th) and the rest of the men's team. IC's runners achieved great results on a challenging course, even if they couldn't see the colour of their shoes anymore. After the post-race cake session descended into a mud fight, with many casualties, the team trooped on to the nearest spoons (which wasn't that near) for a well-deserved calorie binge. With a tough condition race like that under their belts, it's safe to say the ICXC are well and truly prepared for BUCS XC on the 31st. Want to join the fun? Find us on facebook or email run@imperial.ac.uk

JESS PRIOR
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Do you have what it takes to get down and dirty with Imperial Cross Country? Photo: ICXC