



Felix

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External academics criticise findings: "Imperial just doesn't get it."

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Felix Editor || Philippa Skett

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What's on this week:

Medics' Light Opera 24-Hour Musical

May 2nd, 19:00, Union
Concert Hall

ISCM Light Opera Society return to perform a musical learnt and rehearsed in just 24 hours.

The cast and crew find out the show on Friday night, before spending the entire night and day getting ready for curtain up on Saturday.

Skett's been listening to the *Mamma Mia* soundtrack all week, so take it from her: musicals are great. You should go to one.

General Election Live in the Felix Office

May 7th, 23:30, Felix Office

Planning on staying up all night to follow the #GE2015 results? Us too! Come to the Felix Office after we've got next week's paper out to watch the results unfold. Come if you like politics, come if you don't, we don't mind. I don't even know what politics is.

Planning another Library all-nighter to catch up on revision? Us neither. Come procrastinate with us, we have Diet Coke.



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News

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News Editors

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What you may have missed over Easter

Carol Ann Cheah recaps some of the last month's news stories

420: Thousands gather in Hyde Park, more than 50 arrested

As pro-cannabis protesters openly smoked the drug in Hyde Park on April 20 (an annual global celebration of cannabis, where calls for drug law reform take place), police ended up arresting 53 people. 16 were taken into custody, whereas 21 were released on bail and required to return to the station at a later date.

Many participants distributed cannabis leaf-shaped flyers and held picket signs, with one notable one reading "Ed Milliband wouldn't want his own children criminalised for cannabis possession." Dozens of police officers and prominent police signs saying "Possession of cannabis is illegal" were also noted at the event, with a Met Police Spokesman having said that "anyone seen by an officer openly smoking cannabis in Hyde Park or in the Westminster area could be issued with a warning or face arrest."

The 420 Day event was organised by a reform-seeking group called NORML UK, along with the UK Cannabis Social Clubs (UKCSC). Speaking to the Guardian last year, Greg de Hoedt, president of UKCSC, gave the following statement:

"The cannabis community is crying out for legalization and regulation. We encourage growers to register with UKCSC because we want data we can present to authorities and say: this many people grow cannabis, this many people are growing for medicinal purposes; and we can also establish which strains work with which illnesses."

Dyson School of Design Engineering

Launched in late March by Chancellor George Osborne and industrial engineer Sir James Dyson, the new Dyson School of Engineering is the first new engineering department set up at Imperial in the last two decades. The School will be housed at the former Post Office Building on Exhibition Road

The School will offer three courses next academic year: a 4-year MEng in Design Engineering; and two Masters programs, one in Global Design Engineering and another in Innovation Design Engineering (IDE). The latter, with a 30-year history formerly under the Department of Mechanical Engineering, is being jointly offered in collaboration with

"..police ended up arresting 53 people, 16 were taken into custody..."



James Dyson outside of Imperial Photo: James Dyson Foundation

the Royal College of Art.

October 2015 will see the School's first ever intake of students, where the initial cohort will first use Imperial's existing facilities. By October 2017, teaching is expected to move to the new building: the former Post Office Building on Exhibition Road which was purchased by Imperial from the Science Museum.

The new School was made possible by a £12m donation from the James Dyson Foundation, which is the charity's largest ever single gift. This is not the first time the Dyson name has been involved with Imperial College London: Sir James Dyson is a longstanding supporter of the IDE Masters program, and in 2014, Dyson Ltd announced a £5m investment in a new robotics lab within Imperial.

Bye-bye ouchies: invisible mending for the human body

Researchers at Imperial College London have developed a novel way to treat severe burns and assist in organ transplants. The team, led by Molly Stevens from the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, have designed sheets of silicon bandages coated with nanoneedles for this purpose.

The idea is that the healing capacity of tissues can be boosted by microscopically puncturing thousands of cells at once, delivering

"...build on a worldwide database on how 'likeability' is linked to emotional reactions"

a shot of DNA with each puncture. There are many proposed uses for the resulting product; one major idea is to prevent unsightly burn scars during the healing process. At present, patients have to wait until the healing process is complete before treating any discoloration and uneven surfacing with plastic surgery, laser resurfacing and/or medical tattooing.

One of the key reasons of treatment by introducing DNA into cells is to reprogram how they respond to damage. However, inserting DNA into cells can be tricky: injections only allow for one cell to receive new DNA at a time, whereas using genetically engineered viruses (perfect as they are nature's experts at hijacking cell DNA) cannot guarantee that none of the virus' genes will contaminate the process - something potentially lethal. The nanoneedle silicon bandage, on the other hand, will be safer and more efficient at reprogramming whole tissues.

Big Brother really IS watching you: better video emotion/likeability tracking software to be developed

Tech outfit Realeyes, in conjunction with Imperial College London, have received a €3.64m grant from the European Commission for a project to improve the former's emotion-tracking technology. Dubbed SEWA:

Automatic Sentiment Analysis in the Wild, the research will be led by Professor Maja Pantic from Imperial, along with guidance from various organizations' experts including AOL, Ipsos, Skype, and Kaplan.

Realeyes is known for its technology that uses standard computer webcams to measure subconscious responses from audiences as they view video content. Present-day facial coding technology and emotion analytics, including what Realeyes currently offers to its clients, can measure the six universal basic emotions (anger, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness and surprise), as well as engagement. Realeyes however says that 'likeability' is actually a complex emotional state, which automated emotion measurement technologies cannot currently detect. It also stresses how likeability is directly linked to sales,

With names like Adobe, Google, IKEA and Ford on its list of clients, Realeyes boasts collaborations with various Fortune 500 brands and a variety of publishers. SEWA, which will improve the current Realeyes platform, will build on a worldwide database of how 'likeability' is linked to emotional reactions. Realeyes says it has recorded the emotional responses of over 60,000 people in conjunction with answers to a series of 'likeability' questions relating to sharing content and recommendations.

News

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News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah, Cecily Johnson & Kunal Wagle

Ebola may increase cases of malaria

Philippa Skett reports on the latest finding from the MRC

The most recent findings from the Medical Research Council (MRC) Centre for Outbreak Analysis & Modelling has predicted an extra 3.5 million cases of malaria as a result of the epidemic. Researchers based at the Centre have also found that the disease hits those under one year of age hardest, with 90% of those infected dying shortly after.

Results from models developed by one research team have found that the Ebola epidemic has also resulted into an additional 3.5 million cases and an additional 10,900 extra deaths from malaria.

Countries hit by Ebola, including New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia saw major disruption or closure of their healthcare facilities as a result of the outbreak.

Due to the nature of Ebola and its transmission, isolating those infected and ensuring the safety of the healthcare workers has overwhelmed and disrupted healthcare provisions across the three countries, having a knock-on effect on treating those with other ailments.

The researchers then modelled the effect removal of healthcare would have on these numbers. They used demographic and health survey data from 2000 up until the first Ebola outbreak in March 2014.

They found that without any medical care whatsoever, the number of cases of malaria rise by 45% in Guinea, 88% in Sierra Leone, and an

incredible 140% in Liberia. This is equivalent to 3.5 million cases of the disease, and a further 10,000 malaria-attributable deaths. Half of these cases would affect children under five years of age.

However, the researchers also found that mass drug administration and distributing more insecticide-treated mosquito nets could mitigate the effect somewhat.

"The on-going Ebola epidemic in parts of west Africa... [is] threatening to jeopardise progress made in malaria control and elimination over the past decade," said lead author Dr Patrick Walker.

"In heavily affected Ebola areas the indirect impact of Ebola upon malaria deaths is likely to be of a similar magnitude to the public health burden caused by cases of Ebola directly."

Another research group based at the MRC Centre for Outbreak Analysis & Modelling, collaborated with the World Health Organisation, alongside researchers from the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia to address the demographics the disease is hitting hardest.

The group of researchers found that the disease progresses more quickly and is more likely to be fatal for children under five. 90% of children under the age of one fall fatal to the disease too, compared to 80% of those infected that are aged one to four.

Nearly 4,000 children under sixteen



Ebola workers carry away infected child for decontamination Photo: GlobalResearch

"The on-going Ebola epidemic... [is] threatening to jeopardise progress made in malaria control and elimination"

have suffered from the disease since the epidemic began over a year ago, and the proportion of those effected by Ebola who are children is also increasing over time.

Their research found that children infected with Ebola have a shorter incubation period than adults, with those under one year of age on average harbouring the virus for 6.9 days before presenting with symptoms.

Not only that, but the researchers found that symptoms are generally different for those of different ages. Younger children are less likely to present with abdominal, joint or muscle pain, but are more likely to have a fever.

Professor Christl Donnelly, a co-author of the study, said: "These

findings show that Ebola affects young children quite differently to adults, and it's especially important that we get them into treatment quickly.

"We also need to look at whether young children are getting treatment that's appropriate for their age."

The MRC Centre for Outbreak Analysis and Modelling is based at Imperial's St Mary's Campus, in West London.

Founded in 2007, the Centre aims to research disease spread to better prepare for and shape responses to epidemics.

Those working at the Centre are currently analysing and modelling the spread of diseases such as SARS, avian flu, swine flu, alongside Ebola and malaria.

"Ebola affects young children quite differently to adults."

Weeks to remain closed despite student protests

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

Weeks hall is to remain closed for the next academic year despite students petitioning to save the space, and the student Union Council voting to campaign against the closure.

The Imperial College Union President, Tom Wheeler, announced in his report to council detailing his recent activity that he was unable to overturn the decision to close the hall, after contacting Muir Sanderson, The Chief Financial Officer of the college. Wheeler was told that the Provost board has already made the decision, and they were not prepared to overturn their decision.

This follows the furore last term

when, back in February, council initially voted to allow the closure of the Weeks hall, after being told the space could be used for childcare to make the university more attractive to female academics.

However the first vote resulted in equal number of students being either for or against campaigning to save the hall. A second vote ran saw the council narrowly deciding not to campaign against the closure.

Weeks hall committee members were left outraged at the decision, especially since they were not consulted before the announcement to close the hall reached Council. Recruitment for hall seniors was already underway at the time, as the residents were all under the assumption the hall would still be in use for the next academic year.

Neither Imperial College Union

or College have yet to accept responsibility for not informing the residents of the hall of the closure.

The hall committee then arranged a petition to call for an emergency council meeting in March, and residents of the halls turned up in large numbers to argue the benefits of keeping the hall open. Union Council then voted again, this time in favour of campaigning against the closure.

Chris Kaye, Deputy President (Welfare) is also liaising with the director of Human Resources, Louise Lindsey, to ensure there will be maximised space available for childcare provision with the Weeks building.

Property in the North of Princes Gardens will also be used for various purposes, which will be primarily 'academic' related, although no specifics have been released as to what

this would entail yet.

Wheeler also noted in his report that Pembroke hall will remain open for a further three years, although its derelict annex at the top of the building and the surrounding garden will be converted into houses, that will then be sold to fund other college ventures.

An Imperial spokesperson told *Felix*: The internal structure and listed status of the building means it would be difficult to refurbish it as a hall of residence to bring it in line with the standards of other accommodation. These structural issues mean there is little scope for expansion in bed spaces, rendering the refurbishment cost per bed space prohibitive.

"Imperial is currently exploring other options for the future use of the site."

"Union Council then voted again, this time in favour of campaigning against the closure"

"...unable to overturn the decision to close the hall"

News

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News Editors || Carol Ann Cheah, Cecily Johnson & Kunal Wagle

Review in response to Grimm's death completed Results criticised by external academics: "Imperial doesn't get it."

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

The inquest into the death of Professor of toxicology Stefan Grimm, 51, took place last month, six months after he was found dead in his own home in Northwood, Middlesex.

The inquest heard how Grimm was at the informal stage of the College's performance management process after struggling to acquire enough grant money for research, months before his death. The inquest ruled that Grimm had taken his own life by asphyxiating himself.

On April 7th The West London Coroner's Court also heard the report from Imperial's internal review of staff policies in response to Grimm's death, which featured recommended changes, including increasing support for struggling staff members.

The senior coroner, Chinyere Inyama, noted how the funding issues were clearly mounting stress on the professor, and cited Grimm's death as "needless."

However, Imperial's own director of Human Resources, Louise Lindsay, who led the internal review, admitted at the inquest that the changes still might not have prevented Grimm's suicide.

An Imperial spokesperson has since told *Felix* that "Given the complex nature of suicide, it would be impossible to answer with certainty whether any action taken by the College could have resulted in a different outcome."

The internal review has also been heavily criticised online by other academics based at Oxford University and University College London.

Grimm's death hit national headlines last October after a posthumous email sent in his name accused Imperial of mistreatment of staff and stated that: "This is not a university anymore but a business."

He continued: "What these guys don't know is that they destroy lives. Well, they certainly destroyed mine."

In his email, time stamped as sent after his death, Grimm explained how he had received an "ultimatum email" from Professor Martin Wilkins, his line manager, in March of last year, detailing how Grimm was being placed under informal review.

Wilkins explained that although he was aware of Grimm's dedication to try and find funding, he was still "struggling to fulfil the metrics of a Professorial post at Imperial College."

Wilkins then stated that should Grimm fail to secure a £200,000

programme grant in the next twelve months, he would have to consider taking further, formal action in accordance to the College's current policies for managing poor performance.

The internal review conducted by Imperial outlined how Grimm was actually under what is known informal review for nearly two years but no further formal action was taken in relation to his progress.

The review stated that: "the formal stages would have provided more clarity to Professor Grimm on process and support through the written documentation, representation at meetings and HR involvement."

However, other staff that had been through performance management (similar to that undergone by Grimm) also contacted the reviewers, with it being noted in that: "there were a number of cases where staff did not feel that they had received the support that they needed."

The review also addressed the training of management staff, the timescale and progression of informal and formal review processes, and the resources available from HR for disciplinary procedures.

The recommendations included introducing performance and disciplinary training to managers and requesting that managers notify the Human Resources department before putting employers under informal review.

The review also suggested that template emails and letters should be created for correspondence concerning performance management, and that HR also reviews all correspondence before being sent.

The report concluded with recommendations for improvements that were presented to the provost board on the 27th February. The recommendations were accepted.

The review was completed by Lindsey and the Senior Consul, Professor Richard Thompson, and was sent by James Stirling, the Provost of the College, to all heads of department. He has since received further feedback, that he said in an all staff email sent on Tuesday that they will be taking on board when implementing the recommendations.

However, some academics have criticised the suggested improvements, stating that they simply add more bureaucracy, or are unlikely to make a difference.

In a letter posted on the Times Higher Education website, Dorothy Bishop, a professor of developmental neuropsychology at the University



Stefan Grimm was a professor of toxicology at Imperial, and was struggling to acquire funding Photo: Imperial

of Oxford, stated that targets in academia related to performance and achieving grant need to be abolished.

Bishop said in the letter: "I am distressed to find that Imperial just doesn't get it, and seems to think that it can avoid future tragedies by just "managing" people and "supporting" them in dealing with the crazy targets that they are confronted with."

David Colquhoun, a professor of pharmacology from University College London, criticised the new recommendations as being steeped in bureaucracy, and stated the suggestions would simply act as a "Smokescreen for carrying on as at present."

He also said when Grimm's email first surfaced, that "It just seems Imperial are doing their best to whitewash it. They rarely get to the heart of the matter."

Grimm was working on developing treatments for cancer, and he had already published four papers in that year based on his research.

The Reporter, Imperial's own in-house staff newsletter, published an obituary for Grimm, five months after his death.

Written by colleagues from his Apoptosis research group, they described Grimm as a "terrific mentor, deeply committed to all the projects running in his lab... he was a very gentle and caring person, a man of his word, working tirelessly for his students and postdoctoral scientists.

"Stefan will be greatly missed by his current and former lab partners,

colleagues and collaborators around the world."

Alice Gast: Professors are under pressure and they have a lot on their plates

Alice Gast, the President of Imperial, was asked about Grimm and the pressures on academics on Radio 4 just last month.

Tanya Beckett, presenter of the Today Programme said to Gast: "Professor Stefan Grimm took his own life at the end of last year... that is a demonstration that pressures in the academic world can become unbearable."

Gast did not address the death of the Professor directly, talking about the importance of collaboration in research, although she did state that: "Professors are under pressure and they have a lot on their plates, professors are like small business owners...it is a highly competitive world out there."

An Imperial spokesperson released a statement to *Felix* yesterday, saying that: "Imperial has a duty of care to all who work for it. We strive to create

an environment in which everyone understands what is expected of him or her, how they are supported in meeting expectations and able to perform to their best.

"Stefan's colleagues supported him and made great efforts to help him achieve the success he sought.

"In the months since Stefan's death Imperial has examined more broadly how it supports staff during performance reviews. In March all members of Imperial staff received the report and recommendations of a review into this subject, with all staff invited to respond.

"The College is currently working through these responses as part of its preparations for implementing the recommendations in the report."

PHILIPPA SKETT

Comment

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Comment Editor || Tessa Davey

It doesn't take much effort to vote

Thomas Lim asks why students don't care about the election

Conversations with friends around campus have reminded me that those of us keenly following the General Election are in the minority. Hardly surprising given that it's exam season, but it doesn't take much effort to go and vote next Thursday. What surprised me more was how people hadn't registered, believing their vote was either worthless or would not make a difference.

In case it isn't obvious enough, pledges and manifestos from parties are not about creating a balanced set of policies for the country, but instead reaching out to groups of voters who are likely to vote. Forty one percent of young people said they will definitely vote, but compare that with seventy five percent of over sixties who will definitely vote; you can see who the parties really want to engage with.

Pensioners have had a comparatively easy ride over the last few years thanks to various policies set by the Government. Can you blame politicians for behaving like this? Probably, but if we are not voting, we are not holding them to

"People hadn't registered, believing their vote was either worthless or would not make a difference"



These children have less apathy about this election than the average Imperial student. Photo: Scholastic

account and making our views clear.

Students in Nick Clegg's constituency have made their views perfectly clear, with a number of them planning to vote tactically so he loses his seat (the sore feeling over a broken promise of tuition fees does not wear off, it seems).

Whilst I do not agree with them, I admire the fact that they are using

their votes to make their views clear. Without this, we have no way of holding MPs to account, and no way to make it clear that we as young people are as equally important as other demographic groups.

The act of not voting merely enforces the idea that we are not engaged and do not matter. An undecided voter, however, gives the

"We exist and are a group which must be considered."

politician an opportunity to pander to them, and the issues which most concern them. If we do not vote, we give them the opportunity to overlook us.

A common complaint is that politics is stage managed and clean these days - it all just seems a bit boring.

We can thank Tony Blair for starting this unfortunate trend, but a lot of work has gone in to taking the spin out of elections, for example the excellent website voteformpolicies.org.uk allows you to compare your views on various topics with the main political parties.

The constituencies most Imperial students live in are not particularly marginal, meaning the chances of the party elected in that seat changing are low. This should not make a difference to whether you vote or not. When election strategists are planning their next campaigns, they will be interested in the demographics of the electorate, and who votes. By simply turning up to the ballot box, we remind them that we exist and are a group which must be considered.

Will our government be reborn this Spring?



CHRISTY KELLY
COMMENT WRITER

In some accounts of the 'Constantinian shift' towards Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century CE, part of the political efficacy of the move came through the assimilation to Christianity of a variegated iconography and diverse social practices associated with older paganisms. While as historical interpretation such accounts are a little too 'Dan Brown', the general idea does point nicely to a bizarre semantic association in the English language: that of rebirth and resurrection, largely a product

of the coexistence of the Christian Eastertide and residues of spring fertility rituals in rural areas. Both the main parties seem to have had a similar confusion about the meaning of these terms in the run up to the election.

First comes the return of Tony Blair to the political scene. It is rare I find myself in agreement with the Daily Mail, but surely the man can only be described as toxic? The one thing Miliband had going for him was his opposition to the Iraq War. Perhaps I overestimate the negative effect Blair will have; I have friends who have said that the Labour Party 'chose the wrong Miliband.' Since the estimable socialist intellectual Ralph Miliband is dead and will (alas!) probably remain so, one can only presume that these remarks refer to the elder brother David: defender of extraordinary rendition and other human rights abuses, no doubt taking the US on faith that 'advanced interrogation techniques' such as 'rectal rehydration' can't be all that bad, really. On the whole, though, Blair's resurrection seems to have been recognised as a bad move. There is just one nice irony about

the episode: his zombie-like return to the political scene, just two days after he no doubt commemorated the resurrection of Christ, throws into sharp relief his megalomaniac identification with the figure who has become the object of his messianic faith.

The Tories, on the other hand, have rediscovered growth economics but with a catch: we will have more spending and more austerity! The fact that the logic of growth economics requires state intervention during times of recession to promote growth and that state spending during times of growth is at best economically superfluous and at worst damaging seems to have largely escaped a party obsessed with the two contrary desires of staying in power and a punitive neoliberalism - which has historically failed in its promise to be the most efficient policy for growth, never mind the most just. Actually, this criticism assumes that the Tories are right in thinking that growth will continue. Yet the 'great economic recovery' we are witnessing is a less rebirth than stillbirth, epiphenomenon that it is of the crisis in Europe. The crisis has made



David Cameron celebrates the new life of Spring on Easter Sunday. Photo: Huffington Post

the City a magnet for continental surpluses, sanctuary as it is for the twin pillars of deregulation and rampant inequality, but the situation will not last. These pillars have their

foundations in the world turtle of myth and the Tories have built their policies in the belief that, as someone once told Bertrand Russell, "it's turtles all the way down".



The Felix
guide to the
General Election
2015

The General Election 2015

Everything you need to know to cast your vote



Imperial students most likely to vote Conservative, Felix poll finds

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

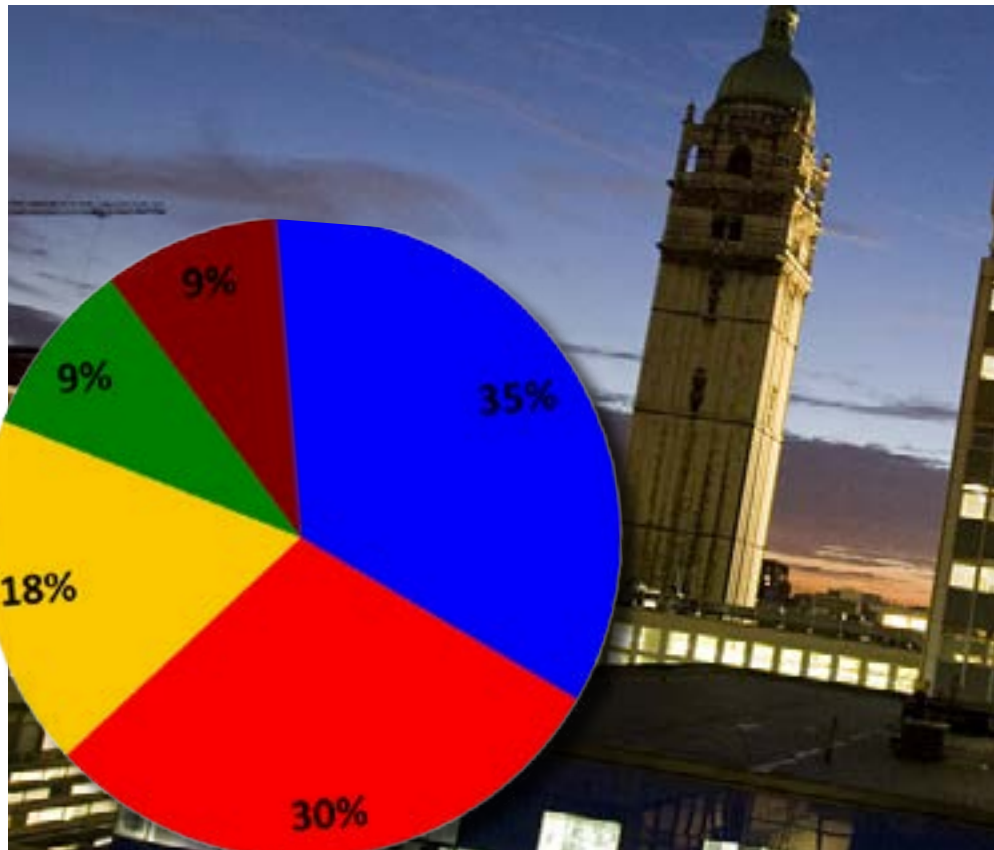
35% of students will be voting for the Conservative party this year, although a further 30% will be giving the Labour party their vote, our *Felix* opinion poll shows.

Only 18% of students are voting for the liberal democrats, a significant drop in numbers since the last general election poll that took place in 2010, when 56% said they would cast their vote for Nick Clegg and his crew. 9% of students said they would vote for the Green Party, whilst 5% said they would be giving Farage the seal of approval and voting for UKIP.

We asked a total of 189 students how likely they will be voting next Thursday in the General Elections; incredibly, 80% of students who responded said they were very likely to vote, with only 6% of respondents saying that they probably wouldn't bother.

When we asked students to list what topics mattered most to them, 34% of respondents said the Economy was their primary concern, and a further 17% said they were most interested in healthcare. 9% of respondents listed Education as the top topic that they were most interested in.

Not surprisingly, none of the respondents listed pensions, local government or rural affairs as topics they were most concerned about, although encouragingly 8% did list the environment as something they



were most interested in.

Compared with other universities, it seems Imperial has mirrored national student statistics. In a survey questioning more than 13,000 students nationwide, Labour and Conservative parties came up as equally popular, with 31% of the vote each. St Andrews students are most likely to vote for Conservative candidates, whilst the Green Party has amassed a strong support with Edinburgh University students.

Compared to national predictions

from *electionforecast.co.uk*, at the time of print, there are similar trends between the two datasets, although it should be noted that the number of individuals voting for a party does not reflect the percentage of seats MPs will obtain in Parliament.

Conservative are expected to win 279 out of the 650 seats available, with Labour coming up close with 270. Liberal Democrats are looking at securing 27 seats, with UKIP and the Green Party winning 2 and just one seat respectively.

“34% of respondents said the Economy was their primary concern”

Five years on: the drop in Lib Dem popularity

For the last General Election in 2010, *Felix* ran a similar poll and found that 56% of those who responded intended to vote Liberal Democrats, 24% were going to vote for a Conservative Party candidate and only 16% were planning on casting their vote for a Labour Party candidate.

Despite this, the overwhelming majority of students still predicted that there would be Conservative win or hung parliament, which was, as we now know, the outcome of the 2010 General Election.

With Nick Clegg promising back in 2010 to scrap tuition fees, this may be how his party garnered so much student support, although they also seemed to be pessimistic about if he would ever actually take power. Back then, the Liberal Democrat

manifesto also had a visibly larger portion dedicated around science policies, and had also pledged not to cut the science budget if they made it into power.

Interestingly, a YouGov poll at the time found that 49% of all voters would have actually voted for a Liberal Democrat, if they thought the party actually had a shot at winning and taking some of those safe seats from Labour or Conservative candidates.



Elections in the UK: A guide for dummies

What is a general election?

Every 5 years, residents of the UK are able to vote on candidates to represent them in the House of Commons. The UK is split into areas of roughly equal population size, called constituencies. Each constituency will have several MP candidates standing for election, with candidates often being affiliated with a main political party. Those that are not are called “Independent” candidates.

What are the main political parties in the UK?

Three parties usually dominate the House of Commons, which are the Conservative party, the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats. However, many other parties may secure a small number of seats, including the Green Party, or the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). Each party has various political views and stances, which their MP candidates will generally also be in favour of.

How many MPs are there?

There is one per constituency, and there are 650 constituencies across the whole of the UK.

In London due to the high population density, there are 73 different constituencies, but generally cities have far fewer. The whole of Wales only has 40 constituencies for example, whilst Scotland has 59.

There are around 50,000 to 70,000 people in each constituency.

Who can be an MP?

Anyone can stand as a Member of Parliament; they simply need to be a British or Irish Commonwealth citizen, and over 18. They cannot be a public official or officeholder.

Who decides who is Prime Minister?

You cannot vote on who is Prime Minister, as they are, by convention, appointed by the Monarch. The individual who is considered “to command the confidence of the House of Commons” and therefore the usually the leader of the majority political party or, if there is a coalition, the leader of the party that holds the most seats will be Prime Minister.

What voting system does the general election use?

The current system is called “First Past the Post” (FPTP). This means you can only cast one vote for an MP candidate, and the candidate that receives the most vote wins that seat and represents that constituency in the House of Commons.

How does a party form the government?

Each MP has a seat in the House of Commons, and the party that wins the most seats forms the government. This means that they can put their ideas and views into practise when running the country.

A party needs to command more than half the seats to win, and the party that wins the second largest seats becomes the “opposition” party. If a party doesn't command a majority of the seats, coalition governments may form. Parties come together until they represent the majority of seats.

The General Election 2015

Everything you need to know to cast your vote



The main parties and their promises

Philip Kent scrutinises the pledges each party has made ahead of the election

LABOUR



Economy

The front page of Labour's manifesto pledges to obtain a surplus on the current budget as soon as possible. This differs from the Conservatives' policy, as they pledge to eliminate the entire deficit, while Labour's pledge still allows them to borrow for infrastructure investment – capital projects. Labour also pledges not to increase personal taxes, but will reintroduce the 50p tax rate, and abolish the “non dom” status which allows some people to not pay UK tax on their earnings outside the UK. The minimum wage will be increased to more than £8 an hour by late 2019, and zero-hours contracts will be banned. A mansion tax will also be introduced.

Healthcare

Labour have not pledged the full £8 billion requested by Simon Stevens, head of NHS England, however they have pledged £2.5 billion to pay for more GPs, nurses, and midwives, as well as look to provide the money if they can make it available. They also pledge to put mental health on the same priority as physical health, repeal the Health and Social Care Act, cap profits made by private operators in the NHS, and guarantee GP appointments within 48 hours.

Education

Tuition fees will be cut to £6,000 for home and EU students, and provide more in-depth careers advice for school students to help them decide between university and apprenticeships.

Welfare

Labour will abolish the Bedroom Tax, also known as the Spare Room Subsidy, and impose rules where migrants cannot claim UK benefits until they have been resident for at least two years. Everyone over 25 out of work for at least two years will be guaranteed a job, which must be taken (those under 25 will wait only one year) rolled out.

CONSERVATIVE



Economy

The Conservatives pledge to simultaneously eliminate the UK's budget deficit while granting millions a tax cut, in raising the minimum salary upon which you pay income tax to £12,500. They also pledge to not rise VAT, national insurance, or income tax; and will introduce a law to bind themselves to doing it. They intend to pay for this through cutting down on tax evasion and avoidance, further austerity, and putting measures in place to promote growth in the North, Midlands, South West and East England, partially through devolution to elected mayors.

Healthcare

The Tories' headline pledge in healthcare is to provide 7 day access to GPs by 2020, but they have also pledged to fund in full the request of £8 billion by NHS England. Further therapists for those with mental health conditions will be introduced, and health and social care systems will be joined up using a £5.3 billion fund.

Education

Announced as part of a previous Budget, a postgraduate loan system will be introduced for taught masters and PhD courses. The Conservatives will also lift the cap on university places, create enterprise zones around universities to promote spinouts, and invest more money in online education.

Welfare

Much debate has been had in the press over where the Conservatives will cut £12 billion from the welfare budget. They intend to do this in part through freezing working age benefits, excluding disability benefits, for the first two years of the Parliament. In addition, the benefit cap will be reduced by £3,000 to £23,000 but disability living allowance and the personal independence payment will continue to be exempt.

LIB DEMS



Economy

The Lib Dems will continue to balance the country's current budget, like Labour allowing borrowing for investment. They will do this by April 2018. In addition, an extra tax charge will be levied on banks to raise money to clear the deficit (after which it will be removed). A mansion tax will be introduced on properties worth over £2 million, the amount of money you can earn before income tax raised to at least £12,500, and additional work to cut down on tax avoidance.

Healthcare

The Lib Dems will provide the £8 billion requested by NHS England, and will also provide money for the rest of the United Kingdom. £500 million will be provided for mental health care, with an aim to get waiting times down to 6 weeks for depression or anxiety, and 2 weeks for a first episode of psychosis. GP surgeries will be open in evenings and weekends, with phone and Skype appointments also made available. A “Patient Premium” will be introduced in disadvantaged areas.

Education

Higher education finance reforms will be reviewed and changed where needed, with a focus on living costs. The review will also cover postgraduate courses. The Lib Dems will also look into creation of a student contract, and will aim to widen participation through summer schools, mentoring, and transparency in selection criteria.

Welfare

Universal Credit will be introduced, and the minimum wage increased at a rate which does not slow down job creation. The Work Programme will be reformed – the Lib Dems claim it currently ignores people who have not found work but stop claiming jobseeker's allowance.

GREEN



Economy

The Green Party reject austerity, will renationalise the railways, and will borrow to invest. Zero hours contracts will be banned, and the minimum wage increased to £10 an hour by 2020. The working week will be set to a maximum of 35 hours. A 60p tax rate will be introduced at £150,000, and people worth £3m or more will be subject to a wealth tax of 2%. Finally, a financial transaction tax will be introduced.

Healthcare

The Greens have trumped the other parties and have pledged to increase the NHS budget by £12 billion. Social care will be, in some cases, free of charge, and resources will be provided to make mental health a much high priority. The Health and Social Care Act will be repealed, and the Private Finance Initiative method of building new NHS buildings (where the private sector builds the building and leases it back to the NHS).

Education

Tuition fees will be scrapped and debt cancelled for all undergraduate courses, with grants reintroduced. The Greens will also consider scrapping tuition fees for postgraduate courses. State funding will be reintroduced for all courses, and fossil fuel divestment will be encouraged across all universities.

Welfare

The Basic Income – a fixed income paid to every individual – will be consulted upon. In the mean time, the Green Party will end workfare (where people work for benefits) and the bedroom tax. In addition, half a million new social rented homes will be introduced by 2020. The carers allowance will be increased by 50%, and child benefit doubled.

UKIP



Economy

The amount of money you can claim before paying income tax will be increased to £13,000, and inheritance tax will be abolished. In addition, UKIP will introduce a 30p tax rate starting somewhere in between £43,500 and £55,000. UKIP have also pledged to change how VAT works upon withdrawal from the EU, including removal of VAT from sanitary products, and will introduce rules to ensure companies cannot avoid corporation tax in the UK. The Barnett Formula which allocates funding in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will be replaced, and the deficit eliminated.

Healthcare

UKIP will fund 8,000 more GPs, 20,000 more nurses and 3,000 more midwives. They will also increase mental health funding by £170 million, to improve provision of mental health services, and will trial a scheme of putting GPs in A&E so those with actual emergencies see an emergency doctor.

Education

Tuition fees will be waived for students studying STEM subjects and medicine who remain in their discipline in the UK for at least 5 years. The target aiming to get 50% of school leavers into university will be abolished, and EU students will not receive tuition fee loans.

Welfare

UKIP will remove the bedroom tax and will end the current Work Capability Assessments for disability benefits and move the tests to GPs and consultants. The carers allowance will be increased, and will train and fund advisors in food banks to help those who use them, and exempt food banks from many taxes. Migrants will be banned from accessing benefits for 5 years, and the benefits cap will be lowered.

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The £40k campaign condemning Lib Dems

Jonathan Masters on the NUS initiative to encourage students to vote against “pledge breakers”

If you paid attention to your news feed in the last week, the likelihood is that the story of the National Union of Students (NUS) spending £40,000 on a campaign against the Liberal Democrats has come across your radar.

The most iconic of the posters displays two clenched fists, with the words ‘liar liar’ tattooed across the knuckles with the first ‘l’ being pointed with the Liberal Democrat logo. The NUS describes the campaign as seeking to end the “cycle of broken promises.”

Their website describes how “In 2010 hundreds of thousands of students were abandoned by politicians who broke their promise on tuition fees... They traded lies for power.”

The main purpose of the campaign is to encourage students to vote against MPs who broke their pledges not to raise tuition fees, although the posters are specially targeting the Liberal Democrat party, something some students aren’t too happy about.

Critics are keen to point out that other MPs too broke similar pledges, but were not necessarily members of the same party. Other members of the NUS are questioning the necessity of such expenditure on what is being called “a political smear campaign.”

The campaign has received even more press due to the fact that national rail has refused to display

the billboards for any longer, emphasizing that it has no expressed desire to have a political opinion as a company.

One commentator online suggested: “The NUS need to stay politically neutral. Why should our union fees go towards pushing a political agenda we never said we support?”

“Furthermore why does the NUS act as if they speak on behalf of all students?”

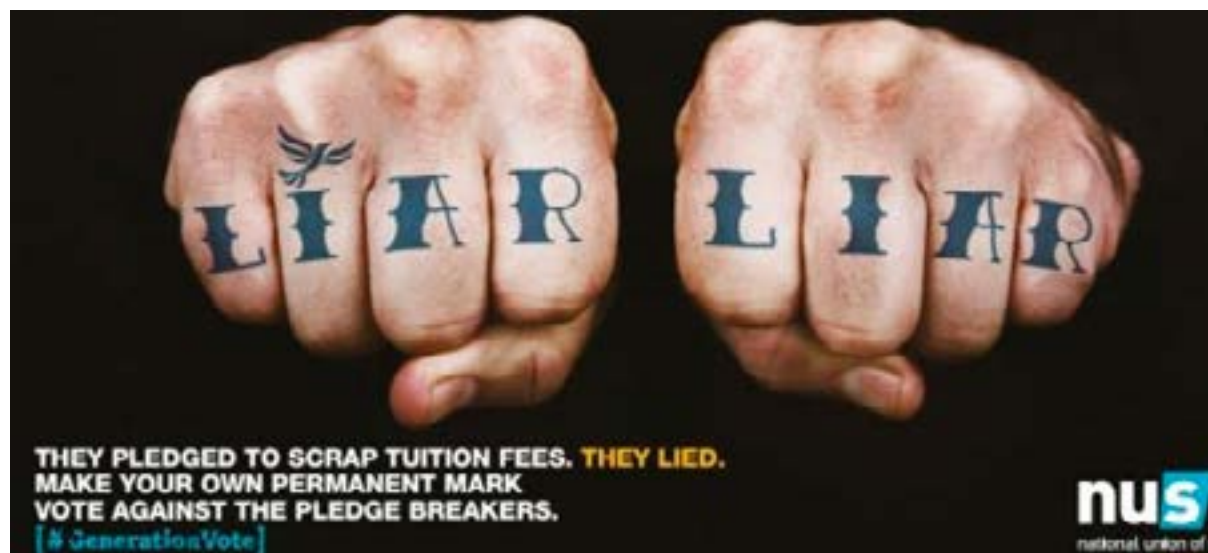
Joseph Miles, a PPE final year student at Wadham college recently saw his counter campaign, #trolltheNUS, go viral, after sharing a page on facebook named: “Troll the NUS executive; donate to the Liberal Democrats!”

He told the Oxford Student: I never expected the #trollNUS campaign to take off like this. When I heard of the #liarliar campaign, and having seen the NUS’s increasingly desperate attempts to plug it on social media, I started the Facebook event...as a joke and invited several people who I know are Lib Dems at Oxford.

“I do think the NUS has a problem with accountability, and its internal structures are almost impossible to understand.

“Clearly I am not the only person who thinks that the NUS has become dominated by small internal cliques who are nowhere near representative of the entire student body.”

An article on the Liberal Democrat



The #LiarLiar campaign coming to a billboard near you Photo: NUS

Voice website, targeted for Lib Dem supporters, pointed out that the campaign is not endorsing those MPs that did keep to their pledge. They also asked: “Where was their campaign against Labour MPs who introduced tuition fees and top-up fees when they said they wouldn’t?”

Some are more sympathetic to the cause; many commentators who sympathised with the campaign, citing the fact that the student population needs to be reminded of the broken promises, and even offering the point that this campaign will put more pressure on the Labour party to follow through with their

plan of reducing tuition fees.

When I contacted Brian Alcorn, President of the Lincoln Student Union and a heavily involved member of the NUS, he did offer the fact that the campaign was originally voted on at last year’s NUS Conference in the form of a mandate to hold those who raised the tuition fees accountable: “In the grand scheme of things, it’s not a lot of money, and we did vote on it last year,” he told *Felix*.

Despite the protests, however, three more billboards are planned to be put up at London Victoria, Sheffield Central, and Manchester Piccadilly

from midnight Wednesday until May 8.

The NUS leader Toni Pearce cited large amount of bitterness within the student population: “Students queued to vote for the Lib Dems in 2010 on the sole basis of this pledge. It wasn’t a minor misdemeanour. It was an outright lie. We have an obligation to hold them to account for this, and we will.”

Will the billboards even make a difference to student voting? Although it is too soon to tell, they are certainly generating debate around the topic, which can only be seen as good thing.

How is the Union lobbying MPs this year?

I’m Alex Savell, the current Deputy President (Finance and Service) sabbatical officer, and I have been overseeing the development of our policy on higher education funding, and ensuring local MP candidates consider the priorities of our students that reside in their constituencies.

Imperial College Union has been pushing forwards with its Fund Education Fairly campaign, in an attempt to lobby MP candidates to consider the needs of students in their constituencies.

As part of this, we’ve been contacting all the candidates in five constituencies where the most Imperial students live: Kensington, Cities of London and Westminster, Hammersmith, Chelsea and Fulham, and Battersea.

We’re lobbying MPs candidates to consider our three key demands: increase funding for living costs,

reverse fee hikes and protect International and Postgraduate students from extortionate fees.

Their responses are live on the Union website and we’ll be rating them as Red, Amber or Green for each issue as more responses come in. There have been some great levels engagements with us, but also a lot of candidates who are as yet to respond.

It can be difficult, when some of our constituencies are seen as safe seats to particularly get the larger parties to engage – they all have more to lose from a faux pas than to gain from engagement.

We’ll be pushing for more responses in the run up to election day... we’ll be naming and shaming those that haven’t replied us on Twitter and if we get a few of you guys to join in with the #FairFunding I’m still hopeful that we can get the majority of candidates to respond.

It’s also proved tough to categorise responses even as basically as Green (fully in agreement with us), Amber (partially in agreement with us) and Red (not in agreement with us). How do you rank some of the vague statements politicians make or promises that seem to not be backed up by concrete plans? I think the fact is, all we can do as a Union is present what they’ve responded with at face value and trust that all of you, as the best and brightest students in the country, can draw your own conclusions on how much to trust the promises made.

How did we decide on the stances in the first place?

When I was still a wide eyed council member last year it was pointed out that our Union stance on Higher Education Funding was due to lapse. With the election coming up in 2015

and feelings on the issue pretty raw from the tripling of fees in direct contravention of some campaign promises we wanted to make sure that we got a new policy in place.

For those that don’t know Council is the top policy making board in the Union (with the exception of the Trustees themselves) it’s made up of about 60 positions including representation from all the faculties and departments, the liberation officers, the sabbatical officers and a number of ordinary members.

Council last year decided to ask the wider student body what they thought, and ran our Higher Education Funding survey to find out what you think is a fair price to pay for a university education.

The survey went through three or four drafts; which went to council for further input and was then revised several times to make it balanced and improve the amount

of time that could be taken. We received about 300 responses to the survey, which were then presented to the Union General Meeting before Christmas. Although under quorate, those in attendance engaged in a healthy discussion and a new proposed stance taken to Council for students to finally agree on.

Eventually, we had our stance; we agreed that Imperial College Union officially supports significantly reduced tuition fees, alongside some other measures.

The stance has a really strong mandate and a balanced position with lobbying targets within college, within the government and, perhaps most notably, for the Election Campaign.

I’m really proud of the result; you can still see it at imperialcollegeunion.org/policies.

ALEX SAVELL

The General Election 2015

Everything you need to know to cast your vote



Imperial's local constituencies explained

JACK STEADMAN
NEWS WRITER

The majority of students at Imperial (especially those in halls) are concentrated in the four constituencies of Chelsea and Fulham, Kensington, Hammersmith, and Cities of London and Westminster. *Felix* takes a look at each of them below.

Hammersmith

Hammersmith is currently represented by the Labour Party's Andy Slaughter, the Shadow Justice Minister. Slaughter was previously MP for Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush from 2005-2010 and is running for a second term (his third overall) in the 2015 election.

The latest polling data suggests Labour will take 49% of the vote, with the Conservatives in second with 33%. With a Labour-led council in the Hammersmith and Fulham borough, Hammersmith is a fairly safe seat for Labour.

Slaughter's main campaigns revolve around the A&E closures in West London, the potential for a third runway at Heathrow, the housing crisis and the demolition of

Shepherd's Bush market.

The first campaign is particularly relevant for Imperial students, in more ways than one. The proposed demolition of Charing Cross will mean many students nearest hospital becomes (St Mary's in Paddington) or Chelsea and Westminster, with only the former having a full-blown A&E department.

Any changes to Charing Cross will likely also impact on medical students, many of whom study in the hospital throughout their clinical years.

Chelsea and Fulham

Chelsea and Fulham is currently represented by the Conservative Party's Greg Hands, the Deputy Chief Whip of the Coalition government. Hands was previously MP for Hammersmith and Fulham from 2005-2010 and is running for a second term (also his third overall) in the 2015 election.

Current polling data suggests Hands will be returned to the government with a 60% share of the vote, with the Labour candidate coming in second with 25% of the vote. Despite including wards from the Labour Hammersmith and Fulham borough, Chelsea and Fulham is a very safe seat

for the Conservatives.

Hands' policies echo those of the Conservative Party in general, as he has endorsed the party's manifesto. Most of the key pledges aren't particularly relevant for most students, as they focus on earlier stages of education, pensions, apprenticeships and changes to Inheritance Tax and the higher rate of Income Tax.

Other promises highlighted by Hands include increased spending on the NHS and lifting the cap on university places.

Cities of London and Westminster

Cities of London and Westminster has been represented since 2001 by the Conservative Party's Mark Field.

Current polling shows Field will likely be returned with 53% of the vote, continuing the constituency's trend of returning the Conservative candidate in every election since its inception in 1950. Labour are predicted to come second with 24% of the vote.

Field has run campaigns on multiple topics affecting constituents, including funding of hospitals, policing issues, housing problems, as well as those affecting the city at

large, not least transport.

Kensington

Kensington was represented until 2015 by Malcolm Rifkind of the Conservative Party, who is not seeking to retain his seat in the 2015 election.

The candidates standing in Kensington from the major parties are Dr Rodwan Abouharb (Labour), Victoria Borwick (Conservative), Robin McGhee (Liberal Democrats), Jack Bovill (UKIP) and Robina Rose (Green).

Current polls show Victoria Borwick being elected for the Conservatives with 51% of the vote, with Labour on 19% and the Liberal Democrats on 15%.

Felix spoke to each of the candidates for Kensington, asking them why we should vote for them and their party, and their responses are printed below.

Dr Rodwan Abouharb (Labour) told us "residents need an advocate not only locally, but also nationally in parliament making a strong case for government to understand and address the needs of all communities living in Kensington.

When you head off to the polling station on 7 May, your choice is simple. Will you vote for the self-

interest of the few, or for the good of the many of One Kensington?"

Victoria Borwick (Conservative) said "I was born in this constituency and spent my life here. Over the past seven years on the Greater London Authority and two years working as Boris's deputy, I have worked hard to promote innovation and enterprise in this great city. I'm passionate about London and its residents.

If you vote for me, I and a Conservative government would fight to keep the economy on track, continue to create jobs and secure a bright future for young people living in Kensington today."

Robin McGhee (Liberal Democrats) said "the Liberal Democrats want to do something about the housing crisis. Housing is the most important issue facing young people in London today. We need urgent action now to ensure our generation doesn't get left behind."

Jack Bovill (UKIP) told us that "the only reason to vote for me, the UKIP Candidate in Kensington, is that I care for open access to learning of everyone in this land, particularly where the learning is structured and led by teachers of renown." before quoting George Orwell.

Robina Rose, Green did not submit a response before *Felix* went to print.

Students are taking to the campaign trail too



As a member of the Liberal Youth, I was invited to go canvassing in various target seats in the country. It's a great scheme where they give you some money towards travel, free accommodation and food and there's a social to cap things off at the weekend.

I went to the marginal seat of Oxford West and Abingdon where Imperial alumna Layla Moran was standing. It was a great experience to find out the inner workings of political campaigning behind the scenes.

I was briefed on the local issues and the work Layla has been doing over the past few years. Then we were paired up and started knocking on doors. What I found is that in an ultra marginal seat people are more likely to want to engage in doorstep conversations although some were quite shy about expressing the party they are going to vote for.

This constituency had a right wing Tory MP in the last parliament who voted against bills such as gay marriage so the Liberal voice wasn't such a hard sell. Lib Dems have

traditionally banked on strong local connections and it showed here as some people commented that they have heard more about Layla and her work in the constituency than their MP. It was quite refreshing to see people actively willing to engage in politics and give their views on NHS, education and housing.

The weekend also gave me a chance to chat to Layla about her journey from Imperial to politics. She highlighted the need for objective decision making in politics compared to the ideological policies that are often pursued by the political parties.

She spoke in a friendly manner and was very willing to discuss party politics with me during lunch. As a current school teacher she had a very good insight into the education policies needed in this country and was committed to making a positive impact. Education inequality is an issue close to my heart and it was great to learn about the steps the party is taking to address the issue.

I have always felt a certain degree of political apathy at

Imperial, perhaps it's the nature of our courses and the ideological showmanship from the political parties that puts us off from actively engaging in politics.

Nevertheless, it's important that we exercise our right to vote and make our voices heard in elections. Engaging actively with political parties is the best way to influence policymaking and truly make a difference in people's lives.

The Lib Dems policies are voted on at conference and any member can put forward a policy motion to be debated. This gives an excellent opportunity for grassroots campaigners to have a say at the national level. And the truth is it works. The Lib Dem policy delivered in this parliament of income tax cut was originally proposed at conference by an ordinary member.

So it's important that we actively engage and campaign to get a better understanding of the issues facing our society and do something about solving it.

PLABON SAHA

The General Election 2015

Everything you need to know to cast your vote



The MPs hoping for your valuable vote

ALEXANDRA SANDERSON



Sanderson works for a charity that helps people with money management, and is a school governor. She wants to keep Charing Cross and other A&Es open, and was part of the team that saved Sullivan School in the area from closure.



Chelsea and Fulham

ANDY SLAUGHTER



Slaughter is the current MP. He wants to save Charing Cross hospital, fight the third heathrow runway and save Shepherd's Bush Market from demolition. He also wants to fix the Hammersmith



Hammersmith

ROB ABOUHARB



Abouh Barb is a politics lecturer at UCL, and wants to end the tuition fee system. He is against backdoor privatisation of the NHS, and wants to build more social housing in the area. He wants to save Earl's Court from demolition.



Kensington

NICK SLINGSBY



Slingsby is currently a lawyer. He wants to save the timber yard in Pimlico road, the Soho Square surgery, restore the Paddington Street public toilets and tackling anti-social behaviour in the area.



Cities of London and Westminster

SIMON BAILEY



Simon is a management consultant after graduating from Durham, where he read Physics. He wants to ensure investment in education and the national infrastructure, by asking the richest to contribute more to do so.



Chelsea and Fulham

MILLICENT SCOTT



Scott has spent many years campaigning to engage a more representative and more diverse range of politics, and she believes we should have a parliament that's more representative of the people.



Hammersmith

ROBIN MCGHEE



Graduating in 2012 from Oxford University, he has worked in journalism and research. He wants to reduce high rents by outlawing "buy-to-leave" and wants to protect local businesses. He also is a keen environmentalist.



Kensington

BELINDA BROOKS-GORDON



Brooks-Gordon is currently the Assistant Dean of Strategy for the University of London. She is a member of the party's federal policy committee, and part of the policy reference team should there be a hung parliament.



Cities of London and Westminster

GREG HANDS



Hands is the current MP for the constituency, and was MP for Hammersmith and Fulham since 2005. He was the founder of the Save Fulham Pools campaign and is Vice President of the Chelsea and the Fulham Society.



Chelsea and Fulham

CHARLIE DEWHIRST



Dewhurst works for Sport UK, and plans to fight against the third Heathrow runway, abolish night flights and replace the Hammersmith flyover with a tunnel from Hogarth Roundabout to Earl's Court.



Hammersmith

VICTORIA BORWICK



Current Deputy Mayor of London, Borwick wanted to oppose the mansion tax and supports the renogation of EU membership. She wants to hold surgeries regularly and end health inequalities, and maintain the sense of family in the area.



Kensington

MARK FIELD



Current MP. Member of the Intelligence and Security Committee and the Privy Council of the UK. Highly critical of the second home allowances, and protestors camping outside of St Paul's.



Cities of London and Westminster

ADRIAN NOBLE



A financial assistant for the Royal Hospital for Neuro Disability, he initially was an active member of the conservative party. He is an advocate of an EU membership referendum and thinks UKIP stands for "common sense" values.



Chelsea and Fulham

RICHARD WOOD



Wood has built many successful businesses in construction, trading and importing. Most recently he signed contracts to cut and export timber from Russia to the UK. He is also a Freeman of the City of London.



Hammersmith

JACK BOVILL



Bovill retired in 2000 and since then has been Chair of Governors for the local schools in the area. Bovill believes UKIP stands apart "from the problems that seem to have become endemic in the Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee parties."



Kensington

ROBERT STEPHENSON



Stephenson is an IT professional after graduating from LSE. He has been a political activist and campaigner for more than a decade. He is the Chairman of the party's Westminster and City branch.



Cities of London and Westminster

GUY RUBIN



Rubin has served as a Labour councillor for eight years before joining the party. He wants to save Earls Court from demolition, tighten controls on road pollution and supports a £10 minimum wage.



Chelsea and Fulham

DAVID AKAN



Akan works in construction and his interests lie in sustainability and the environment. He wants to make housing affordable, build safe cycling lanes and reverse the privatisation of the NHS.



Hammersmith

ROBINA ROSE



Rose is an independent filmmaker who has taught at the Berlin Film School. She wants to address the environmental impact of basement extensions and keep properties for local instead of international development.



Kensington

HUGH SMALL



Small wants to improve the pedestrian facilities in the area, and to reduce the speed limit to 20mph. He also wants to reduce pollution and traffic congestion, and make rented houses more affordable.



Cities of London and Westminster

The General Election 2015

Everything you need to know to cast your vote



Just how do you decide who to vote for?

Joshua Renken ponders the perils and pitfalls of picking a politician



Cameron looks forward and attempts to ignore Miliband's hungry eyes and Clegg's cheeky grin. Photo: Creative Commons

The novelist and essayist George Orwell once said that political language is “designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.” He wrote that over half a century ago, but it is just as relevant today as it was then. Perhaps even more so.

There is undoubtedly a problem with how political language is perceived by the public. Many people feel that politicians are not direct or honest with the electorate, and are constantly dodging questions and twisting the narrative in an effort to appeal to everyone. There is an aroma of mild deception to the whole game, but you can see why politicians do it. They can't get a whole lot done if their party comes in second.

Politics is all about the future. This means politicians get into power by making promises, which are often about quite abstract, intangible ideas.

So straight talking is hard to find, because politicians are not in the business of candid communication and transparency. They are in the business of breaking their messages down into sound bites and slogans that will resonate with as much of the electorate as possible. This

is not necessarily a terrible thing. Great speeches need to weave policy with high ideals, but the problem is that political discussion is totally smothered by precisely framed platitudes and clichés, with little substance to them. It's a tricky balance and not really the fault of any single group of people, just a reaction to incentives.

I'm sure many politicians would prefer it if they were able to speak freely and debate their opponents openly, but by outlining your policies clearly you are reducing the number of people who readily agree with you. Instead, by running a generic campaign you are able to appeal to as many people as possible, because there is little to disagree with them about. But this isn't good for the country.

Even the party manifestos are packed full of generic promises about a “brighter future” or a “better plan,” and very few people have the time, or the patience, to meticulously analyse each party's intentions.

So, how does one go about deciding whom to vote for?

Well, voting for policies over personalities is crucial. Having a competent leader is of course very

important, but ultimately it's the policies that directly affect our lives and make a lasting impact.

After that, it's a question of assessing the pros and cons of each policy platform, taking into consideration the policy areas that matter most to you, each party's record of delivery and whether the policies seem realistic. It can be the case that a policy that sounds great is, on closer inspection, detrimental in the long term.

It could be that you have a very strong view about a particular issue, which would take priority over all the other policies. For instance, you might feel very strongly that Scotland should not break up from the rest of the United Kingdom. This might lead you to vote tactically for the Conservatives or Liberal Democrats in order to minimise the impact of the SNP over the life of the next parliament.

There are some crucial dividing lines between the parties. Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have agreed to further austerity cuts over the next parliament, which Ukip largely support. The Green Party, Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National

Party are all anti-austerity and have promised to modestly increase government spending.

When voting, it is important to be aware of the political landscape within your constituency, to see whether your vote will make a significant difference to who wins. For many voters there is a valid argument to vote tactically, particularly if you know you live in a marginal constituency that could ‘swing’ to another party.

You might consider voting down the front running candidate you dislike - a compromise that would help to get a more agreeable candidate elected. To look at your constituency's profile go to <http://democraticdashboard.com>.

Online questionnaires and political party comparison sites such as www.whoshouldyouvote.com and www.voteforpolicies.org.uk will give you a good idea of whom you align with. It is also possible to go online and look at how your local MP has voted.

Many people think, quite sensibly, that election campaigns are about competing answers to the same question.

They're not. They're a fight over the question itself.

Labour wants people thinking about inequality and the NHS. The Conservatives want people thinking about the economy and strong leadership. Lib Dems want people thinking about fairness and a compassionate approach to fiscal recovery, while Ukip want the conversation to be about immigration and the EU. You get the idea.

Even if you don't get the candidate you voted for, you will have helped reduce the size of the majority for the winning candidate, making him or her less complacent about their victory so that they work harder for their constituents ready for the next election. By voting you also represent your age group, and the larger the number of a group of people going out to vote, the harder it is for politicians to ignore that group's interests over other groups. Old people love to vote, young people don't. So tuition fees increase and pensions are protected. These policy priorities can shift if enough young people vote.

Deciding whom to vote for is admittedly a difficult decision to make. But it is important to exercise your freedom to have a say in how the country is run.

The General Election 2015

Everything you need to know to cast your vote



The big Debate between the biggest names in politics

Joshua Renken recaps the televised election debate, and gives the lowdown on how each candidate held their own

The first and only televised election debate for this year's general election took place earlier this month, featuring seven party leaders from across the United Kingdom. The two-hour debate was structured around four key questions on the following topics: tackling the deficit, the future of the NHS, immigration policy and future prospects for young people.

The marathon debate, moderated by Julie Etchingham and hosted by ITV, represented months of foreplay between political operators and broadcasters culminating in a single pre-election debate featuring seven party leaders from across the political spectrum.

The meeting was enlivened by the new female dynamic and stirred by the presence of three parties that only stand in certain areas of the UK: the SNP in Scotland, Plaid Cymru in Wales and The Green Party in England and Wales. So how well did each candidate perform?

David Cameron - Conservatives

Cameron took the opportunity to reemphasise that five years ago the country was "on the brink" and that the "long term economic plan was working." He spoke of two million more jobs and the coalition tax cuts. Cameron defended attacks on his immigration record by stressing that the UK currently has the fastest growing economy in any major western country, naturally resulting in people wanting to come here. He predictably focused his attacks on Labour, and expressed concern that voting for Miliband would "put us back to square one." The PM declared that the problem with Miliband is that he "still doesn't think Labour borrowed and spent too much," and told the audience about a letter left by Labour at the Treasury in 2010 which read "I'm sorry, we've ran out

of money."

The Conservative leader came out strong for the NHS, calling it the UK's "most important national institution" that provided "unbelievable care" for his severely disabled son. Cameron claimed that there are now 9000 more doctors and 20000 fewer bureaucrats, and promised to implement seven-day operation for A&E and GP surgeries.

In response to attacks from Ed Miliband on the number of zero hour contracts, Cameron told the audience about claims that 70 Labour MPs currently employ people on zero hour contracts.

On immigration, Cameron laid out plans for new policies that would stop immigrants from claiming benefits until they have lived and paid into the country for four years and prevent migrant workers from sending money to dependents who live overseas. The PM promised an in-out referendum on Europe in 2017 after renegotiations to "get a better deal for Britain."

Ed Miliband - Labour

Ed Miliband focused his attacks on Cameron's record, claiming that "over the last five years wages haven't kept up with bills."

He promised to raise the minimum wage to £8 an hour and "rescue the NHS by hiring more doctors and nurses." Labour's cut in tuition fees from six to nine thousand was not criticised by the other leaders, while Miliband promised to cut the deficit every year while reversing the tax cut for millionaires and making "common sense spending reductions, where outside the NHS and education system spending will fall."

The Labour leader set out a NHS "time to care fund" coming from a new mansion tax on properties worth over £2 million, a banker's bonus tax and unexplained money coming from tobacco companies. The Labour

leader attacked Cameron on the NHS, claiming that "over one million people waited in A&E for more than four hours."

Miliband plans to prevent immigrations from receiving benefits for the first two years that they come here, and will attempt to "stop the undercutting of wages and working conditions." On the EU, Miliband argued that "David Cameron has marginalised us in Europe" and asserted that he will not be holding a referendum like the Tories.

In his closing speech, Miliband reminded the audience that he will "stand up to energy companies" and implement a price freeze.

Nick Clegg - Liberal Democrats

The abiding message from Nick Clegg was that the Liberal Democrats act as a moderating force in British politics, who will stop the country from "lurching to the left or right." The deputy prime minister acknowledged that "no one is going to win outright in this election," but that "the country is in a much better shape than it was five years ago."

Mr Clegg declared that the Liberal Democrats have "the grit and resilience to finish the job and balance the books fairly" and did a good job of positioning himself as the reasonable compromise between the two biggest parties. The Lib Dem leader went on to say that the next five years require more austerity but emphasised that "It's a balance. We will cut less than Tory, and borrow less than Labour."

In an effort to distance himself from his Coalition partner, Nick Clegg attacked Mr Cameron on the harsh cuts made in the coalition, claiming that the prime minister had executed "ideologically driven cuts on schools" and that the "Tories cut more because they want to," as opposed to the Lib Dem who

reluctantly feel that it is in the best interests of the country's current finances.

"The NHS doesn't need warm words it needs hard cash." Mr Clegg also stated that "mental health has for far too long been the poor cousin of physical health."

The deputy prime minister said he "will never spread fear about immigration" and "welcome people who play by the rules," before going on to say that "without immigrants the NHS would collapse overnight." The three female leaders shared these positive sentiments towards immigrants.

In one exchange between the three biggest Westminster parties, Mr Clegg asked Ed Miliband for an apology about the state of the economy that the coalition inherited. This prompted a rare applause from the audience. Miliband deflected the criticism by attacking Cameron for his statements while in opposition that the banks were overregulated before the 2008 crisis, "so I won't take any lectures from you."

Mr Clegg defended his party's success in the coalition with the pupil premium, income tax cuts for millions of low earners and new apprenticeships, before talking about the Liberal Democrat 'rent-to-own' scheme for people trying to get onto the property ladder.

The deputy prime minister intends to raise more money by closing reliefs in capital gains tax. He closed his speech by highlighting the Liberal Democrat mission statement: "A stronger economy and a fairer society, with opportunity for all."

Nicola Sturgeon - SNP

Nicola Sturgeon said she was committed to changing the Westminster system while "standing up for Scotland's best interests." She made it clear that she wants Scottish independence and offered



Consectetur adipiscing elit. Photo: Creative Commons

an alternative to austerity, where the UK "puts investment in children, not nuclear weapons." The SNP leader claimed that "economic policies shouldn't be an end in itself," and would like to see "modest spending increases" that stop "pushing people into poverty." While admitting that this approach would "take longer to pay off the debt," Nicola Sturgeon justified that it would "give money for infrastructure and public services." She criticised the coalition's "blind commitment to austerity," insisted that "you can't cut your way out of the deficit" and won over the audience after observing "it seems that there is nothing Nigel Farage won't blame on foreigners." After calling the NHS "too precious for private profit," Nicola Sturgeon reemphasised lifting people out of poverty and scrapping Trident, while creating an "education system based on the ability to learn not the ability to pay."

Nigel Farage - UKIP

Nigel Farage quickly tried to distance himself from the other leaders, explaining that "all the other six

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Prime Ministers

here support the EU and open door immigration.”

The Ukip leader advocated for an Australian style points immigration system, to give “ordinary working people an even break” and affirmed his intentions to withdraw from the European Union. Mr Farage also pledged to cut the foreign aid budget, stop the HS2 “vanity project” and revisit the Barnett formula because “Scotland should receive less than it currently does.”

Farage said that the NHS “should run as a public service, free at the point of access” and promised to reverse the growth of middle management and scrap hospital parking charges.

Mr Farage raised the topic of health tourism, saying that foreign workers should have health insurance before they arrive here.

Shortly after this Mr Farage brought up the 7000 HIV cases in the UK, and claimed that “almost half” of the patients were from overseas. When he Leanne wood gets the first round of applause for condemning his words.

Farage repeatedly claimed that

“we can’t do anything” to control immigration and said that he doesn’t blame a single migrant for coming here.

He highlighted issues such as wage compression and the housing crisis, but steered clear of the economy and focused on immigration and our EU membership as priorities for the UK. Mr Farage attacked the six pro-European leaders, calling them “detached”, “all the same” and declaring they have “never had a job in their lives.”

Leanne Wood – Plaid Cymru

Plaid Cymru leader Leanne Wood stressed that “jobs and services have been cut to the bone” and declared that “the austerity experiment has failed.”

Speaking directly to the Welsh voters, she promised to offer an alternative to “balancing the books on the backs of the poor.”

Leanne Wood relentlessly criticised austerity, saying that “debt has gone up despite promises” to produce “so much pain for so little gain.” At one point the Plaid Cymru leader told

the audience that “the banks had a bailout, now it is time for the people to have a bail out.”

In the next parliament Plaid Cymru will demand that Wales receive (per capita) fiscal parity with Scotland.

Leanna Wood criticised Labour for the “creeping privatisation” and the introduction of PFIs (private finance initiatives). She contended that the “private sector has no role in healthcare.”

In response to Farage’s comments on immigration, the Plaid Cymru leader asserted that the United Kingdom would not go along with the “scaremongering” and “divisive rhetoric.”

In closing, Leanne Wood underlined that “austerity is not inevitable. We do have a choice” and told the audience that “for Wales to be strong, like Scotland, Plaid Cymru must be strong. Only they can win for Wales”

Natalie Bennett – the Green Party

Natalie Bennett argued that in the NHS “no public money should go into

private profits” and pledged that the Green party would “stop slashing at essential public services” by raising taxes and ensuring that multinational companies and rich individuals “pay their fair share.” She criticised the government’s efforts for the poor and told the audience “one in five workers is on less than a living wage.”

The Green Party leader promised to “increase the amount we spend on foreign aid” because “we need a more secure, stable world.” Bennett announced that other parties are “offering two choices: austerity heavy and austerity light.”

According to the Green party leader, the NHS is “moving to the American system,” which is why the Greens would “take the market mechanism out of the national health service.”

Bennett spoke about the “damaging” debate on immigration caused by Nigel Farage, and agreed with other party leaders about the numerous benefits of immigration. She went on to mention “the NHS couldn’t operate without immigrants.”

Natalie Bennett was the only

leader to mention the environment, claiming that “we are using the resources of three planets when we’ve only got one.”

Ms Bennett spent her remaining time praising the “huge impact” that the Green Party’s only MP, Caroline Lucas, had made in parliament and urged the public to vote for the Greens to “deliver a new kind of politics. A peaceful political revolution.”

But just how well was this all received?

Snap polls suggested that Nicola Sturgeon and David Cameron had come out on top, but for very different reasons. Many liked the aggressive and impassioned rhetoric coming from Sturgeon, who attacked Miliband for not being left enough. David Cameron remains the most ‘prime ministerial’ in the public’s eyes, after he gave a calm and convincing argument for voting Conservative.

Ed Miliband also came out strong from the debate. He has the most to gain from participating in a head to head debate with David Cameron, due to the expectation game. The Conservatives and the press have hugely exaggerated Miliband’s poor image and the debates give him an opportunity to confront Cameron and look the part.

However, in the seven-way debate he had little time to clash with Cameron, and had to spend just as much time being criticized by Sturgeon, Bennett and Wood for Labour’s support for further austerity.

Nick Clegg, arguably one of the best speakers on the panel, came out with some appealing lines on why to vote Lib Dem, and successfully positioned himself away from his coalition partner. Painting a picture as the party that would “add a heart to a Conservative government and a brain to a Labour one” might chime with the electorate, but Clegg’s image is tainted with large chinks of the public after the tuition fee debacle.

Nigel Farage gave a pretty poor performance and caused controversy his comments on immigrants suffering from HIV. Natalie Bennett and Leanne Wood both had their moments that won over the audience, mainly on the subjects of inequality and the “failed austerity experiment,” and the three women leaders were very much in agreement on the issues.

However, as the best debater of the three, Nicola Sturgeon stole Bennett’s and Wood’s thunder.

There were no major gaffes or game changing moments during the debate, and the two-hour discussion probably didn’t change many people’s perceptions of the party leaders, except now there might be a large number left-wing English voters who wish they could vote for Nicola Sturgeon.

‘Kings’ of the Jungle De-Throned!

Lauren Ratcliffe on the impact of logging in Borneo’s rainforests



Demand for palm oil has driven the destruction of the rainforest in Borneo. Photo: Orangutan Foundation International

New research in Borneo by researchers from Imperial College London suggests that clear cutting rainforests changes which types of species perform vital ecosystem functions. In logged forests, vertebrates instead of invertebrates appear to be contributing a greater amount to key processes such as seed dispersal and predation. This switch in functional dominance renders these systems more vulnerable to future change.

Whether you be trekking through a tropical forest or taking your dog out for a walk, snorkelling with tortoises or dipping your toes in Cornish waters, in any terrestrial, marine or aquatic environment, vertebrates may catch your eye but most of the time you are the visitor of a primarily invertebrate world. Edward O. Wilson has called them “the little things that run the world,” and invertebrates truly are the movers and shakers of tropical ecosystems, vastly outweighing their more charismatic vertebrate companions in abundance and diversity. One could even call them the true kings of the jungle.

These little critters are the foundations of life across many ecosystems but their importance is most prominent in tropical rainforests. If left untouched by mankind’s chainsaw and caterpillar tractor, beetles and termites, ants and earthworms can go about their business with relative ease and help

“Most of the time you are visitor to a primarily invertebrate world.”

decompose decaying matter like fallen leaves. Through digestion and egestion, the release of essential nutrients such as nitrates and phosphorous helps fuel the growth of the surrounding fauna. Seeds off trees are carried, munched and dispersed across the forest floor by these little creatures, which helps maintain the vast diversity of tree species. And carnivorous ants and spiders can scuttle about, preying on these insatiable herbivorous invertebrates, thus keeping them in check so they don’t much through all the foliage, dead or alive.

Unfortunately, as a consequence of globalisation and the growing demand from an expanding human population, intense legal and illegal logging currently threatens half of the world’s rainforests. The caterpillar tractors are fired up and chainsaws roar. In particular, the clearing of land for palm oil and timber plantations has rendered Borneo’s rainforest almost unrecognisable, with an area almost the size of Belgium having been cut down between 1985 and 2001 to supply the global timber gluttony. As a consequence of this, these little “movers and shakers” of forest ecosystems have been severely hit, with many species being lost altogether.

So with these integral cogs gone, what happens to the overall functioning of tropical rainforests?

“Logging currently threatens half of the world’s rainforest.”

Well, surprisingly very little. In fact, new research from Imperial College London’s Department of Life Sciences has indicated that tropical rainforests are actually very resilient to change. What does change, however, are the type of creatures that perform these vital functions. By excluding either invertebrates or vertebrates from patches of both logged and unlogged rainforest in Borneo, the researchers were able to determine their contribution to three ecosystem functions: leaf litter decomposition, leaf-eating invertebrate predation and seed disturbance. The team found that in logged forests, vertebrates played a more dominant functional role and increased in abundance compared to primary (untouched) forest patches.

“Invertebrates are often thought of as the controllers of tropical forests, so it’s surprising that mankind can upset their dominance to this level,” said Dr Robert Ewers, lead author of the study. For example, in pristine primary forests predation on herbivorous invertebrates is almost entirely performed by other invertebrates. However, in logged forests their contribution to this function is cut by 40% and animals such as mice and tree shrews pick up the slack.

Similar trends were seen for seed disturbance rates. However, leaf litter decomposition rates were unaffected by lack of invertebrates

and it was not a function taken up by the vertebrates. Instead the team hypothesise that in the altered microclimate in logged forests leading to reduced humidity and increased air temperature as well as altered activities of soil bacteria could have helped decomposition to continue.

Although the ecosystem can continue to function with vertebrates usurping the throne from invertebrates, the rainforests are left more vulnerable to disturbance than before. “The forest will keep maintaining itself, but it will be much more susceptible to further change. Relying on vertebrates is a bad tactic,” Dr Ewers elucidates. “Knocking out one or two invertebrates might not be too bad, as there are many others to take their place, but knocking out one or two vertebrates could now be disastrous.”

Intrinsic susceptibility of vertebrates to a range of human pressures has seen their threat status steadily rise over the last two decades. Increased reliance on them is therefore likely to render these systems more vulnerable to future disturbances. Invertebrates still remain an important actor in logged forests, but as the area of pristine forest shrinks to less than a third of the world’s forest area, their role seems to have switched from true kings of the jungle to jesters of the crown court.



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Features

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Features Editor || VACANT

Do you want a firetruck with your beer?

Jonathan Masters investigates the latest entrepreneurial endeavour by the Imperial graduate who prefers to pour his own pint

Craft beer has seen an exponential increase in popularity in the last four years, and with that increased demand have come entrepreneurs seeking to profit.

However, some of those capitalising on the trend were more likely to be found in the lab than down the bar only a few years ago. Imperial chemistry graduate, Douglas Hunt, is one such scientist turned entrepreneur, although his idea comes with a novel twist: Doug has retrofitted a fire engine into a beer-dispensing-festival-serving device under his company Pour Your Pint.

Doug studied chemistry at Imperial, before spending a year as a sabbatical officer for Imperial College Union. When he left Imperial, he went on to work in the field of accountancy, where he met his other two business partners, Laurence Culloty and Laurence Tarr.

I caught up with Laurence Culloty last Saturday in in Tottenham Hale to discuss craft beer, their plans for the future, and the political influence of Al Murray.

After the longest tube journey I've ever taken, I emerged from the tube station, immediately seeing a crowd of bearded twenty-somethings. Already I had an inkling that they were probably going to a craft beer brewery, and sure enough, after following the bearded crowd I eventually found the industrial estate, they were there, right next to a beer dispensing fire engine.

The fire engine in question has six self-service points supplied by one of Pour Your Pints' partners, Robot Pub Group, with each one of them being able to be filled with any beverage of the event organiser's choice. Their website boasts: "We realise that people enjoy drinks bars most when

they are part of the action. That's why we created the worlds first fire truck mobile outdoor bar which features self serve technology."

Laurence remarked that the idea originally came about when he and his other future business partners were in a long queue at a festival waiting for a beer, and getting increasingly frustrated over missing the acts. They thought that there had to be a quicker way to get a beer, and, after copious research, they discovered that the self-service technology existed, and so decided to find a way to bring it to the portable market.

The fire engine as a method of transportation was originally Laurence's father's idea, stemming from a friend that converted a fire engine into a radio station over thirty years ago. The three accountants researched began to look for something that could transport itself easily. They initially had a look at slipstream caravans and the Routemaster buses, but in the end they felt that the fire engine wasn't really something that had been done before. After a tense but successful venture onto eBay, the fire engine was purchased.

Luckily there weren't too many obstacles in financing their business, since it was from their collective personal savings. Laurence did admit to me that their cash flow was not ideal at this moment in time, but their collective optimism for their business has made the investment worth it in their minds.

In the next five years Laurence hoped to expand the business to a wider market, making themselves the prime company when it comes to self-service technology to the festivals and events market.

Somewhat bizarrely, the fire engine has attracted considerable attention from Al Murray, the comedian whose act centres around the musings of a typical pub landlord. Al Murray recently travelled in the fire engine as a way to announce his satirical campaign in the upcoming election in the Thanet constituency, running against Nigel Farage, leader of the UKIP.

Laurence told how it originated from the Robot Pub group who had a contact in the Avalon group (Al Murray's agent), and they were talking about the Pour Your Pint venture late one night, and he was talking about his political venture. He contacted Pour Your Pint and next thing you know, he was riding in the engine through the streets of Thanet.

When I asked Laurence if he had any thoughts on the nature of his satire and the state of British politics, Laurence was initially quite cautious, declaring that he wasn't going to broadcast his political views, obviously quite wary of his new company's reputation.

He did admit that there were certain elements of Murray's performance that had an element of truth to them: one quip Murray said was that although many politicians break their promises, he was going to promise to not keep any of his promises. "I think there's definitely an element of truth to that", Laurence replied, before we went and got another pint.

Craft beer has increased in popularity over the past few years, even being added to the basket of goods for calculating inflation; however I was curious as to whether or not this is just a transient fad. During the course of the day, Beavertown brewery opened its doors

"I was curious as to whether or not this is just a transient fad."

"Craft Beer has increased in popularity over the past few years."



Main photo: the engine in action. Bottom right: around the Thanet constituency. Bottom left: owners of the truck Photo: Jonathan Masters

to those that had come to the event, revealing a giant warehouse with several large distilleries.

Opened in 2011, Beavertown has gone from strength to strength, before moving to Tottenham Hale in May 2014. I managed to talk to one of the brewers about the merits of craft beer: "Once you get distilleries of this size, it gets really difficult to make a shit beer and I think to make a good craft beer there has to be something unique about it."

Laurence also sounded in on this stating that "There's a lot more variety of flavours, and ability to experiment with craft beers."

This was definitely true with many of Beavertown's brands: there was a particularly interesting Grapefruit IPA (Indian Pale Ale), as well as a

Features

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Phot: Al Murray taking riding the engine (FLTR) Laurence, Laurence and Doug, the / Pour Your Pint

13.5% cherry flavoured IPA which was particularly delicious.

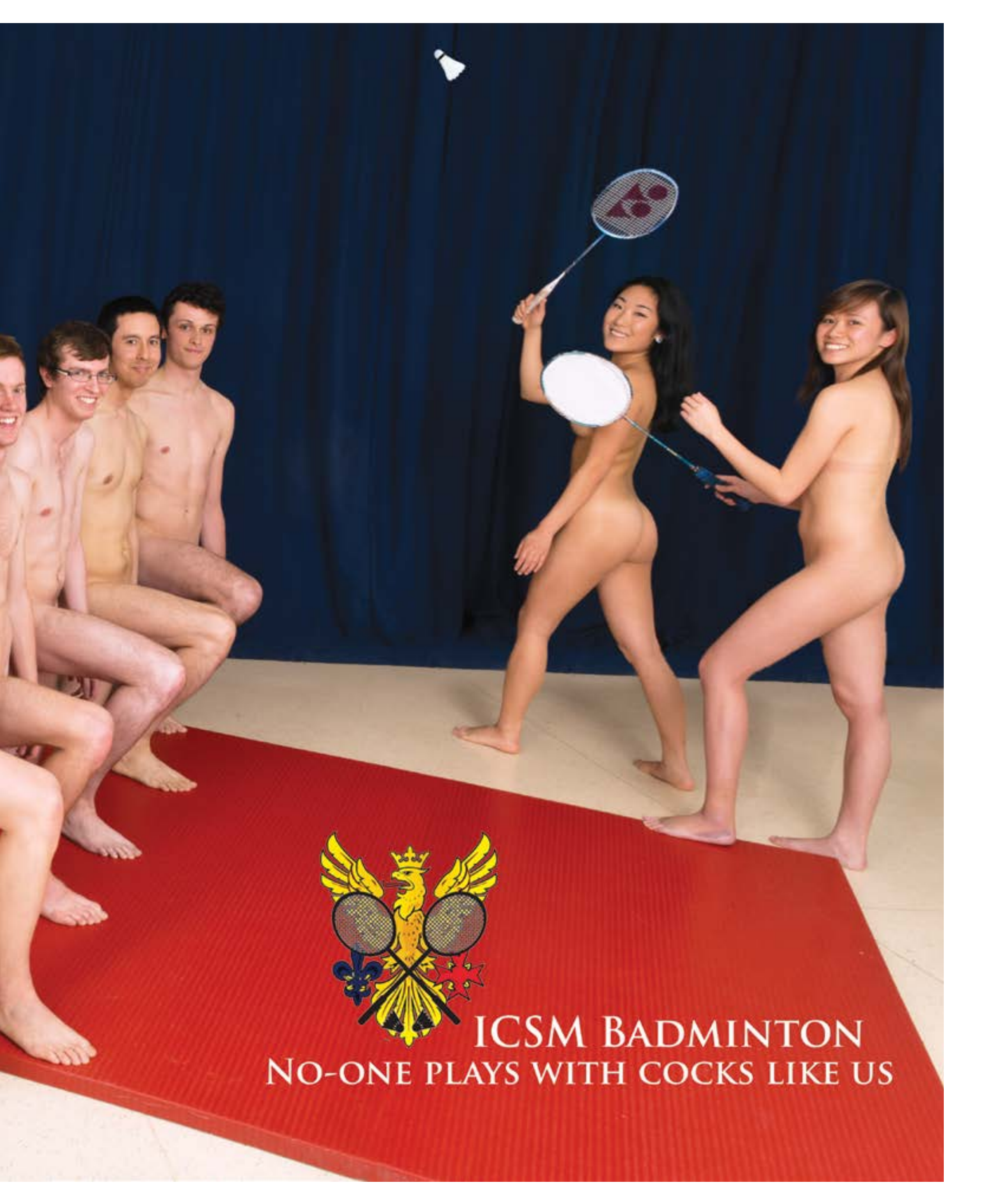
I was curious about his advice to future entrepreneurs, especially in light of the most recent Imperial entrepreneurial success story, Clotho, the eco-friendly online clothes trading store ran by two Imperial graduates.

Laurence concluded: "I would definitely take any advice you're given (especially from people with expertise in the your field), play to your strengths, and above all, just take the risk as it is definitely rewarding."

The firetruck costs £2000 to rent, and your own beer must be provided. Check out www.pouryourpint.com for more information.



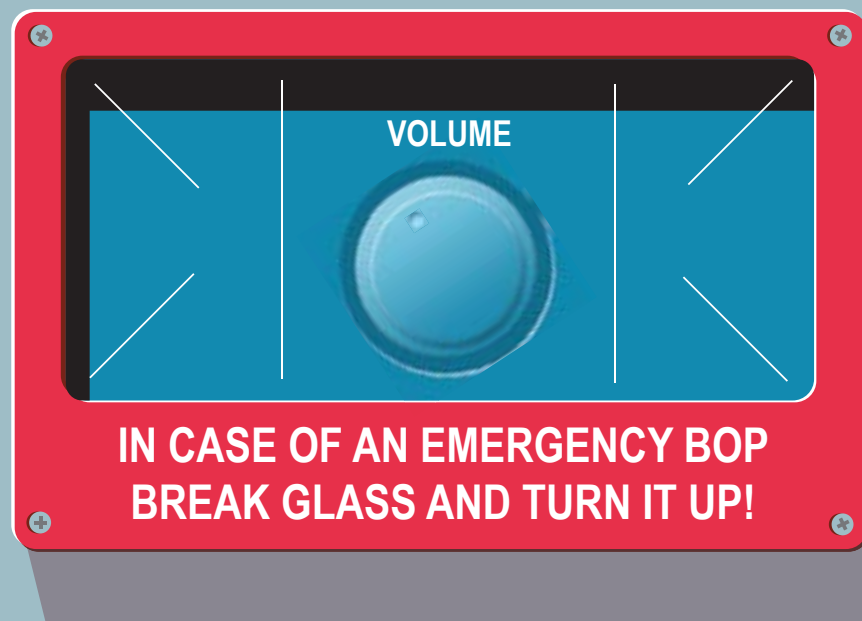




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Every Tuesday	Super Quiz	20:00 - 22:00	FiveSixEight
Every Wednesday	CSP Wednesday	19:00 - 01:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Every Wednesday	Pub Quiz	19:00 - 22:00	Reynolds
Wednesday 6	PG Graduation Party	12:00 - 23:00	h-bar
Friday 8	iPop	20:00 - 02:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
Friday 8	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds

Arts

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Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Orange Tree: Lost in the Wild

Max Falkenberg finds this Doris Lessing is lacking

If only third time lucky always worked out. With another long-winded, lack lustre display from the **Orange Tree**, I am starting to lose patience with Paul Miller's tenure at this fantastic theatre.

A rare early work by the Nobel Prize winning Doris Lessing, *Each his own Wilderness* is branded a play about politics with all the passion usually reserved for sex. Although there are a number of interesting and lively passages, the piece is let down by an unnecessarily long runtime and a lack of coherence in deciding its theme.

Set in 1958 London, 22 year old Tony returns from National Service to find his mother, Myra, the same bohemian activist she's always been. Cold and disillusioned, Tony's anger and deep political scepticism provides a lively contrast to his mother's idealism.

With a supporting cast made up of Myra's current and former lovers, the whole political spectrum is entertainingly represented. Despite the political topic of choice - the H-bomb - having somewhat lost its significance in the last 50 years, discussion on the indifference of the young to politics and the futility of protest movements stays remarkably relevant today.

Unfortunately, while the play's political message is rather enjoyable (for those who can stand politics), the relationship between Tony and his mother falls a little flat. Unpleasant and bitter, Tony's anger comes across as distinctly adolescent, despite a superb performance by young RADA graduate Joel MacCormack. Similarly, Clare Holden works well in the role of Myra, but both characters are plagued by a lack of development from start to finish.

It also doesn't help that a number of the supporting roles are a little subpar. Roger Ringrose as Mike plays a naïve, elderly Labour politician who has been openly in love with Myra for years. His performance is what one would expect from such a character but remains rather unexciting. In contrast, Phillip, played by John Lightbody, is a successful architect with the confidence to match. Having had a five year relationship with Myra previously, Myra's longing for him is entertaining but adds little to the play.

For the first half, the cast is closed out by Sandy, Myra's 22 year old lover, and Rosemary, a young girl engaged to Phillip. In truth, Sandy's character is remarkably refreshing; the same age as Tony, but without all the unpleasant cynicism, he provides

"The piece is let down by its needlessly long runtime and lack of coherence"



Joel MacCormack in *Each His Own Wilderness* at the Orange Tree Theatre Photo: Richard Hubert Smith

some urgently needed relief in the early parts of the play. But the real nail in the coffin for this production is Rosemary. Incredibly uninteresting and childish, it seems Rosemary's character has been written into the play for the sole purpose of demonstrating what it's like to be politically clueless. I really can't blame Rosie Holden's performance since the character she is given to work with is dire, but she does little to find any redeeming features.

The play seems to ramble on stuck somewhere between the political and personal for the full two and a half hour runtime. Without seeming to reach much of a political conclusion and with Tony and Myra's relationship as frayed at the start as at the finish, it all feels a little in vain. The only real highlight, apart from the brief political commentary already mentioned, is Susannah Harker as Milly, Sandy's mother and another Bohemian friend of Myra. Sharp, witty and with a far more reasonable tone than many of the others, Milly livens up the second half. Although there is a fair bit of

tongue in cheek in the first half, Milly's arrival really sets the ball rolling for the more comedic side of the play.

Despite what I've said, I don't want to give the impression that this production is an outright failure. Particular praise must be handed to Joel MacCormack whose performance really is exceptional given what he had to work with. Equally, the performances of Josh Taylor as Sandy and Susannah Harker are fun and refreshing. The staging and scenery makes good use of the space at the Orange Tree, and although the play's more intimate moments are a little lost in the round, the general atmosphere is enlivening.

Unfortunately, little can be done to redeem the shaky plot and lack of development in this frankly underwhelming play. It certainly wasn't terrible, it wasn't even particularly bad, I just expected so much more from the Orange Tree.

Each his Own Wilderness is on at the Orange Tree Theatre until May 16th. Tickets from £10. Available online...

"The only real highlight is Susannah Harker as Milly, who livens up the second half"

Welcome Back to Felix Arts!

FRED FYLES
KAMIL MCCLELLAND
SECTION EDITORS

Yes, it's term again and whilst you have all been busy revising hard in the library or more likely crying over a tub of ice cream at 3am, the Arts section has been hard at work going to press viewings and getting our hands on all the complimentary wine we can. And so, whilst this week's edition represents a selection of all that we have reviewed, be sure to check out the *Felix Arts* section online for even more reviews of what has been going on all around London.

We start this first issue of exam term with a slight whimper, as Max Falkenberg is rather unimpressed by the play *Each His Own Wilderness* at the Orange Tree Theatre. Long winded without any clear direction, this political play falls rather flat, despite some good quality acting performances in the main roles. Despite promising to be an exciting piece, an underdeveloped plot left the piece integrally flawed.

Next, Clara Clark Nevola spends the evening at a fabulous new opera at the Royal Opera House, Rossini's *Il Turco In Italia*. A comic opera containing a farcical love triangle, this 19th century piece manages to stay relevant and hilarious, not just jokes left back in the past.

Rules for Living at the National Theatre may not seem much when you first glance at the setting, a middle-class Christmas dinner, but you are soon pleasantly surprised. Overflowing with energy, the work even has its own fight director, ensuring that it is piece full of irony, comedy and drama.

Finally, this one might be perfect for us Imperial students: a play about science. Telling the story of the development of the atomic bomb, *Oppenheimer* at the Swan Theatre makes the complex topic of nuclear physics incredibly accessible, a refreshing change. Add to that excellent staging and a gripping cast, Fred Fyles feels this is certainly a play to see, one of the best productions currently out.

So, that's it for now, make sure to tune in for next week's section where we have an excellent collection of various opera, art and theatre reviews on offer. Plus, it makes for great procrastination so that, even for five minutes, you can escape the misery of the library's fourth floor and imagine you had the time to actually go out in the evening.

Arts

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Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

An Operatic Romp through 60s Italy

Clara Clark Nevola is taken on a journey to the fun side of the ROH

It would be understandable if a comic opera about a love triangle – featuring a randy Turkish prince, a doddering old man, and his unfaithful young wife – struggled to be relevant. Throw in a few jokes about Gypsies, the inconstancy of women, and old men falling into plates of spaghetti and it turns into an unpalatable cocktail of racism, sexism and slapstick comedy.

Of course, there is a but. Somehow, this Rossini opera wasn't an operatic version of the *Daily Mail*. Somehow, it managed to re-stage 200 year old jokes and make them genuinely funny for a modern audience. Not fake, high-brow, isn't-this-culturally-enriching type funny – but pure, real laugh-out-loud funny. For a repertoire opera that is a real achievement.

Il Turco in Italia centres around a love triangle that turns into a love pentagon as the story evolves. A handsome Turkish prince, Salim, visits Italy on holiday and catches the eye of a local beauty, Fiorella. He thinks she's majorly hot stuff, and they hit it off. Obviously Fiorella is married to a naive sugar-daddy style husband who's not too happy about it all. He teams up with Fiorella's Elvis-esque ex-lover (complete with yellow bomber jacket and turquoise Vespa) to stop the "Turk" getting too

cosy with their girl. Conveniently, Selim's spurned former-fiancé, now travelling around with a band of gypsies, is also on hand to add to the farcical love tangle.

Overshadowed by Rossini's most famous comic opera, *The Barber of Seville*, this performance rarely gets put on, and the Royal Opera House's production (which premiered in 2005) is an exception. Its success lies in adding an extra layer of comedy to the opera. Originally aimed at 18th century Italians, the libretto is peppered with nationalistic speeches and jokes at the expense of women, foreigners, and Travellers. By staging the piece in a stylised 60s Italy, the production allows the audience to laugh at a stereotypical image of Italy, and thus makes the other jokes ok too. Suddenly having a giggle about the sexual benefits of harems or the stealing habits of gypsies is fine, because after all you've just had a laugh about a giant pizza, an overdressed Italian dandy, and an old man sparring with a forkful of spaghetti (this actually happened. An extra reason to get yourself a ticket for this!). It's simple but it's genius, a revelation for the many musically beautiful but non-PC operas which fill theatres every year. The usual tactic is to tone down the insubrious jokes at the expense of the public's



The Royal Opera House's *Il Turco in Italia* Photo: Tristram Kenton/The Guardian

entertainment (The Royal Opera House's *Magic Flute*, from earlier this season, is an example in kind), contributing to the perception that opera is for boring old farts.

Patrice Courier and Moshe Leiser's clever directing is supported by a fantastic cast, who don't seem to be too dignified to be comic actors as well as world-class opera singers. The leads are all incredibly real, believable people, achieving comedy while escaping the one-dimensionality which often tarnishes farcical theatre. Fiorella (Aleksandra Kurzac) and Selim (Ildebrando D'Arcangelo) are also a beautiful soprano and bass respectively, and make a musically balanced pair. The staging is so colourful and sunny that you'll almost get a suntan by sitting in your seat – think pink beach umbrellas, palm trees and stylised landscapes in bright, bold colours.

This is real comic opera, an 'opera buffa' as it was originally conceived. The set is minimal and modern, the directors' have taken some liberty with the jokes, and the costumes aren't a faithful reproduction of the historical style. But the audience's laughter rang out throughout as it would have on its first night, in 1814. So three cheers for the Royal Opera House, and down with the boring old farts.

The Rules of the Theatrical Game

FRED FYLES
SECTION EDITOR

Any hope that the *National Theatre's Rules For Living* would be a quiet affair was quickly dashed upon reading the programme: tucked in the cast list is an acknowledgement for Kate Waters – Fight Director. This gives us a clear indication of the direction the play is going to go in, but really it should be obvious from the start – *Rules For Living* centres around that most volatile of environments: the middle-class Christmas dinner.

Director Marianne Elliott takes Sam Holcroft's explosive script, and transposes the action to the NT's Dorfman Theatre, whose seats rise up like bleachers at a high school grudge match, a comparison that is only made stronger by Chloe Lamford's set design. Lines mark out different territories, there are zones like 'Home' and 'Garden', and at the end

confetti crowns the 'winner'; but the most unique and intrusive aspects of the design are the large scoreboards that flank the ends of the stage, upon which the different family members' various 'rules for living' flash up. Thus insecure Adam (Steven Mangan) affects an accent to mock, uptight Sheena (Claudie Blakley) must resort to alcohol whenever she wants to contradict, and the matriarch of the clan (Deborah Findlay) calms her nerves by scrubbing every surface in sight. The result is a snappy play that positively crackles with energy, although the format on occasion limits the plot progression.

One of the major themes of the play is CBT, or Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, a form of psychotherapy in which the root cause of anxiety and depression is sought out, and action taken to prevent future occurrences. It seems to me that many playwrights could do with some form of therapy, particularly those whose work involves a family at Christmas time – there is rarely a happy ending,

and *Rules for Living* is no exception, with resentment turning into grudges turning into outright warfare. Adam, whose dreams of being a cricket star have been crushed thanks to a Richie-Tenenbaum-Style meltdown at Lord's, is now stuck in a boring job as a solicitor; he's been eclipsed by his brother Matthew (Miles Jupp), who instead was forced into legal work, thanks to his overbearing judge of a father (John Rogan). Matthew has rebelled – as best he can – by becoming involved with Carrie (Maggie Service), a bubbly comedic actor, trying to make it big in the world of drama.

Although such characters may, on paper, sound like a mere collection of stereotypes, the way the cast handles the roles really brings them to life, not least Deborah Findlay, whose Edith is imbued with a duality of maternal love and simmering rage. Claudie Blakley is also great in the role of Sheena, trying to hold her marriage together in the face of mounting apathy from her husband

over their daughter's depression, for which she is going to receive – surprise, surprise – CBT. At moments like this, where serendipity tips over into heavy-handedness, the script can feel somewhat sluggish, almost as if the audience is being spoken down to.

The use of rules is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it serves as a witty piece of stagecraft, giving us a clever insight into the characters' inner lives; thus we experience a delicious burst of dramatic irony when Matthew, who must sit down to tell a lie, pulls up a chair to tell Sheena how tasty her gluten-free, dairy-free, joy-free mince pies are, and also a pang of sadness when he remains seated to tell Carrie how much he loves her. Elsewhere, however, it falls somewhat flat, like for Carrie, whose rule – she must stand up to tell a joke – means that she is forced to bounce around the stage like an overexcited rabbit; sometimes this works, but other times it simply adds in another unnecessary element. The most intrusive rule is undoubtedly Adam's, which leads

to an extraordinary range of accents from Magnan, robbing from the audience any sympathy that we may have had for him.

As the play progresses, the rules begin to get more and more complex, piling up like a series of obstacles. For the most part, this works, but there are occasions where the script feels like a slave to the rules, rather than the master. Thankfully the team manage to hold their own, with standout performances from Findlay and Blakely. Two final things to add: firstly, how refreshing it is to see a play written, directed, and designed by women – this is the last production at the National Theatre under Nicholas Hytner, and I can only hope that such things continue with his successor. Secondly, the play culminates in a massive food-fight, with a mashed-potato-as-pathos mania as Christmas dinner is decimated; unfortunately not all the cast have a great aim – if you're sitting in the front rows, I would recommend bringing a raincoat.

Arts

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Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

On Learning how to Love the Bomb

Fred Fyles checks out RSC's play on the father of the A-bomb



The company of the RSC's *Oppenheimer* Photo: Keith Pattinson/RSC

The story of the Manhattan Project, which saw the United States lead a team of international scientists developing the first nuclear weapon, has gone down in popular legend: Einstein (that most cuddly of nuclear physicists) recommending that the US begin work on 'extremely powerful bombs', mushroom clouds above the New Mexican desert, and J. Robert Oppenheimer quoting the *Bhagavad Gita* - it's all been burned onto our collective consciousness. Such a thing was surely a mixed blessing to playwright Tom Morton-Smith, whose production detailing the creation of 'The Bomb', *Oppenheimer*, has transferred to London's West End, following a critically acclaimed run in Stratford-upon-Avon. When the public believe that they have a good grasp on a piece of history - as I am sure a lot of people do about the Manhattan Project - it can be difficult to make them see any other way; however, with *Oppenheimer* Morton-Smith has created a finely scripted historical drama, which sticks closely to the truth whilst still being entertaining, no doubt thanks to the fine cast of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

We begin with the Einstein-Szliárd letter, in which Roosevelt was warned about the possibility of Hitler developing an atomic weapon; as a result, the brilliant J. Robert Oppenheimer, or 'Oppie' - communist, radical, genius - is called up to direct a team of internationally renowned scientists (those working

on the project would eventually come to include twenty Nobel laureates). Moving from the west coast to Los Alamos, New Mexico, whose empty deserts allow scientific inspiration to 'find' Oppie; as his passion for the project builds, Oppenheimer sacrifices his friends, his family, and his very morality in pursuit of scientific achievement. John Hefferman is brilliant as Oppenheimer, creating a cocktail of a character who is one part smooth, sophisticated revolutionary, one part mad scientist. Ben Allen and Tom McCall are wonderful in their respective roles of Edward Teller and Hans Bethe, one all cold Hungarian intelligence, the other a model of Teutonic good-naturedness. Similarly, Catherine Steadman brings a bold physicality to her role of Jean Tatlock, the doomed lover of Oppenheimer, who first introduced him to radical politics - it's a pity, then, that her part isn't nearly as fleshed out as I would have liked.

It is easy, with the privilege of hindsight, to condemn the naivety of the scientists involved. When Oppenheimer claims that the nuclear bomb would mark 'an end to all war', we can sit smug in our tower of dramatic irony, surveying the wreckage of Sarajevo, of Georgia, of Gaza; but to take such an attitude is to belittle the intentions of the scientists involved. What *Oppenheimer* does particularly well is help to return the nuance to the arguments surrounding the Manhattan Project: it was not a simple case of American dominance,

"John Hefferman is brilliant as Oppie, creating a smooth cocktail of a character"

"The heaviness of the script is offset by the skill with which the science is dealt"

but rather a campaign borne out of the fear that the Nazis would get there first. The fact that a number of the scientists working at Los Alamos had fled the seemingly-unstoppable tide of European fascism helps to make the issue a lot more complex than it may appear at first.

However, there are points within the production when this desire to promote debate overstretchers itself; the result is a number of lengthy near-monologues in which the characters grapple with the moral confusion working on such a project can bring, leading to a runtime which - at three hours long - certainly feels like a bit of a drag. Perhaps as time goes on the cast will be able to deliver such paragraphs with more pace, but it seems like Tom Morton-Smith's script could certainly do with editing down. Similarly, there are elements of the play where subtle symbolism can spill over into psychological heavy-handedness: Oppenheimer can't feel love for his baby because the bomb is his child; the shroud of secrecy under which the project is carried out is closer to fascism than the socialism that he so loved; the scientists always have purely knowledge-based motivations, while the military (boo!) are only interested in personal gain. While these elements don't happen too often, they do feel like missteps, jerking us out of the action with a sharp tug.

They are, however, partially offset by the skill with which Morton-Smith deals with the scientific aspects of

the story - he manages to strike a fine balance between over- and under-information. As an audience we don't feel spoken down to when the cast begin describing the structure of the atom (or at least, I didn't; perhaps if you're studying nuclear physics such things may seem a bit more slow), but the theory never takes precedence over the plot; instead the two aspects work in perfect tandem, with one building and developing the other. This is helped by the clever staging design, which gives every surface the ability to become a blackboard - a clever nudge towards the stereotype of the genius scientist, madly scribbling away on any available space. The set it dominated by the interlinking girders upon which the atomic bomb descends during the Trinity Test; like a pig-iron sword of damocles, they remind the viewer that there is only one way things can end: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and over 100,000 dead.

Despite what Brian Cox's popularity would seem to tell us, it's still difficult to make science 'sexy' (although perhaps not physics: the number of people applying for physics degrees has increased by 40% over four years). Therefore, we should applaud director Angus Jackson, who manages to steer his RSC cast through a script that, despite a few areas of weakness, is generally extremely solid. Subatomic physics has rarely looked so good.

Oppenheimer is on at the Swan Theatre until 23rd May. Tickets from £25, available online



Catherine Steadman (Jean Tatlock) and John Hefferman (J Robert Oppenheimer) in *Oppenheimer* Photo: Keith Pattinson/RSC

Boulez at 90: The Enfant Terrible of Modern Music

Emiel de Lange explores the new musical vocabulary of one of the 20th Century's most controversial composers



Pierre Boulez as conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Photo: BBC Radio 3

Pierre Boulez is *the* controversial figure at the forefront of musical development in the 20th Century. Though equally respected by his enemies as by his supporters, a certain stubbornness and radicalism has alienated many. For instance, in 1952 he declared in one fell swoop half of the musical world as useless, in 1967 that opera houses should be blown up, and in 1971 he advocated for the destruction of the Mona Lisa. But read past these shocking soundbites and you may find yourself in fact following his arguments. Indeed the vast literature he has produced throughout his

"In 1971 he advocated for the destruction of the Mona Lisa."

career has swayed many, undoubtedly influencing the course of music history, and it certainly does display a penetrating and unabashed intelligence. Of course, his music is the true testament to this: original, endlessly thought provoking, and constantly being reinvented; the Guardian says "it is impossible to imagine [...] the entire musical world without Pierre Boulez". But then why haven't you heard of him? And, at the recent 90th birthday celebrations at the Barbican, why was the hall half empty?

The masterpieces of Mozart were written at a time when men wore powdered wigs and aristocrats

entertained themselves at balls in ornate palaces; the Enlightenment ideals of rationality and form were manifest. When Beethoven wrote his dramatic symphonies, full of angst and triumph, society was turning inward and Napoleon's conquests inspired the ideas of great men. The 20th Century began with two wars of unprecedented scale. Industrial technology enabled the destruction of a generation, and entire peoples, while in peacetime dehumanised the lower classes and manufactured a commodified culture for the masses.

At least, this is the pessimistic view of social theorists such as Theodor Adorno, who, in 1949, famously

"It is impossible to imagine the entire musical world without Pierre Boulez."

declared that "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric". Whether you agree or not, it is clear that art could not continue as before and ignore the new reality. In the 20th Century an unprecedented diversity of musical thought emerged, ranging from the reactionary and easy-going minimalists to the strictures of serialism. Boulez, at least at the start of his career, was a certified serialist. Serialism was a method, developed by Arnold Schoenberg in the 1920s, which attempted to free music from the "tyranny" of the tonal centre, allowing the other musical parameters, such as rhythm and timbre to take centre-stage.

After the war, Boulez and others would extend this beyond tone to all the parameters of sound, a style known as total serialism. This rigid, highly formulised way of writing music was attacked for its asceticism, for its artifice and sterility, and for its lack of expression. Boulez himself realised these limits, but his later music retains certain aspects, including a focus on architecture and structure rather than expression or sensuality. This certainly sets him apart from past French composers, such as Debussy or Ravel, but then again Boulez was working in a new world. His musical mission seems altogether higher, and in his own words was nothing less than the construction of a new 'musical language'.

"If you want a kind of supermarket aesthetic, OK, do that, nobody will be against it, but everybody will eventually forget it"

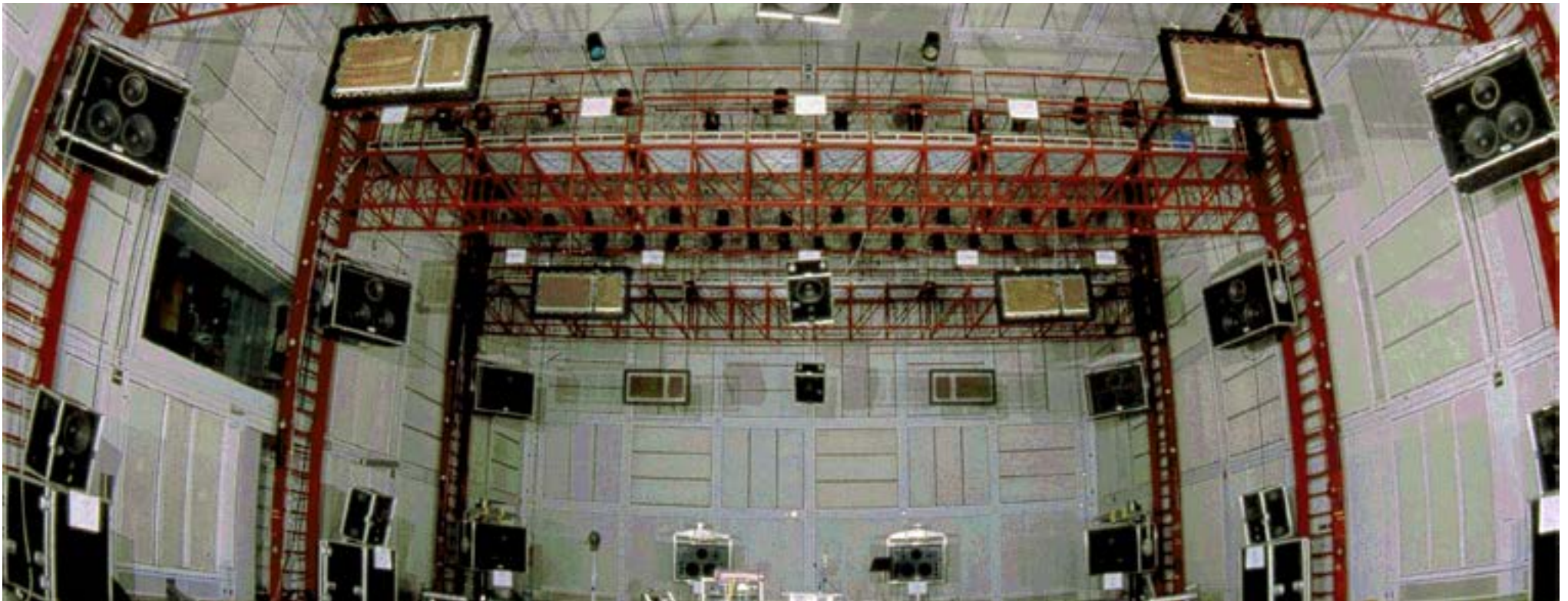
His first great success was 'Le marteau sans maitre', or, 'The hammer without a master', first performed in 1955. The orchestration was new and cosmopolitan – combining instruments from all over the world into groups and allowing an abstraction of timbre from instrumental identities. Although it is set to surrealist poetry, the music is structured at even the smallest scale according to techniques derived from serialism such as pitch multiplication. In the decades since, Boulez has published fewer than 20 works, but each are, in the words of George Benjamin, "singular statements, singular and unique works", something unique and I think entirely appropriate for our cultural milieu. Also unique is the manner in which Boulez continually revises his work and perfects them further, as if reaching closer to some ideal expression of the piece's logic. In these later works he experiments with the use of chance to determine structure ('Pli selon pli'), spatial organisation of sound ('Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna') and the use of electronics (such as in 'Repons').

It was in 1970 that then-president Georges Pompidou invited Boulez to build an institute for musical research

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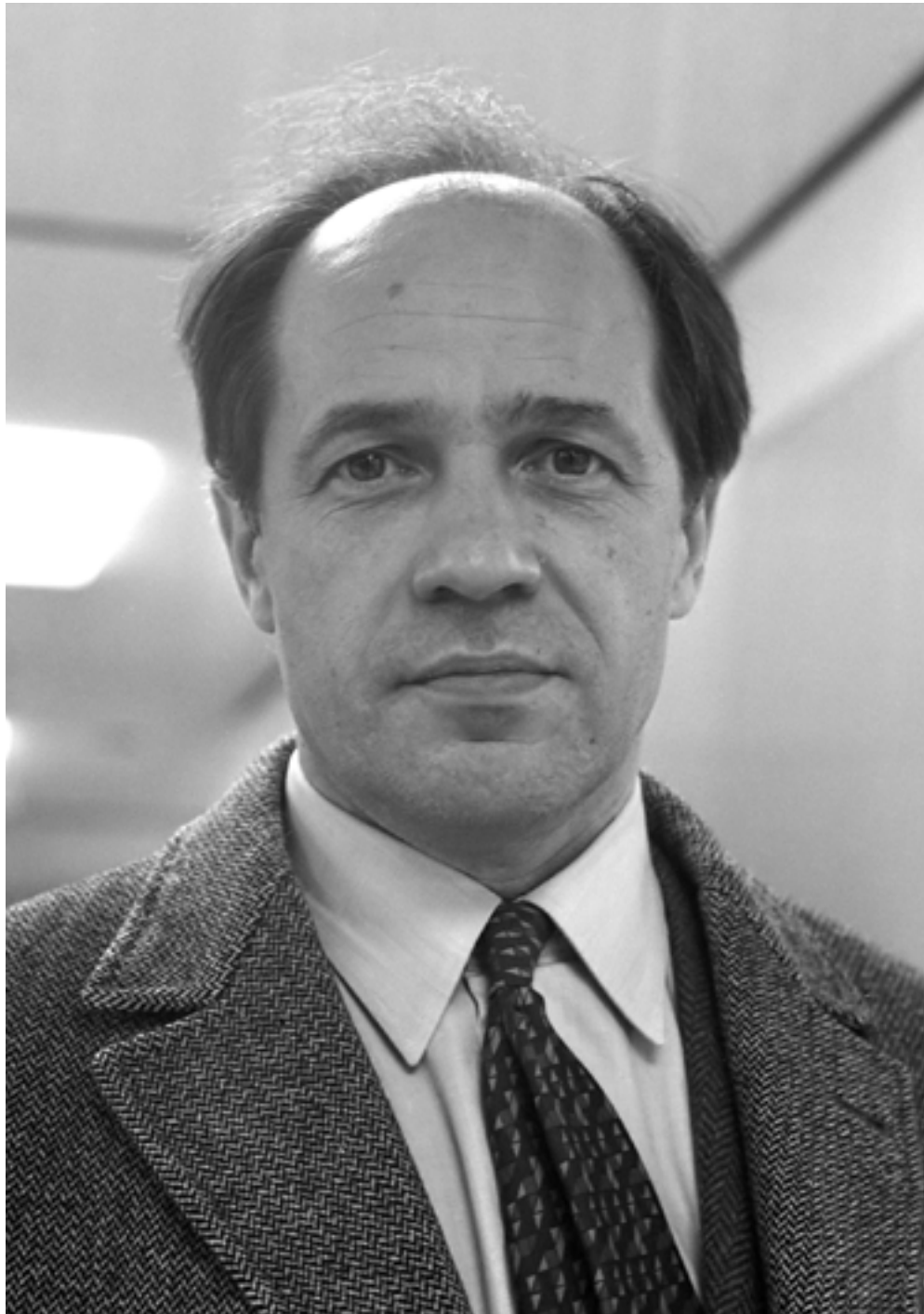


Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM). Photo: ircam.fr

in Paris, and this is where much of the capabilities of electronic music were developed. IRCAM – l’Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique – was a hotbed of innovation, with computer scientists and acousticians working directly alongside composers. Pioneering work on FM synthesis was carried out and programmes for the real-time modulation of sound were developed (such as MAX). MAX has been instrumental in the creation of some of the most important musical compositions in recent decades, such as Birtwhistle’s opera, *The Mask of Orpheus*. Boulez himself wrote a number of works in the early days of IRCAM, exploring the potential for computers to manipulate sound in real-time, for example, in ‘Repons’ where a programme is used to provide an altered echo of certain instruments.

Boulez’s music is difficult. It is unlike Mozart or Beethoven or anything heard before, and has not enjoyed broad public appeal (yet). But his contributions are valuable; his language is objective and free of any history, it is one of the most successful responses to the events and conditions of the 20th century. If people complain of its atonality and difficulty, they should think of music from other cultures, which can sound equally alien and provide unequivocal evidence for tonal systems being the result of cultural conditioning. In this way, Boulez’s music can be seen as a universal music, rooted in the equally universal language of mathematics.

“The strongest civilisations are those without memory - those capable of complete forgetfulness. They are strong enough to destroy because they know they can replace what is destroyed. Today our musical civilisation is not strong”



Pierre Boulez (1968) Photo: Creative Commons

Universally popular it certainly isn’t. Boulez’s own diagnosis is that people use music as a sort of backdrop to their own thoughts while his music demands complete attention. Although unwilling to compromise on his duties as composer, as a conductor he has enjoyed international fame, winning 26 Grammy awards and raising the profile of 20th Century music to the highest acclaim it has enjoyed. In the 70s he was musical director of both the BBC Symphony Orchestra (in London) and the New York Philharmonic, reinvigorating the musical life of these two cities. In New York, he organised ‘rug concerts’ where audiences were exposed to contemporary music in new ways. Now at 90 years old, he no longer conducts, and indeed achievements in the concert hall were only transient, but I have no doubt that his compositions will be remembered and become more widely understood in the future.

Personally, I have found exploring the music of Pierre Boulez to be one of my most rewarding musical explorations. In my efforts to understand this language I have been taken back in time to medieval Europe and around the world. While I am still a huge fan of what historians call ‘common practice period’ music, such as Beethoven and Mozart, and also of more popular styles from the last decades, I see now how the immediate appeal of these styles is the result of lifetime exposure. Attending the Boulez at 90 events at the Barbican recently was an important catalyst in my appreciation. With a full day of concerts, talks, and documentaries I was thrown in at the deep end, but quickly learnt to swim. I hope you will join me in exploring the art of one of the most radical and forceful minds in modern music.

“His music is one of the most successful responses to the events and conditions of the 20th century.”

Travel

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Travel Editor || Yung Nam Cheah

Volunteer Experience: Working a

Because sometimes what **Chris Richardson** needs is a holiday from his holiday



Work exchanges are a great way to travel. Photo: WWOOF

I'm sure you're all depressingly familiar with the concept of unpaid internships by now: roll in with a smile, do a little grunt work, leave with a frown, only to be replaced by the next person on the unending list of the exploited. WorkAway.info is a little different. In exchange for a mere 25 hours of work per week, you at least get free room and board. That and the experiences are typically a little more uplifting than shadowing and fixing coffee. And as you're breaking even each week, this will also allow you to sustain your travels over a longer period. Most of all, it gives you time to properly settle into a particular place: you get to really feel the vibe as opposed to just box-ticking the colonial buildings and museums deemed worthy of inclusion by the Lonely Planet.

WorkAway features continuously in works of lifestyle design guru Tim Ferriss: if that's not enough to give it a moment of consideration then I'm not sure what is. Unless you have a particular passion for organic farming, I think it's much better than WWOOFing, as it offers a vast repertoire of different kinds of work

"A lot of things on offer are interesting and unique"

that includes – above all, for me – working with people. It also trumps any voluntourism opportunities you're likely to stumble across online: it's often similar work, but simply relies on you taking the initiative to drop a couple of emails as opposed to throwing a load of cash at some uncharitable agency.

So what's the drill? After you pay a small subscription fee, you'll have access to thousands of hosts in almost every country in the world. Filter by continent, country, region, and keyword. See who fits your criteria, assess their feedback score, and drop emails accordingly. Make it personal and include dates, and you'll have jobs lined up in no time, providing you start looking as early as possible. I can't rate it enough: sometimes what you need is a holiday from your holiday, and a lot of the things on offer are truly interesting and unique. It might even have the knock-on effect of putting you out of sync with all the people you've met on your route, so you'll have the added bonus of meeting some new faces when you eventually re-emerge.



The beautiful vineyards of Colchagua Valley. Photo: Chris Richardson

Travel

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Workaway in Chile's Colchagua Valley



South America, Chile, wine. That simple little search linked me up with Familia Espino in the heart of Colchagua Valley, the nation's famed wine region that's rapidly gaining traction on both the gringo trail and luxury travel market, while still retaining the charm of a place well within its prime. In the run-up to my stay, I'd partied my way through Rio Carnival, CouchSurfed with some crazies across Argentina, and burnt what remained of my energy and sanity at Lollapalooza Festival – decompression was long overdue.

The job appealed to me because I wanted a combination of vineyard work and care work, which is exactly what the job delivered. The family home is on the fringe of Marchigüe, a beautiful town set against a backdrop of picturesque mountaintops and endless vineyards, and the home itself comes equipped with a well-groomed Carmanere vineyard at its rear. Any work on the vineyard will of course vary depending on the time of year, culminating in the late April harvest, at which point grapes are shipped off for processing and bottling. Following an unfortunate accident the family's son Mario now relies on a wheelchair for much of his mobility: he receives around-the-clock care and sessions with medical professionals, so the role is predominately social, with as many elements of physiotherapy as you're willing to engage with.

I spent a month with Familia Espino and had a fantastic time. In

addition to my work on the vineyard and with Mario, my stay coincided with the area's largest wine harvest festival, an excellent weekend of outstanding food and wonderful wines. The house is also a short bus ride from capital Santiago, so it's perfectly doable to spend a couple of weekends away partying with whoever you happen to have met on your travels. And for the wave worshippers among you, Chilean surf haven Pichilemu is just a short drive away: the family have a car you can borrow (a UK license will suffice) and friends that can hook you up with equipment. Oh, and the local produce markets make Borough Market look like Morrisons markdowns.

I'd say I picked up a lot more than what I'd initially expected from the job description: on top of learning a thing or two about wine and finding new friends in my hosts, I was continuously kept on my toes at mealtimes, due to the rapid pace of Chilean Spanish and varied topics of conversation.

On that note, I'd say this WorkAway is a particularly good call for anyone wanting longer-term experience with a single patient, those applying for graduate-entry medicine, or someone simply looking for a slight change of pace and decompression from big city life. For me the experience was a wonderful WorkAway debut that I'd love to replicate and would recommend to anyone.

"A wonderful WorkAway debut that I'd love to replicate and would recommend to anyone"



Photo: Emiliana

Television

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Television Editors || Guila Gabrielli & John Park

My new wind-swept, muscly hero

Giulia Gabrielli looks at the Nation's new addiction to *Poldark*.

I rarely write an article about a programme and focus so much interest on its main character. Of course there are heartthrobs who keep you glued to the screen, but Ross Poldark is different. The reason why he is different, is that rarely such a hype has been built around a single character, to the detriment of an otherwise rather empty show.

The story of the nation's obsession with the Cornish hunk started in 1975, when the BBC began airing the series *Poldark* starring Robin Ellis. I guess as often happens, it probably started earlier with the Winston Graham books being published in 1940s and 50s, but those were darker times, without any pictures.

Looking at Robin Ellis now it's hard to understand what of his weird 1970's looks, hairdo and all, was so appealing to the ladies. However, this gentleman has forever been cursed with having played the dark Cornish gentleman.

Now a similar curse could fall on the shoulders of actor Aidan Turner. After portraying Kili in *The Hobbit*, vampire John Mitchell in *Being Human* and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in *Desperate Romantics*, Turner has landed a role that might haunt him, and even worse in TV terms, typecast him, forever.

After the first episode of the show aired, in fact, all magazines and morning shows (which as we know is where the real TV gossip can be found) could focus on were Aidan Turner's rugged looks. Thus completely ignoring Turner's, and everyone else's, relatively mediocre performances.

The situation took a turn for the worse in episode 3, when Turner made a habit of appearing without a shirt.

There are other characters in the show, good ones even, like Ross's love interest Demelza (played by Eleanor Tomlinson), there are plotlines and cliff-hangers, the works, but I fear in a couple of weeks all we will remember is the scene where Poldark works his field bare-chested. This one particular scene caught the interest of warm-blooded women and farmers concerned with health and safety alike.

Adding to the distractions, the series, which started off strong with an interesting story of love and loss and with just enough talk of war and poverty, ended on a real low on Sunday. The finale was jam-packed with half-hearted emotional plot-turns and it didn't help that the special effects guy was left loose, free to experiment with all his arsenal of filters, providing a rather confusing watch.

The real fall of *Poldark*, however, could have been anticipated by about the famous episode 3. Having bigged Ross up as the main male love interest, and having provided him with a contentious love triangle, the authors decided to marry him off to one of the two ladies to focus on more political themes. This is a noble effort, but one which comes with some danger.

In order to write a period drama addressing the social injustice of the epoch, you definitely can't have half-naked hunks advertising the show. Of course you will attract attention, but

"Turner landed a role that could haunt him, worst, typecast him, forever."



Those muscles! Aidan Turner preparing for one of the show's most famous scenes. Photo: BBC

it will be the wrong kind of attention, with most of the viewers interested in a little bit of light entertainment (the show was aired on a Sunday night for crying out loud).

In addition, you have to find something a little more engaging than copper mines and smelting companies, the details of which I still fail to understand. All in all, *Poldark* was a fun substitute for *Call the Midwife* on BBC's Sunday programming, and certainly a more light-hearted one. It taught most of us a lot about 1780s Cornwall, an almost

"Turner's abs were hardly a mystery after his efforts in *Desperate Romantics*."

virgin land full of copper, beautiful flowers and great accents (though not from Turner, who can barely hide his native Irish twang).

It also taught us about Aidan Turner's abs, although these were hardly a mystery after his efforts in *Desperate Romantics* to bare all the skin possible.

Seeing how empty the underlying themes are and how average most of the storylines can be, I will probably not be tuning in for season 2, which has already been confirmed, but 5.9M viewers probably disagree with me.



The stunning location of *Broadchurch*. Photo: BBC America

Beautiful beaches of Britain

Look behind the well-sculpted muscles of Ross Poldark and you'll see the Cornish coastline. This is not the first time that a British beach has proven to be a co-star on a TV show. I guess when you can't boast the sun and the white sands, and when "it's so bracing" (read "cold and miserable") becomes your catch phrase, a little bit of publicity is always welcome. A similar fame to that that will inevitably be encountered by the beaches of *Poldark* has already been experienced by the Dorset coast where the TV drama *Broadchurch* was set. The show was a police drama so dark and disturbing it is a surprise that people could watch it and think of their next holiday location. However, the brilliant writing and acting by David Tennant (*Dr Who*) and Olivia Coleman (every other TV/movie show ever) wasn't the only thing viewers appreciated, at least in the first season, before shares dropped dramatically. Currently property prices are on the rise in the area and local businesses are

smacking their lips in delight. Even less subtle was the attempt of 2012's series *True Love* to publicise the holiday town of Margate, Kent. The narrative, also featuring David Tennant, was relatively poor, focusing individual episodes on different inhabitants of the small town, all linked to each other. The hype was maintained by promises of lesbian kisses with Billie Piper and, of course, epic coastal panoramas. I guess these shows serve as reminders of what television's prime purpose is: a broadcast for all things new and beautiful. A cynic may interpret this as an attempt to bring people to small, rapidly deflating towns. However, I like to think of it as more of an educational journey to discover all this lovely country has to offer, which is so much more than the view from Waterloo Bridge. Thus reconfirming the BBC's mission "to inform, educate and entertain".

GIULIA GABRIELLI

Facing up to the force of nature

ABENA TAYLOR-SMITH
WRITER

FORCE MAJEURE

Director: Ruben Östlund

Screenplay: Ruben Östlund

Cast: Johannes Kunke, Lisa Loven Kongsli, Vincent Wettergren, Clara Wettergren, Kristofer Hivju



Force Majeure (or *Turist* if you're Swedish), is written and directed by Ruben Östlund.

It is a disaster movie but not as we know it. You see, the disaster doesn't actually happen. Tomas and his wife Ebba are on a skiing holiday in the French Alps with their two children, Vera and Harry. Young, attractive and wealthy, they seem to be the ideal middle-class family.

When an avalanche approaches with gathering speed, it seems certain that it will completely engulf the family.

In a split-second decision, Tomas grabs his smartphone and runs, leaving Ebba to protect their screaming children and brace herself for the onslaught. It never comes.

What follows is an unflinching, tragicomic depiction of Tomas's return to the family he effectively left for dead. Clearly he has a lot of explaining to do. Yet in a disastrous bid to save face he refuses to acknowledge running away.

The performances are faultless, especially from Lisa Loven Kongsli as the seething Ebba and Johannes Kuhnke as Tomas, floundering in his wife's hostility.

"In a split-second decision, Tomas grabs his phone and runs."



Photo: Ruben Östlund/Curzon Film World

Östlund's script cleverly explores the concept of masculinity and reverses traditional gender stereotypes: Ebba is the hero while Tomas is the coward.

It's always heartening to see a strong female protagonist and Ebba is no exception. She is a well-rounded character with strength and incisiveness as well as vulnerability.

She does not wait to be rescued like a typical damsel in distress, instead showing courage and demanding the same of her husband.

She's not perfect though. She sidesteps every opportunity to discuss the avalanche with the children, presumably because the actual events are too painful to explain so she plumps for saying nothing.

Interestingly, the women are the most sympathetic characters, being fairly level-headed and reasonable, while the men are the least likeable with their fragile balance of bravado

"It's one of the year's best releases so far, and well worth a watch."

and insecurity. Östlund suggests that men are oppressed by society's expectation for them to be heroic in dangerous situations.

Even after overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Tomas does not admit that he, as an individual, was scared. A breezy, "we were terrified" is the closest he can get, speaking for his wife and children as a sneaky employment of safety in numbers.

This film is smart, sharply written and well-observed, a deserving winner of the 2014 Cannes Un Certain Regard Prize.

The only complaint is that it feels a touch long but this only adds to the impression of time dragging on the holiday from hell. It's one of the year's best releases so far and well worth a watch.

We may all condemn Tomas from a position of relative safety but until that situation is upon us, can we truly know how we would respond?

This Week at Imperial Cinema



Imperial Cinema are back for the new term, and with *Inherent Vice* already under our belts we're already looking to the Academy Awards for our next film...

Up next, the Oscar-winning Julianne Moore stars in *Still Alice*, the story of an American professor diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's Disease.

Moore is undeniably the highlight of the film, in a role that saw her sweep virtually every Best Actress award going, but there's still much more besides to recommend.

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name, *Still Alice* features an all-star cast alongside Moore, including Alec Baldwin, Kristen Stewart and Kate Bosworth.

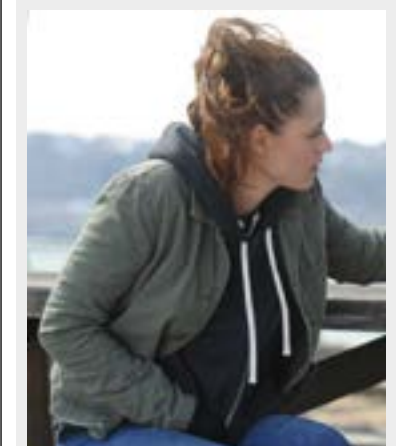
Written and directed by Richard Glazer and Wash Westmoreland, this intimate, understated film is a powerful look at Alzheimer's and how it can affect those we love.

Still Alice is playing at Imperial Cinema on Tuesday 5th May and Thursday 7th May at 19:00.

Tickets are £3 for members and £4 for non-members.

Doors open around 15 minutes before the start of the film.

To buy membership or to find out more information, visit: imperialcinema.co.uk.



Trailer Watch: Star Wars awakens

JACK STEADMAN
SECTION EDITOR

With the summer blockbuster season fast approaching, it's time for Hollywood's immeasurably vast marketing machine to get the ball rolling on showing off the big upcoming films of 2015.

Causing the biggest splash by a considerable margin was the second teaser for *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens*. The first teaser didn't offer a huge amount in the way of details, and while the new teaser still isn't what could be called forthcoming there's certainly a lot to take in.

The opening shot is instantly iconic - a slow pan across a desert planet that's since been named as Jakku (not Tatooine, the series' previous sandy landscape) that reveals a downed X-wing, and behind it, a crashed Star Destroyer.

There's a voiceover that sounds like it might be Mark Hamill's Luke Skywalker, taking about the presence of the Force in his family over shots of Darth Vader's melted helmet, Luke (we think - there's a lot of speculation in this trailer) placing a mechanical hand on R2-D2 and someone (presumably Leia, going by the dialogue) being handed a lightsaber.

As the voiceover concludes, the establishing shots start to come thick and fast. There's another look at the



Photo: JJ Abrams/Disney

X-Wings skimming across the lake from the first teaser, replete with a far more excited Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac).

Other highlights include the first close-up of Daisy Ridley, the previously unknown soon-to-be-star,

as Rey, as well as confirmation that John Boyega's Finn is a stormtrooper of some kind. Throw in a glimpse of Kylo Ren, the film's big bad, more of the Millennium Falcon and a chrome-plated stormtrooper, and *Star Wars* looks very exciting indeed...

The Age of Ultron is upon us

It's time for the final entry in Marvel's 'Phase Two', as the Avengers come together once more to face their greatest foe

JACK STEADMAN
SECTION EDITOR

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

Director: Joss Whedon

Screenplay: Joss Whedon

Cast: Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Jeremy Renner, Scarlett Johansson, Mark Ruffalo



There's a lot to be said about sequels and their relationships to their predecessors, and it's almost all been said before. So with the usual preamble resoundingly skipped, the heart of the matter is this: *Age of Ultron* very much shares the traditional trait of being a 'darker' sequel. It sheds the bombast and excitement of the first Avengers film for something more intense, more personal, and ultimately more fulfilling.

The first film was very slow-burn, taking its time to piece the team together – often by pitting the various Avengers against each other first – before everything comes together in a triumphant climactic battle in the middle of New York.

Age of Ultron gets all of that business out of the way immediately, opening in medias res with the Avengers' assault on Baron von Strucker's mountainous fortress (last seen in the post-credits stinger for *The Winter Soldier*).

Within the first few minutes, there's a new twist on that shot from the last film, as well as a chance to see all of the Avengers in action – including the new additions to the equation, Quicksilver (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) and Scarlet Witch (Elisabeth Olsen), although they're not called that here. Not yet. This early on, they're still Pietr and Wanda Maximoff – and they're on the opposite side to the Avengers.

Any fears that this version of Quicksilver wouldn't match up to the one seen in last year's *X-Men: Days of Future Past* can be laid to rest; while he doesn't quite have any one moment that matches up to his X-Men

counterpart's starring moment, this Quicksilver has a more prolonged role in the storyline to compensate.

Naturally this first battle is won by the Avengers – although the Maximoffs are still at large – and it appears that Hydra may have finally been put to rest, and the team can relax in style.

At the party, Whedon's typical quick-witted interplay comes to the fore, providing a stream of laughs while also showing that these are all characters he understands. A contest to try and lift Thor's hammer quickly lays out the traits of the group alongside a healthy dose of comedy.

And then Ultron (played magnificently by James Spader) arrives to ruin it all.

Ultron is a fascinating villain. Despite the film's hefty running time, and his presence in most of it, he still feels weirdly under-used.

Created by Tony Stark (Robert Downey, Jr.) in an attempt to craft a global peace-keeping program, he definitely has some daddy issues alongside his need to see the human race driven to extinction for its own good.

His reasoning behind this – and therefore his entire motivation for doing anything in the film – doesn't feel as fully explored or fleshed out as it could be. It just sort of 'is.' It's acknowledged a lot, but not really discussed.

The daddy issues only really get one moment of being dealt with – and it's a glorious one that reveals volumes about Ultron as a character, which is why it's a shame there aren't more of them.

But there's always an underlying tension to the whole thing, with Ultron very much being his father's creation: even his speech rhythms subconsciously echo Stark's, making for some entertaining subversion of standard villain tropes.

But while the father-son dynamic of Stark and Ultron doesn't fully get its due, the relationships between other characters are almost all given a chance to shine. Vision in particular gets his own father-son storyline with Ultron – one which has a great deal more resolution than Ultron and Stark's – and it's one that lands with genuine meaning.

More generally, where *Avengers* had

to do a lot of leg work in just getting everyone together, *Age of Ultron* starts off with pretty much everyone involved (at least early on) being a known quantity.

With that, it has plenty of room to go off and explore the bonds between characters, and toy with just how they bounce off one another.

The connection between Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) and Bruce Banner/the Hulk (Mark Ruffalo) seems to have only grown since the first film – not something anyone really seems to have seen coming – while the ideological conflicts between Captain America (Chris Evans) and Iron Man start to simmer nicely before *Civil War*.

Age of Ultron is a hugely character-driven piece, much more so than its predecessor (and arguably the other Marvel films). It's to Whedon's enormous credit that it never loses any entertainment value for that, and it feels like a much richer film for it.

Avengers occasionally stumbled in its handling of characters, often feeling like the Tony Stark Show, to the detriment of smaller characters like Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), which is probably why it's such a joy here that Hawkeye is the absolute heart of *Age of Ultron*.

It's hard to put into words just how much Hawkeye matters to this film. Almost all of the humanity either comes from or is directly related to him, and it gives the film the vast majority of its emotional beats.

Discussions on how mere mortals like Hawkeye are working alongside these gods (literally, in one case) to become something genuinely heroic, simply because it's their day job. Inspiring speeches on duty and sacrifice. Musings on family, and what being an Avenger means for that. It all stems from Hawkeye. And it is wonderful.

The only thing that stops him from stealing the entire show is The Vision (Paul Bettany). The Vision is an absolute picture – he looks deliriously weird, and it feels like he marks the point where the Marvel Cinematic Universe finally tips over into the kooky, magical space drama side of things.

Guardians of the Galaxy was the first film to really embrace that non-Earth-bound side of the universe,

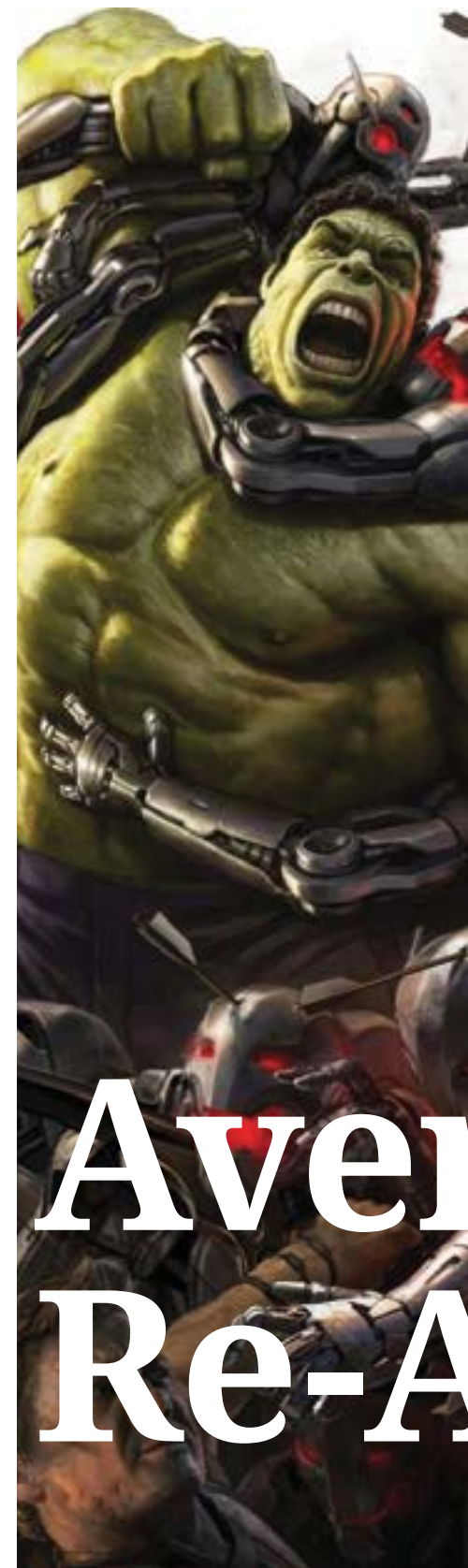


Photo: Joss Whedon/Disney

and it was a resounding success, so it's not exactly an original claim, but the arrival of Vision heralds the dawn of Phase 3. You can feel the shift happening around him, as the dark, broody Phase 2 gives way to the gloriously insane, enormous in scale Phase 3.

The film embraces Vision's weirdness with outright glee, and he's easily the best addition to the franchise from this film.

That shift between MCU Phases doesn't come without its simultaneous upsides and downsides, however.

There are multiple references to future storylines that feel more than a little shoe-horned in: Thor's side-plot

"Age of Ultron is very much a traditional 'darker' sequel."

"Ultron is a fascinating villain [but] he feels weirdly under-used."

Film

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Film Editors || Ellen Mathieson, John Park and Jack Steadman



Avengers Assembled

with the Infinity Stones doesn't do a huge amount beyond introduce them (once more) as a concept, and vaguely set up *Ragnarok* in the process (in its defence, it does at least get closure of sorts, so it's not exactly an unresolved plot-thread that doesn't work in-film).

The various mentions of Wakanda (the home of Black Panther) appear in a scene that feels like it might well have been cut if it didn't need to exist to set up those plot threads – although since that scene then leads to Ultron's daddy issues outburst, it's a fairly good one to have kept in.

One of the main disappointments from the film actually comes from the absence of a future film set-up: FX plates were shot for an appearance

"The film embraces Vision's weirdness with outright glee."

by Captain Marvel in the film's final scene, but she was ultimately switched out for another (unnamed here) character.

All this talk of character beats and emotions doesn't mean that *Age of Ultron* doesn't still deliver on the action. It does, it really does.

The special effects are second to none, the action is (mostly) wonderfully shot (it occasionally gets a little choppy and confusing, a complaint that never held for the first film), and it makes great use of all the characters.

There's no standout moment – nothing like "Hulk... smash" or Iron Man's adventure into the portal – but there are plenty of cheer-worthy

segments (one hit in particular triggered the audience I was with to burst out into cheering and applause), and it's still a visual treat.

Whedon knows that what was magical once won't necessarily be magical again, and he's delivered a different film that satisfies those needs while also providing something more.

It's not as euphoric as *Avengers*, but that may well have been asking the impossible, and the unnecessary. In place of the euphoria comes something more mature and more meaningful. Where there was once only the fight, now there is a reason to keep fighting.

You can't ask for more than that.

"In place of euphoria comes something more mature."

But what about the 3D?

As with almost every major blockbuster being released these days, *Age of Ultron* has been released in both 3D and 2D. But is the extra spend on the 3D worth it?

Unless you're heading to see the film in IMAX, not really. The 3D does get some use, but it's nothing special and its presence doesn't really add to the film in any noticeable way.

The visual are plenty sumptuous enough without it.



No. 1603
1st May -
8th May 2015
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PRIVATE ICL

STUDENTS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO PROVE THEY SHOULDN'T BE INVOLVED IN POLITICS



INSIDE: KAYE ACTUALLY FARAGE LOVECHILD?

HANGMAN



News in Brief: UK set to elect man in 2015 General Election

hangman@imperial.ac.uk

Hangman exclusively reveals Summer Ball headliner

Using some of the most complex algorithms known to man, our staff at Hangman have managed to decode the puzzle for who would be headlining the Imperial summer ball, eventually discovering that the answer was “Green”.

Hangman then proceeded to dig up Alan Turing’s body and reanimate it. Once he had regained consciousness, Hangman forced him to help us work out that this clue was referring to the fact that the main act would in fact be Natalie Bennett, leader of the Green Party.

After Alan had done that we then coerced him into hacking into the Green party’s email system, which took no time at all due to their password being “I <3 trees”.

From this, Hangman can now exclusively reveal the content of Bennett’s act.

From what we’ve been able to decode from their illiterate ramblings, there will be a live compost act to start off with, followed by her showing the audience how

to reuse your old tea bags to make a deckchair.

There is then the promise of some of Bennett’s hot tracks from her as-yet unreleased mixtape which is set to debut if they ever win any seats outside of Brighton, so it’s very likely this will be a one off performance.

This mixtape contains such hits as “No plans for where the money for our policies will come from”, and “We’ll ban animal testing, regardless of the help they provide for modern medicine”.

Hangman also found blueprints for a mobile solar panel that would “create energy from how on fire Bennet’s mixtape would be”, filling us with a lot of optimism for June the something-th, and we’re sure that all seven people that have bought tickets will enjoy the display.

For many this will be a controversial choice as in the recent Hangman election survey, nobody said they would fuck or marry Natalie Bennett.

The “fuck, marry, avoid” survey was answered by 749 Imperial students

(more than the *Felix* General Election exit poll, Hangman is obliged to point out).

In fact, we can now reveal that 56% of imperial students would fuck David Cameron, with many citing their wish to hate fuck them as their motivation.

One student said that they would marry Ed Miliband due to the fact his deep brown eyes filled them with not only a heavy sense of security, but also an uncontrollable urge to fuck him right in the arse with a kiwi fruit.

Nick Clegg received an incredibly large number of avoid votes, which when Hangman contacted him for his opinion, replied that he was “extremely disappointed”, and said that “he would be more committed this time”.

Hangman now does not reply to his calls anymore and has blocked him on Facebook.

Unfortunately the amount of nudes we’re currently getting sent is slowing down our servers and we might have to take out a restraining order in order to get this issue out on time.

NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS



Felix Editor attempts to liven up Staff Briefings



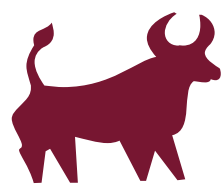
Hangman “too meta for its own good”

HOROSCOPES



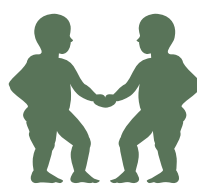
ARIES

This week you discover that Masters degree you received still isn’t worth a lot so you have to find some extra money. After much desperation you find a grant for married Greek women, and marry a waiter called Savas so you can afford it- he does have a penchant for anal, but you can’t have everything.



TAURUS

This week after Tom Wheeler gets Dib Dabs in the shop, you decide to get one. Flooded with nostalgia you buy 50 of them; however after having two you realize sherbet isn’t that great and you have wasted your money. This isn’t a joke, I just feel I need to share my poor decisions with the readers.



GEMINI

This week you go to see Imperial’s University Challenge team compete, hoping to meet sex symbol Jeremy Paxman. At the after party you get talking and one thing leads to another and you find out you’re carrying his baby. Perhaps this child can fill that empty space in your life?



CANCER

This week you have an anatomy lecture. However, you forget to actually register what it’s specifically about, so on your second day after Easter break you are subjected to a tirade of images of dissected genitalia. You also realize this is the first time you’ve seen any genitals since freshers week.



LEO

This week you decide to join in on the Milifandom on twitter and get to making friends with a politically conscious 17 year old who subsequently invites you on a date to their house. When you arrive you find out it was actually a truck driver from Leeds called Barry who forces you to eat Doritos off his dog.



VIRGO

This week in an attempt to cram as much as possible for your exam, you drink a litre of Red Bull; however this has serious psychoactive effects, causing you to revise for 48 hours in a row. When you review your notes the day after, you realize you had just written Chris Kaye’s name 10122 times.



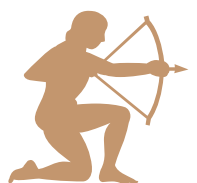
LIBRA

This week you realize that you have left your accommodation for next year too late, and all your friends have already found people to live with. You then live in the library next term; however you unfortunately realize that at night Alice Gast patrols the library, consuming any sleeping Chinese students.



SCORPIO

This week you realize that due to the shorter final term, you have money left over in your student loan, which you decide to spend on a sex doll of Nigel Farage. Unfortunately your Erasmus friend spots you in the act, and has subsequently fled the country. At least you have Nigel.



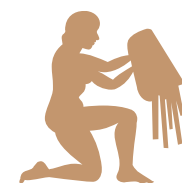
SAGITTARIUS

This week you share an article about politics from the Guardian on Facebook, instantly making you an expert on politics. Tom Wheeler hands over his presidency to you, you’re offered a job at the Guardian, and you win a Pulitzer and a Nobel peace prize. You then wake up from your wet dream.



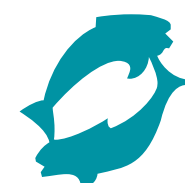
CAPRICORN

This week in the midst of a revision slump, you check your Facebook and realize that all your friends from home have all finished university already, while you still have several weeks until the end of exams. At least we’re getting fresh pizza bases next year.



AQUARIUS

This week you decide to go to the protest against the beach body ready advert in Hyde Park, to show everyone that you should love your body and not be concerned about whether or not you fit in. Unfortunately everyone is repulsed by you in beach wear and you’re asked to leave.



PISCES

After spending 4/20 blazing it up in Hyde Park, you made friends with a friendly drug dealer who you, whilst quite high, gave your number. Unfortunately they keep sending you nudes and upon closer inspection, it was actually just the *Felix* Editor.

Blue News

The weekly newsletter of the Faculty Building

Provost Post of the Week

Every week, a member of our esteemed Provost board shares their thoughts with our collaborative, cohesive community. This week, we welcome Al Pologies, Vice Provost (Arbitrary Excuses)!

Unfortunately, Al was unable to write this week's column, as he was called away to deal with a sudden outbreak of cancellations.

Al would like to apologise for his absence, and would like me to let you all know that it was entirely beyond his control.

In place of the Provost Post, we're running a short advert for a brand new product from a start-up led by a team of Imperial graduates!

Hi everyone!

We're UCK - the Useful Company for Keyboards - and we're delighted to introduce our very first keyboard, the "Corporate Time Saver"!

We all know that it's a tough life in the world of business, where every second of every minute of every hour counts in making sure you can be the most productive and efficient worker possible.

One of the biggest problems that we identified with our focus groups was the very act of typing.

Having to bash out each individual character was consuming precious seconds, especially when having to produce reports that repeated commonly-used words several times.

It's with that problem in mind that we've created the CTS keyboard, designed exclusively for office workers who need to produce a lot of reports in the shortest time possible.

Instead of individual letters, each key is a commonly-used "business speak" word, such as "collaboration" or "meeting".

Within seconds, you can fire off an email requesting a meeting on productivity in the board room, and sign it with your own personal signature.

We're really pleased with this new product, and we hope you all like it too. If you have any queries, drop us a line at QuestionsForUCK@UCK.co.uk

Hello all,

Bienvenue, willkommen and welcome to the latest edition of Blue News, which we've tinged with a slight international flavour this week to reflect the global nature of our world-leading institution.

This week, you may have noticed an increase in noise around the South Kensington campus. After being reliably informed by the Vice Provost (Noise Complaints) that this wasn't due to sudden rioting in the local area, it was actually the return of the undergraduate students to the campus for their "term time", I decided it was the perfect time to take a brief trip out into the world to visit these delightful young people who so generously contribute to the funding of our institution.

With a small team of excited Vice Provosts accompanying me*, including the Vice Provost (Brand Awareness), who kept stopping to put posters for Imperial Festival up on every wall, I ventured forth on Wednesday to the Imperial College Union Building, located just on the other side of Prince Consort Road, for a chat with some of the students and a quick tour of the facilities.

I had an extremely productive meeting with the Office Trustees of the Union, where we discussed how we could greater improve collaboration between the good folks at the Union and the lovely team here in the Faculty Building. A lot of good ideas were proposed (mostly by yours truly, it must be said), including the possibility of appointing a new Vice Provost (Collaboration).

The position of Vice Provost (Collaboration) is now open to all applicants, with anyone wishing to be considered for the position needing to submit a resume (including evidence of past collaborative efforts) alongside a covering letter explaining how they feel they can help improve cohesion and efficiency all across campus.

Have a productive, cohesive, collaborative and happy day!

*Sadly, the Vice Provost (Student Voice) had to stay behind, as he became a little too excited at the thought of actually speaking to students. His position is now under informal review.



Alice Gast: Thought of the Week

"Collaboration collaboration collaboration world-leading collaboration innovation institution collaboration collaboration yoga mat world-leading Board Room collaboration efficiency productivity collaboration world-leading yoga mat commissioning an independent report collaboration."

(Editor's note: Alice has been using her new CTS keyboard this week, and would like to express her thanks to UCK for their kind gift!)

What is going on inside the Blue Cube this week

Hopefully everyone is feeling refreshed and raring to go after their complimentary holiday period over the Easter weekend!

But with that disruption in our lives out of the way, we're back to our normal exciting schedule with plenty of delightful events lined up for the coming week!

Imperial Festival Briefing

I'm sure you're all aware of the upcoming Imperial Festival, a campus-wide celebration of all thing scientific, but the Vice Provost (Brand Awareness) has asked me to let you all know about this week's special briefing to let staff know just what's going on with the Festival.

Come along to the Briefing Room on the Fifth Floor at 1pm on Monday to get a sneak peek at the Festival and find out how to get involved!

Don't forget to bring your yoga mat as usual, and green tea will (of course) be provided.

Advice on: Budgeting

On Wednesday, we'll be kicking off a new weekly session open to all staff members, our "Advice On" series!

The inaugural session will be on "Budgeting", and how best to juggle your income with your expenditure. We all know London can be expensive, and we want to make sure all of our staff are fully equipped to survive life in the capital.

All-Staff Briefing Cancelled

Our weekly staff briefing has been cancelled by the Vice Provost (Arbitrary Excuses) due to a mix-up with what a Staff Briefing actually entails.

Fear not, we have an intrepid team of staff working at this very moment on defining what a Staff Briefing is. We look forward to reading their report and passing the conclusions on to you when their investigations conclude next February.

What is going on outside the Blue Cube this week

The annual tradition of supplanting Queen's Lawn with a beautiful marquee continues this term, as we prepare for multiple events that can only boost Imperial's brand awareness.

Also, don't forget to keep an eye out for our new adverts for Imperial Festival!

SPORT

Sport Editor: Kunal Wagle

Varsity recap: IC takes down the medics

Bruno Villatte recaps the flair displayed by ICURFC's 3rd XV...

The big day has arrived for Imperial College 3rd XV, varsity. Despite the defeat in the friendly against Surrey the previous week, training had allowed the team to gain confidence, and it was with high morale and motivation that the team entered the field. After a speech, made up of fine words with a rare elegance, reminding us of the long history of love we have with Medics, the team was ready for battle.

After a light observation round, IC started to gain possession, eventually leaving the referee with no choice but to blow his whistle for IC (yes, his whistle was still working at this time). After a first touch not found, the second penalty hit the mark.

A good lineout maul advanced ten meters with the ball coming into the hands of Bruno "Jules Plisson" "flair god" "baguette man" Villatte. A signature dummy back pass with Tom Murray bamboozled the low IQ medics, with only the fullback was still able to defend. Very good support by Syarif "3s convert" Hertog made it a 2-on-1, and a try under the posts. 7 - 0

Despite the wind, IC had the only real attacking opportunities for the first 30 minutes, this was helped largely by the numerous knock-ons from Medics' backline. More awesome work from IC's forwards allowed the ball to be quickly ejected by Luke "El Presidenté" Armitage (surely helped by his new hair cut). Bruno took full advantage and, without his pair of centers, feinted the pass and broke the line on 30m finally using some flair footwork to score second try of the game.

Unfortunately he had the same success as Haimona for the kick and failed in the conversion. 12 - 0

The last ten minutes of the first half were one-sided in favour of the Medics, who took advantage of hand mistakes from IC's players. After 5min of intensive rush defence right in front of the goal line, Jono "Captain Transport" Stancombe took one for the team, getting himself binned. Ten scrums on the five meters line later, the Medics finally scored. 12 - 5

Half-time: Imperial College 3rd XV 12 - 5 Imperial Medics 3rd XV

The second half began in a similar way to the first, IC still strong in defence but now, with the wind in our favour, the pressure was easy to put on the Medics. Outrageous scrum domination by IC, sadly didn't materialise in penalties. Nevertheless, IC quickly returned into the opposites 22. After another good lineout maul, next year's 3s Captain Matt "port connoisseur" Kettle got the score. Another conversion missed by Bruno; he seemed more comfortable with his hands than with his feet today. 17 - 5

In spite of the desire to play a beautiful rugby, the first part of the second half was poor.

Too many hand mistakes on both sides meant neither side could gain any momentum.

Even the whistle of the referee decided to stop working. This gave the opportunity of a mini break, whilst the ref made the slow-but-steady jog to get another whistle.



Ruffman in play whilst a medic ballerina in a rugby kit looks on Photo: Ben Lester www.throughbenslens.co.uk

Half-half-time: Imperial College 3rd XV 17 - 5 Imperial Medics 3rd XV

After this unexpected break, IC started to keep the ball and a penalty gave the opportunity to approach the line. A good lineout and a strong maul after, Matt fell just over the goal line for his second try! Thankfully no one notice the conversion was missed, not that it was needed. 22 - 5

The medics continued to try to break the defence but the pressure and some big tackles from IC players forced them to make mistakes.

After knock-on from Medics, scrum down. The ball went straight through the channel, unusually the referee decided that the game should

continue, resulting in the Medics recovering the ball in front of the incredulous eyes of IC's players. After 3 or 4 quick passes to the wing where IC's players were not in a defensive position, the Medics scored their second try of the game. 22 - 10.

Frustrated by this try, IC really wanted to finish this Varsity game on a high note.

The pressure was very intense inside the medics 22 and after a good change of direction in the game called by Syarif, and great 2-on-1, Bruno dived over for the second time. Bruno finally decided to let Syarif take the kicking responsibility who added the extras. 29 - 10.

Not satisfied, IC continued to play, this time with one goal, flair. An

unreal attempt of a "Sonny Bill", off a great run from Tom "doesn't have the English weakness" Murray, ended in a knock-on, 5 meters in front of the goal line.

A quite unbelievable turn of events happened next, firstly out very own Jon Lineham made an incredible line break, then he ran 50m to score a wonderful "Teddy Thomas style" try, only for the the referee to go back to a scrum, in FAVOUR of IC. No one is quite sure what happened.

A very strong defence, massive performance from the forwards and some incredible French Flair, was just too much for the medics.

Varsity 2015 was of to a great start! That is, if the 3s would remember the rest of the day...



2nd team huddle, with one well dressed fan of the team in attendance too. Photo: Ben Lester www.throughbenslens.co.uk

...but 2nd XV medics took the lead

Having watched the 3rd XV put in a magnificent and flair dominated performance, the IC 2nd XV stepped out into the sun looking to complete the holy grail of a 3W Varsity. Unfortunately it was not to be.

The game set off with a few tense first collisions, the Medics managed to secure possession early on. A simple set play from the Medic back line culminated in a rather silly looking Will "face-plant" Taylor and led to the first Medic try, despite excellent cover tackling from Gavin Roberts. 0 - 7.

In what seemed slight role reversal from the 3s game, unfortunate errors struck the IC line. Another moment from Taylor, after a brilliant Tom Mavin offload, left us unable to capitalise fully despite a good penalty from Charles "owns a safari park" Price-Smith. 3 - 7.

A series of penalties and bad luck left the forwards putting in a huge shift on our line, finally after a scrum it had seemed we'd survived, but with extra players

drawn gaps appeared. A simple shift out wide gave their winger amply room to score. 3 - 12.

IC rallied forcing our way into their half and after a good driving maul Jamie Curtis was able to break the line and score. We therefore went in to half-time a mere 2 points down.

The second half was a very ragged affair with IC desperately trying to gain territory against the wind and hill. In going for territory, possession was sacrificed; meaning chances were few and far between. The Medics were able to get one over despite wonderful defensive work from Roo, among others. 10 - 19.

Despite the result, a large squad of very promising freshers and a broadly successful year, despite circumstances, mean that the IC 2nd XV finished the season with their heads held high. Next year's meeting will be a chance to show the medics what we're really made of.



Imperial's Volleyball club is served sweet success this year

ICVC sees their mens team becoming BUCS Trophy Champions



The Men's team receiving the BUCS trophy Photo: ICVC

The start of the year already hinted at a great volleyball season to come; with over 120 people attending the taster session and a record-high membership of 87.

After an absence of two years, the women's BUCS team returned to the first division for the 2014-15 season. Throughout the season the women's team had a solid performance even when it was at times a struggle. An example being the away match vs Kent University, for which, due to illnesses and work deadlines, the team travelled with only the bare minimum of six players (our libero having to play opposite).

Not having the luxury of substitutes, the 5-set match left the players exhausted. Even though it was a 3-2 loss our players should be

proud of the fight they put up in this extremely close match. By the end of the season, the IC women's BUCS team took the third place in the league, only below the well-deserved first place for University of East London and second place for University College London. The final league standings only confirm that the team deserved the promotion to first division.

The men's BUCS team looked promising with a number of returning players as well as new high-level recruits. The men were on course for a promotion to the Premier League, having only lost their away match to Portsmouth.

All hopes were therefore placed on the Portsmouth home match as a win would have resulted in a first

place in the league and a promotion play-off match. Unfortunately, the great success the men were achieving in their Trophy competition, meant clashes with league matches and much rescheduling, ultimately resulting in the men's team having to play three crucial matches in the final week of the BUCS season.

The home match against Portsmouth ended up having to be played in a training slot and with some challenging circumstances the men's team were unfortunately unable to reach their full potential, losing 3-1 to a strong Portsmouth.

Regardless of the disappointment of not getting first position in the league the men were determined to come away with a win for the BUCS Trophy competition. Throughout the

Trophy knockout matches the men remained undefeated, not even losing a single set.

Overcoming many worries and uncertainties about the Final in Loughborough (the match being on a Tuesday in the final week of term!), the whole team eventually made it to the final match.

Specially thanks to the support of Sport Imperial who were instrumental in ensuring player availability and transport. The result speaks for itself, the BUCS men became BUCS Trophy Champions in an impressive performance in a match of just under an hour, defeating Northumbria 2nd 3-0 (25-16, 25-8, 25-13).

Besides the competitive success, the Club had many other greats and

firsts this season expanding our reach as a club beyond the volleyball community at Imperial. ICVC introduced charity matches, raising money on two occasions for the charities Prostate Cancer and MAG (Mines Advisory Group) respectively.

The Club also had numerous mixed training sessions including friendly mixed tournaments, always with chocolate prizes!

Food is also generally the focal point at our socials, having many skilled cooks and bakers among our members, bringing dishes such as tiramisu, spanakopita, lemon cheesecake, brownies and much more home-made goodness.

Following on from this year, we cannot wait to see what next season brings!