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Issue 1607

May 29th 2015

Arts: The Power of Theatre

Felix reviews four new theatre shows across London

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Imperial mental health survey: three in four are stressed or have a mental health condition

- Twice as many students experience stress compared to other UK universities
- Student campaign recommends improvements for support services

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Felix Editor || Philippa Skett

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Imperial can do more to help us stress less

This week we are publishing the results from the student-led mental health survey, that has finally quantified a lot of the anxiety and disquiet students at Imperial feel on a monthly, weekly and even daily basis. The survey, put together by the Imperial College Union campaign *Mentality*, has given students an opportunity to voice their experiences with stress and mental health, and although the results are shocking, they are not surprising.

Mental health is important. Talking about mental health is important, and sharing advice and support about mental health is also important. The *mentality* campaign has done a great job of raising awareness and opening a dialogue about mental health, and they have made a great number of recommendations for the treatment and support for students who suffer from mental health conditions too.

Although some may be easier to implement than others, all are worth doing if they make just one student more capable of getting to the end of their degree and leaving with a qualification they deserve.

When it comes to managing student stress though, it is unclear as to why some of the more simplistic mechanisms that could alleviate a lot of the pressure have not been put in place before.

Stress and mental wellbeing are two ends of the same spectrum, and although we can never say definitively that too much stress can lead to anxiety, depression, insomnia etc, I have definitely seen friends and peers pushed to the limit with work load and revision and starting to exhibit symptoms that were a cause for concern.

Students at Imperial are clever, hard-working individuals; they wouldn't have made it past the first week of term if they weren't. We are students that thrive in competition and relish in success; great traits for the working world, but potentially harmful in large quantities when still trying to balance student life with all the other pressures of being a young adult.

Imperial can often harbour a rather intensive work environment,



THIS WEEK'S EDITORIAL

with many students all too familiar with working all-nighters, balancing multiple deadlines, struggling to find the hours in the day to complete coursework and burning out before exams.

The survey found that 39% of students suffer from mental stresses. Some stress is good for students; it drives them to finish lab reports, revise for exams and keeps them on their toes. It is only when this stress starts to hinder a student's ability to focus on other essential areas of life does this stress become damaging, and may be one of the factors that has driven the student satisfaction at Imperial so low in previous years.

Students time and time again complain to their department representatives and the Union about mounting deadlines, clashing coursework submissions and other factors of their degrees that add to this stress, and it is the sort of stress that can push students over the edge, whatever the edge may be for certain people.

I remember a particularly harrowing all-nighter spent in the library as my classmates and I battled to complete seven lab reports all due in for the following day; most of them managed, but I remember one just passing out and going home soon after.

The stress of those deadlines and the fallout from missing them could have been avoided if scheduling had been done more conscientiously, and it is little things like this that can make the life of a student more pleasant.

Imperial was never meant to be

easy; knowing us, we would have left complaining about what a waste of money it was if we weren't getting millions of contact hours and lab sessions. However there are simple things that Imperial can do to keep students satisfied with their education and not result in 75% of students being mentally distressed in some way.

Simple things like getting departments to spend that little bit longer teaching students just how to learn from lectures and tutorials instead of throwing them in at the deep end, or spacing out deadlines so they don't all sit in the middle of an Easter holiday or at the end of a term can all help students make it to the end of the year without burning out, stressing out, and even potentially dropping out as a result.

Personal tutors being trained in understanding the concerns of students is another key improvement that would work wonders in the lives of many nervous undergraduates (and postgraduates) could catch students as they fall at the first hurdle; I remember in my first week at Imperial going home at the weekend because I just couldn't cope (plus I was too hungover to breathe, let alone cook for myself).

I was lucky to have an incredible personal tutor who checked in on me to make sure I was ok, and made me feel more comfortable in what was a pretty stressful year all in all. Imagine if I hadn't come back after that first weekend: who would print all the typos in this paper then?

I hope College takes on board the recommendations *Mentality* have made, but doesn't overlook the simple things it can do straight away to alter the ethos of Imperial at departmental levels and below. Having welfare seminars behind closed doors doesn't help anyone.

Take a leaf out of *Mentality's* book and get people talking: arrange for tutors, lecturers and course convenors to talk to each other, to share best practice and making things easier for students as soon as they walk into the lecture theatre. You might find that other, bigger concerns might improve as a result too.

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Printed by Iliffe Print Cambridge, Winship
Road, Cambridge.

Registered newspaper ISSN 1040-0711
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Front page picture: John-Paul Jones
Top banner: Facebook



News

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

Study by Imperial Professor raises fears for diabetes screening in India

Kunal Wagle reports on the research into large-scale screening programmes

A study conducted by a team including a professor from Imperial College London has suggested that the large-scale diabetes screening programme in India will result in the public health system being overwhelmed.

The programme, which aims to screen the general population for type two diabetes, requires those who initially test positive to undergo a second test to confirm the diagnosis.

The study estimates that between 158 million and 306 million people will be asked to take the second test. However the study goes on to estimate that only between 26 million and 37 million people will actually be diagnosed with diabetes.

The study, published in *PLOS Medicine* uses mathematical models to estimate the outcome of screening the entire population of the country, which is about 1.25 billion. Three types of survey-based screening method were compared against

glucometer tests by researchers from the UK, US and India.

The lead author on the study was Dr Sanjay Basu, who is from the Prevention Research Center at Stanford University.

Dr Basu said “The tools we have available are just not good enough to make a programme like this worthwhile. Rather than screening the whole population, it would be more beneficial to rely on symptom-based diagnosis as many other countries do.

“Health system resources can then be focused on managing those we know have diabetes, whose care at the moment is suboptimal.”

If all 567 million people between the ages of 25 and 65 in India are screened for the disease, it is estimated that between 126 and 273 million people would be given a false positive in the first round of tests. This many incorrect results would create a cost of 169 million and 567

million dollars.

The Indian government has already screened 53 million people, using either a questionnaire or glucometer. Those who test positive have to undergo a blood test.

One of the authors of the study Dr Christopher Millett, who is from the School of Public Health at Imperial College, said “A huge number of people will be told they have a high risk of diabetes and have to undergo a second test.

“This will cause a lot of worry for these people unnecessarily, and will also place an enormous burden on the health system to carry out all these tests.”

It is believed that around 12 per cent of Indian adults have type two diabetes, most cases of which remain undiagnosed. The disease can lead to severe complications when mismanaged, such as stroke, cardiovascular disease, blindness, limb amputation and kidney failure.



Diabetes screening in Karnataka, India. Image: Trinity Care Foundation

Student's death prompts riots at Ain Shams University

NICK FARMER
NEWS WRITER

Ain Shams University in Cairo has had to cancel exams after fears of protests by students following the controversial death of Engineering student Islam Salah Al-Din Atitu.

Atitu's body was found on a desert road hours after he was called out of an exam by University staff at the request of an unidentified individual who is said to have escorted Atitu off-campus.

Egypt's Interior Ministry has said that Atitu was killed during a chase with Security Forces and that he was involved in the murder of Egypt's Homeland Security Colonel Wael Tahaoun in April. Claims of his involvement in the killing have attracted criticism, with the Student's Union calling them “a story falsely and deceitfully fabricated”.

The University has reportedly called in security forces to its campus to deal with student riots, whilst the Student's Union denies

any wrongdoing and has called on the University to release evidence surrounding Atitu's death, with many students resigning from the Union in protest at the perceived complicity of the University in the violent death of one of its students.

Reports indicate that the University has cancelled a number of exams for Engineering students to reduce the likelihood of protests, with students reporting that only those people with exams are being allowed on campus.

This is one of a number of incidents of violence on Egyptian university campuses since the controversial removal of President Morsi, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, by a military government in 2013. According to the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, an opposition group, at least 22 students have been killed on-campus over the last two years.

Amnesty International report that the human rights situation in Egypt has deteriorated rapidly, and that freedoms of expression, association and assembly have been severely restricted.

"at least 22 students have been killed on-campus over the last two years"

Imperial Scientists create model of extinct lung parasite

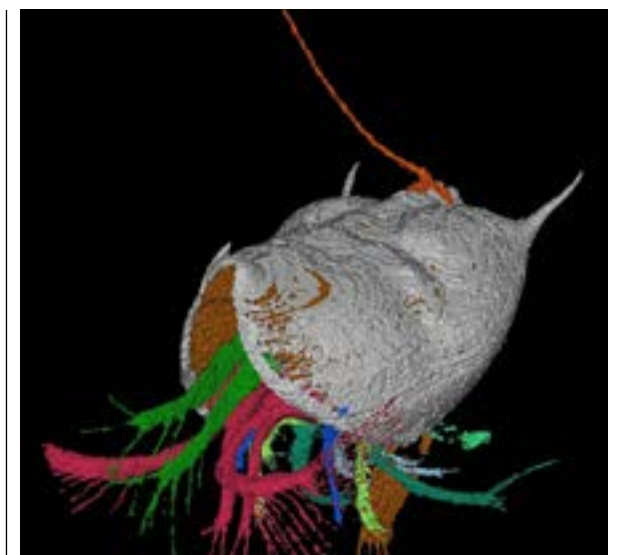
STEPHEN BALL
NEWS WRITER

A 3D model of a 425 million year old fossil of a sea creature has allowed researchers to obtain the first examples of *Invavita piratica* (invading pirate) an ancient ancestor of a lung parasite called Tung Worm, sometimes found in humans.

The research team from the University of Leicester including Imperial's Dr Mark Sutton, Department of Earth Sciences and Engineering, produced the model and are using it to gain a much better idea of how Tung Worm has evolved. This specimen is the first adult example of the parasite to be found.

Previously only larvae have been found in rocks from 500 million years ago. This meant that there was no evidence about the life of the adult parasite. The discovery of the adult parasite living on the outside of a sea creature indicates that the species has undergone drastic changes.

The research has been reported



As far as we can tell, it's basically a hermit crab. Image: Forbes

in *Current Biology*, with Dr Sutton reporting: “Fossils like this can genuinely cast light on things that would be otherwise fundamentally unknowable... we now have a much better idea of the evolutionary pathway this parasite took from external to internal.”

News

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News Editors

Carol Ann Cheah, Cecily Johnson & Kunal Wagle

Three out of four students at Imperial suffer from stress or have a mental health condition, survey finds

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

A College-wide survey has found that three out of four students have suffered from high levels of stress or a mental health condition whilst at Imperial.

The online survey, completed by over a thousand students, found that 39% of all respondents have suffered from mental stresses.

21% had or have been diagnosed with a mental health condition and a further 16% suspect they have a mental illness but are yet to be diagnosed. Only 15% of the total respondents said they had experienced no mental health conditions or damaging stress levels at all.

Out of those who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition, 67% suffer from depression, 42.4% suffer from anxiety, and 16% suffer from an eating disorder, amongst others. 42% of all those diagnosed with a mental health condition were suffering from multiple illnesses.

The survey also found that 69.5% of those that suffer from stress do so at least once a week, and 9% of students feel stressed constantly. 1 in 2 students feel anxious at least once a week, and nearly a quarter of students feel self-loathing over the same period of time.

36% of all respondents to the survey said they have had thoughts of self-harm at least once a year, and 35% reported they had had thoughts of suicide over the same time period. 9% of respondents reported having suicidal thoughts at least once a week.

When students described the various sources of their mental distress, 77% cited exams and revision, 64% cited concern over grades and academic performance, and 60% cited worry over balancing studying with other commitments.

Of note was that 35% of students worry over employability, despite Imperial being ranked first in the UK for career prospects in a recent Guardian university league table.

When dividing the data by gender, it was interesting to note that females and males suffered from different causes of stress at different proportions.

For males, 73% cited exams and revision as a cause of stress, whilst 82% of females cited exams and



The survey said that 21% of people had been diagnosed with a mental health condition. Photo: Newscast

revision as a cause. 56% of females cited low self-esteem as a cause of stress, whilst only 34% of males stated that self-esteem caused them mental distress too.

144 postgraduate students also filled in the survey, and 23% cited publication pressure as a cause for mental stress. 19% also stated that their relation with supervisor causes stress. 1 in 3 cited financial difficulties as something that lead to stress too.

When looking at the results collected from LGBT students, it was found that 38% of those that identify as either lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer find issues related to sexual orientation as causes for stress. Low self-esteem affected a higher proportion of LGBT students when compared to as a whole to the students who identify as heterosexual.

The survey also addressed what provisions students were aware of available at Imperial, and how many students had used in the past. 28% of students said they didn't disclose their feelings of mental distress with anyone, although more than half did say they confided in friends. 20% said they saw a GP, and 13% said they approached their personal tutor.

Around 1 in 4 students who have been diagnosed with a mental illness said they did not access any of the support services at Imperial. Out of those who had used the services, 19% said they didn't know where to find information about the services, whilst 16% said they had issues with long waiting times.

The survey was designed and ran by Imperial College Union campaign group Mentality, and collected data through an online questionnaire

circulated last term.

Mentality has been campaigning throughout the year to raise awareness around mental wellbeing at Imperial, and educate students about the importance of mental health. The survey results were published in a report earlier this week.

The report included a list of recommendations for improvements that could be made to the services available, which included reviewing and improving the training of personal tutors, hall wardens and hall seniors, and the potential to set up a trained student peer support groups, which are proving beneficial to be in other universities across the country.

The report also outlined improvements that could be made to the Counselling services, including introducing "out of hours" support and extra provisions during more

intense times of the year.

The Mentality campaign is lead by Beth Davison, a second year undergraduate student studying physics. She was inspired to start the campaign after suffering from depression in her first year of study.

The results of the survey were released earlier this week during the 7th Annual Welfare Seminar "The Problems students face," that took place in the Royal School of Mines building. Beth, other students involved with the Mentality Campaign, and members of Imperial College Union staff presented the results to members of College staff present at the seminar.

The seminar was not open to students to attend. However representatives from Imperial College Union, including Union President Tom Wheeler, engaged in

News

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News Editors

Carol Ann Cheah, Cecily Johnson & Kunal Wagle

uffer from high levels of student-led survey finds

various panel discussions discussing developing student support and wellbeing services.

During the Mentality presentation, Andrew Keenan, Education and Welfare manager of Imperial College Union, told those at the Welfare seminar: “Academic difficulty should not be measured or even correlated with stress caused. The students who lead Mentality are aware that any working environment will have a level of stress, as I’m sure many staff around the room can testify to.

“But the ‘good stress’ that keeps you motivated and produces results can mutate into the bad stress that endangers your health and happiness.

We should not defend an overly stressful curriculum purely by claiming it is academically necessary. That is no defence at all.”

Keenan described how there is a need to eliminate the causes of such pressures, not just to address the symptoms. “Too often do we

hear students who have pileups of coursework deadlines because their academics have not coordinated with each other.

“Too often do we hear of introductory talks at the start of the year where staff and older students talk up how scary and terrifying their workload is. We know there are projects underway in Chemistry and other departments to tackle this – we ask that every department does the same.”

Wheeler spoke to *Felix* about the survey after the seminar. Said Wheeler: “At Imperial College Union, we are immensely proud of the passionate, motivated students like Bethany who are out to enable ground-up progressive change for the student body at Imperial.

“The results that have come from the work Mentality has done is sending a clear, irrefutable message to every level of the institution.

“I am currently working to ensure

that these messages are listened to and are not ignored.

“The Vice-Provost (Education), Provost and President of College are all aware of Mentality’s work, and from the conversations I’ve had so far, there is a clear commitment to working together and taking collaborative responsibility for the mental wellbeing of our community.”

Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education), said: “I’m very grateful to Beth for her work on leading the Mentality campaign and producing this helpful report.

“We have a bright, hardworking and creative student community at Imperial, and we need to ensure they’re able to excel - both academically, and personally. To do this we need to ensure we are offering the appropriate services and support, and fostering a safe environment in which we can all talk openly about mental health and wellbeing without fear of stigma.”

Mentality’s recommendations to College

Mentality made a number of recommendations towards the end of the survey, which they think would improve the services available to Imperial students.

One of their biggest recommendations was that College should put “students’ mental wellbeing as a strategic priority over the next five years,” by committing to more training for student volunteers and staff alike.

They suggested the College reviews training already in place for personal tutors, Hall Wardens and Hall Seniors, especially when it comes to understanding anonymity and confidentiality.

They also recommended that students in welfare related volunteer roles within Imperial College Union receive mental health first aid training, meaning if students approach them they can offer a lot more support.

Mentality specifically recommended that the college invest in a partnership with Student Minds, a student mental health charity.

Other universities such as UCL and King’s College London have

already got involved with the scheme, and trained students to run peer support groups that other students can take part in to talk about their experiences, and share strategies to help them towards recovery.

The survey found that although the Counselling Service waiting times have improved, extra provisions should be put in place during times when more students are experiencing mental stresses, such as during exam times.

They also recommended that “out of hours” support should be considered, alongside the introduction of a self-assessment form that students could fill in ahead of time to ensure students are prioritised according to their immediate need.

Some of the remaining recommendations are focused around ease of access to services. The survey results showed that there is a high level of awareness of services available for students already, which is promising. However, when asked, students weren’t engaging with such services when they were in need.

69% of students did not access any of the support services at Imperial, although

Beth explained that although people have an idea of who can help when it comes to welfare concerns, when the time comes to actually reach out and find support, finding specific information could prove too difficult. “Some people may find it hard to actually dig out information, and when someone is suffering, that can be difficult to do when the time comes.”

Another recommendation therefore is to produce a clear document aimed at signposting students to relevant services, alongside clearer information on the college website and a targeted section within welcome packs for first year students.

Said Beth: “We heard from some students that were unhappy with the lack of support available on other campuses, but later found out that there are provisions at other locations, its just that students don’t know about them.

“Making it clearer where students can go to when they need help would be beneficial.”

Our mental wellbeing in numbers:

1115

The number of students who filled in the online survey

75%

Of the total respondents said they have experienced mental stresses or a mental health condition

20%

Of the total respondents have been diagnosed specifically with a mental health condition

16%

Of total respondents think they have an undiagnosed mental health condition

67%

Of those that stated they have a mental illness said they suffer from depression

42%

Of those with a mental illness said they have multiple mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety

77%

Of all respondents said they have experienced feelings of mental stress in relation to exams and revision

News

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News Editors

Carol Ann Cheah, Cecily Johnson & Kunal Wagle

Hall warden belittled my illness when I went to seek help for problems I was having with my roommate that were leaving me sleep deprived and depressed.

GP was very understanding and did not belittle me in any way. I felt I was taken seriously and was directed immediately to current support services.

I felt like I may have intruded on the time of my tutor.

My personal tutor was amazing. He talked to me and we decided together that I would take an interruption to studies and then helped me get into the swing of things when I came back.

IC Health centre has a long waiting list and you have to be referred if you are ill when there is an appointment.

If you miss an appointment with your GP they don't check up on you despite it being about a mental illness; the fact that you don't turn up should raise a red flag.

The IC health centre was sympathetic to my underlying medical condition that was causing my poor medical state and at that point helped me to quickly find a solution.

My personal tutor provided clear advice and good support, and counselling felt safe.

Mentality: We need to learn to address stress and realise we are all in this together

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

Mentality was started as a campaign this year, building on the success of the previous year. The campaign was run by a group of students and led by Bethany Davison, a second year physics student.

They secured £400 in funding from Imperial College Union to spend on publicity and events promoting the survey and mental health awareness, and with Union staff support put together their survey to finally quantify the mental health issues Imperial students face, sometimes on a daily basis.

Chris Kaye, Deputy President (Welfare), said about Mentality: "I'm delighted that a student-led campaign funded by Community & Welfare Board has been able to present such important data at the Welfare Seminar.

"It is a great success for Mentality and student-led campaigns as a whole."

Beth spoke to *Felix* about what spurred her on to start the campaign. Beth

described how she herself suffered from depression in her first year at Imperial, and although she said he

"I heard too many stories where the support given was just not good enough or non-existent."

experiences with Imperial welfare provisions were wholly positive, she still felt incredibly lonely.

"I got better and returned to Imperial adamant that no student should feel the same loneliness that I felt," said Beth. "The initial aims of Mentality were to increase awareness of mental health and the services at Imperial, reduce the stigma of mental health and to support students.

"As things started to progress, it became clear that my own positive experiences were not the norm. I heard too many stories where the support given was just not good enough or non-existent."

Beth said it was then they realised they needed to call for improvements, one of the main aims behind the survey results.

Explained Beth: "I don't want students and staff to think that the point of the survey report is to say 'Look at how bad Imperial is, everyone here is really stressed. It's a terrible place to be!'"

Yes, some of the statistics are pretty shocking and the personal stories paint a very grim picture and we don't want to shy away from that.

However, I also want people to look at the results and use them to challenge their own ideas and preconceptions about mental health, and to think a bit deeper about the

reasons behind these results and what they can do to improve the situation."

Beth uses the example of stress surrounding exams and revision, something that 77% of the respondents of the survey had experienced at one point during their time at Imperial. She explains that the answer isn't to simply get rid of exams, coursework or deadlines, but to teach students to manage stress and academic pressures in a healthy and positive way.

"To do this we could have departmental talks about dealing with stress, increase publicity for workshops run by the Counselling Service and do more to dispel some of the false rumours and beliefs that students have about exams and the way they're moderated."

"These are small changes which could make a difference to lots of students."

Beth also explained that we all need to work together to improve the mental wellbeing of students and staff at Imperial.

Said Beth: "We all need to be involved, whether it's as a student, taking the time to ask a friend how they really are or as a senior staff member in College, committing to expanding the counselling service.

"I want this report to be a positive thing and to inspire change."

"I want this report to be a positive thing and to inspire change."

Comment: Imperial needs to do more

Mental health is the great untackled health problem in the UK.

In a year 1 in 4 adults will experience a mental health problem and suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 35.

This week's results from the 'Mentality' campaign show that Imperial is no exception. Of those who completed the survey, over 82% of respondents experienced anxiety at least once a term and 72% experienced insomnia. 24% of students experienced suicidal thoughts at least once a term.

These statistics are shocking to any compassionate observer.

We live in an age of advanced medical care, where child mortality rates are at record lows and where our life expectancy is only continuing to grow and yet, we cannot tackle these fundamental problems that make life a misery for so many.

You're at a higher risk of a mental health problem if you're young, or if you are in a high pressure situation.

Welcome to Imperial College, which is full of young people, often away from home for the first time and often under pressure to meet a deadline.

There is no doubt to me that a university has a duty of care to its students.

As university is such a huge part of a student's life and the very nature of the degree can affect your health – it's right for Imperial to do what it reasonably can to help.

And it does; for example it funds a counselling service, often the first port of call for students, and it also provides funds to the health centre so that it is able to cater for all Imperial students, not just those living close to campus as well as working with the GPs in the health centre so that they understand Imperial's systems and how best to help a current student effectively.

This funding is however, under threat. A review recently recommended that students should seek help from their local

GPs paving the way for Imperial to retract funding.

This would have a major impact on student wellbeing. Whilst the health centre is not perfect, it is significantly better at dealing with students' problems than other GP surgeries in London.

Their GPs regularly meet with college staff, sit on committees, meet with senior tutors and work with the counselling service directly.

The health services at Imperial need all the funding they can get at the moment. Students are being denied the vital help they need because of months long waiting lists, which makes it more and more likely they have to take time out of

their course, their results suffer and most importantly, their health deteriorates further.

There are effective medical treatments for the vast majority of mental health problems.

No one should have to live with one forever, and no one should feel defined by it. In an ideal world, the NHS would provide all the treatment and help we could need, but this isn't that ideal world.

Imperial needs to support students to the best it can, it's in College's own interest to have healthy students and it needs to continue to effectively fund organisations that help that.

GEORGE BUTCHER

MEN+ALITY

News

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

Imperial students twice as likely to be stressed than national average

PHILIPPA SKETT
FELIX EDITOR

A similar survey was ran by the National Union of Students (NUS) back in 2013, which surveyed around 1200 students across the country via an online questionnaire.

The NUS found that 10% of students had already been diagnosed with a mental health problem, 2% were currently seeking a diagnosis and a further 8% believed they had a mental health problem but were not seeking diagnosis at the time.

The Mentality report however found that 20% of respondents said they had or still have a mental health condition. 67% of those who responded said they had never been diagnosed with a mental health problem at all, compared to 62% of Imperial students who said they did not have a mental health condition.

When asked what symptoms of mental distress students may have experienced at least once during their studies, 55% had said they had experienced anxiety and 49% of those who had responded had said they had felt a "depressed feeling."

However, the NUS survey found that only 14% of students have had thoughts of self-harm, and 13% have harboured suicidal thoughts during the time they have spent at their place of study.

These findings were lower than those from the Mentality survey; 35% of those that responded to the Imperial survey said they had experienced suicidal thoughts at least once a year, whilst 36% of the same sample reported experiencing thoughts of self-harm over the same time period.

Not only that, but the Mentality survey results suggested that Imperial students suffer from stress more often than students from other universities: only 31% of students

"Imperial students suffer from stress more often than students from other universities"



Exams are just one of the things that stress out Imperial students. Photo: Neville Miles

who responded to the NUS survey said they experienced stress at least once a week, compared to 69.5% of Imperial students who said the same.

The NUS survey found that 26% of those experiencing mental distress didn't tell anyone about their feelings, a similar percentage to those at Imperial who also didn't enclose their feelings with anyone.

Both the NUS survey and the Mentality survey found that students are reluctant to talk to personal tutors or other academic members of staff; out of the Imperial students who stated that they were suffering from mental distress, only 13% discussed their concerns with their personal tutor, whilst nationally, the NUS survey found that only 14% of students did the same.

That's not to say students nationally are not aware of some of the services available; the NUS found that 79% of students acknowledge that their GP or Doctor can provide

advice or support services.

However, only 58% were aware that their place of study can help, whilst a smaller portion of only 35% of those asked were aware that their Student Union could offer advice and support.

76% of Imperial students said in their Mentality survey response that they are aware that their personal tutor can provide support, and 43% said they knew they could approach their Students' Union Welfare Officer.

So how do we compare nationally? According to the Mental Health Foundation, 1 in 4 people will experience some kind of mental health problem over the course of a year, with anxiety and depression coming top as the most common mental disorders.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has forecast that by 2020, depression will be the second leading contributor to the global burden of disease.

"1 in 4 people will experience some kind of mental health problem over the course of a year"

Where you can find support at Imperial

Many students go to their **personal tutors** first when experiencing difficulties coping with stress and other mental health problems.

The **Union's Advice Centre** can also provide impartial advice when you feel your department can't help.

Imperial Health Centre offers a range of support including

referrals, and they have a lot of experience with mental health issues among students.

Your **local GP** will be able to provide the same service.

Through the **Counselling Service** students can access trained professionals to help talk through their problems.

Important contacts:
Student Counselling Service
Phone: 020 7594 9637
e-mail: counselling@ic.ac.uk

Imperial College Health Centre
Telephone: 020 7584 6301
e-mail: healthcentre@ic.ac.uk

Samaritans (24 hr helpline)
Phone: 08457 90 90 90

www.samaritans.org.uk

No Panic
Phone: 0808 800 2222
(daily, 10:00 - 22:00)
www.nopanic.org.uk

Anxiety UK
Phone: 08444 775 774
(Mon-Fri 09:30 - 17:30)
www.anxietyuk.org.uk

I just needed an outlet to talk and give me a boost. I wish I had contacted someone sooner.

I was under the impression that we had to 'deal with it ourselves.' My dept head talked about only coming to see him in extenuating circumstances.

Welfare officer and wardens great to chat with and just have someone to listen, not necessarily analysing everything I say, just being there for me.

My personal tutor, although a good tutor, had no advice to offer and seemed uncomfortable and out of his depth when I said I was struggling.

I asked for a counselling appointment, but the first available is in months and meanwhile I am left alone.

Student Counselling was extremely difficult in the beginning, but the counsellor allowed me to take my time, and helped me greatly in clearing my mind.

One Imperial GP told me to "stop being silly" when I had self harmed severely and taken an overdose... it shouldn't be a lottery whether you're going to get good care.

Counselling felt like they were working against a ticking clock the entire time because they don't have enough time/staff for students, which I guess is not their fault.

News

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

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

University League Tables – how does Imperial College London rank?

Cecily Johnson rounds up the various league tables from the last year

This week Imperial College London dropped three places in the Guardian's 2016 University Guide, taking eighth place out of 119 Universities.

The University of Cambridge came top of the table for the fifth year in a row. In second place again was the University of Oxford, followed by St Andrews in third.

The Universities of Surrey, Bath, Durham, Warwick, Exeter and Lancaster made up the rest of this year's top ten.

The league table, which ranks institutions offering undergraduate degrees in the UK, is known to place more weighting on student satisfaction and less on research than other similar tables.

Compared to the rest of the top ten, Imperial had the lowest score in all three student satisfaction ratings – overall course satisfaction, the quality of teaching and feedback received.

However in the category 'Career after 6 months', Imperial was awarded top marks. Imperial's average UCAS entry tariff was also amongst the highest on the table, behind only Oxford and Cambridge.

Breaking the Guardian's guide down to individual subjects, Imperial was top in the UK for Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering (joint with

Leeds), Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences.

Imperial were second for Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, fourth for Electronic and Electrical Engineering and fifth for Computer Sciences. Medicine and Physics managed eighth place while Chemistry were tenth.

Finally, Imperial took the 23rd place for Biosciences, despite achieving third place on The Complete University Guide's version of the tables.

Imperial achieved fourth place overall on The Complete University Guide, gaining two places from the previous year. Cambridge topped the list with Oxford and St Andrews taking the second and third places.

In terms of subjects, Imperial were in second place for Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Materials Sciences and Mechanical Engineering.

Imperial were third in the UK for Physics and Mathematics, fourth for Chemistry and fifth for Medicine. The Complete University Guide ranking criteria doesn't put as much emphasis on student satisfaction.

The Times Good University Guide also placed Imperial fourth overall in

the UK, this time behind Cambridge, Oxford and London School of Economics.

In terms of worldwide rankings, this year Imperial was ranked ninth overall in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, up from tenth last year.

Imperial College was ranked fourth in the world for clinical, pre-clinical and health subjects and sixth for engineering and technology. For life sciences Imperial was tenth and physical sciences twelfth this year.

Imperial also achieved 14th place in the Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings, down one place from 13th in the previous year.

Only three UK universities made the top 20 on these Times Higher Education rankings – the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and Imperial College London.

The World University Rankings are determined by studying performance indicators in five areas: teaching (30%), research (30%), citations (30%), industry income (2.5%) and international outlook (7.5%).

The Guardian University Guide breaks their scores down into a different set of indicators: teaching (10%), assessment and feedback (10%), overall student satisfaction (5%), the student-staff ratio (16.25%),



Criteria weighting for the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Photo: Times Higher Education

expenditure per student (10%), entry scores (16.25%) and career prospects (16.25%).

The last 16.25% is made up of 'value added scores', which compare the average entry grades of students on enrolment to their final awarded grade when they graduate, reflecting how difficult it is to get a good degree.

Data is collected from the institutions themselves. The UK rankings tend to also use information from the National Student Survey to gauge the level of student satisfaction.

The National Student Survey takes place annually, assessing the opinions of all final year undergraduate students at institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Collecting data via questionnaire, the survey covers the quality of

teaching, resources, assessment and feedback; the level of academic support available; and organisation and management at the university.

The data are analysed and an overall student satisfaction mark awarded. Imperial tends to perform poorly in comparison with other top universities in the UK.

Information gathered by Times Higher Education while compiling the tables has been used to determine that only 28 of the world's top 201 universities are currently run by women.

Under President Alice Gast, Imperial College London is among this mere 14% of institutions that are female-led. Nearly half of these universities are located in the United States.

Imperial College London	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Guardian University Guide	8th	5th	9th	13th	10th
The Complete University Guide	4th	6th	4th	4th	3rd
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	9th	10th	8th	8th	9th
Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings	14th	13th	14th	13th	11th

The last five years of Imperial's rankings. Photo: Cecily Johnson

Fat or muscle?

We are inviting healthy volunteers to take part in a research study comparing body fat and metabolism in young adults. It will involve a single visit to Chelsea & Westminster Hospital for 3-4 hours. You will have a full body Magnetic Resonance scan, which is safe, and does not involve x-rays. You will also be asked for a blood, and urine sample and a buccal swab taken from the inside of the mouth. This study is open to people aged 19-27 years; we would particularly welcome interest if you were born prematurely.

For more information please email James Parkinson, Research Associate, jrcp@imperial.ac.uk or text 07814 296596

News

news.felix@imperial.ac.uk

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

New scholarships for Chemical Engineering

Kunal Wagle reports as former student's donation extends scheme

The Chemical Engineering department has announced two new scholarships. The scholarships, which will provide tuition fees, a significant maintenance allowance, and a travel bursary, are made possible by a "generous gift" from Mrs Marit Mohn, who graduated from the department in 1973).

The scholarships, which are for PhD students of any nationality, form part of the extension of the Marit Mohn PhD scholarship scheme. The scheme was started in 2011, when it was established by another donation from Mrs Mohn. This is the latest in a string of donations made by Mrs Mohn to support education at Imperial College London.

Speaking about the new scholarship

Andrew Livingston, head of the department of Chemical Engineering, said "Her [Marit Mohn] support for scholarships is offering life-changing opportunities for generations of chemical engineers." He went on to say that staff at the department "are hugely grateful, not just for her financial support, but also for her interest in the department and its development."

The first scholar is expected to join the College in October 2015, with the second scholar following roughly a year later. The extension of the Marit Mohn PhD scholarship scheme means that the department will now have three scholarships available.

Donor Marit Mohn said of her donation, "The Department of Chemical Engineering at Imperial

is among the world's leaders and, as an alumna, I am proud to contribute to its further success and to give something back to the UK higher education system. Excellence in engineering will be a key to solving many of the problems the world faces today."

Professor Jeff Magee, who is Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, was also in high spirits, adding "Philanthropic support for scholarships is hugely important. It gives us the flexibility to recruit the very best candidates in priority research areas, or in important fields that are relatively underfunded by public money. The impact of Marit Mohn's generosity will be felt across the Department of Chemical Engineering for many years to come."



Izzati Mohd Noor is the first student to benefit from the Marit Mohn Scholarship Scheme. Photo: Imperial College London

Union releases second impact report

BEN HOWITT
NEWS REPORTER

This week Imperial College Union published their second termly impact report of this academic year.

The report aims to summarise the big effects that Imperial College Union has achieved in the past term, and benchmarks its progress on improving the student experience, community, and voice, as well as making sure that the Union becomes a sustainable organisation.

The first section focuses on "Enhancing the Student Experience". Here the report highlights Imperial Plus, a scheme whereby student representatives and those involved can log the hours they spend volunteering to work towards a scaled qualification system. The number of students has doubled since last year, but the number of hours logged has not increased by anywhere near the same margin, perhaps indicating a fall in enthusiasm.

Also commented on is Community Connections, described as a "volunteer brokerage service". The Union reports an 18% increase in organisation uptake, but only a 10% increase in the number of students attending. This, combined with the emphasis on the views of the Times Higher Education survey perhaps suggesting that more work needs to be done to get students on board.

The Student Experience section also

mentions the Student Volunteering, January's Give it a Go events and Refreshers' Fair, with all receiving "positive feedback".

In the "Amplifying the Student Voice" section, the report turns to celebrating the achievements of this year's officer trustees, in particular Union President Tom Wheeler, Deputy President (Welfare) Chris Kaye and Deputy President (Education) Pascal Loose.

The Impact Report from Term 1 focussed heavily on responses to national surveys, but the report here highlights the Union's wins on the Student Academic Choice awards, the controversial "victory on halls rents", and the high turnout for this year's big elections.

The report then turns to "Building a Student Community", in which much is made on the new 'Campaigns' sections of the website. Mentality, ICsexism and Fossil Free Imperial have been active [Mentality is featured in this week's issue - ed] all term, with some being involved in (and outposts of) national movements.

The report also documents the launch of: #impics, the Union's sponsored hashtag for clubs and societies, which has had 30 posts so far on Twitter; and h-bar's wine tasting event, which saw 20 attendees at the end of last term.

The final section of the report concerns "Building a Sustainable Organisation", focussing on financial



The Impact Report can be accessed on the Imperial College Union website. Photo: Imperial College Union

stability, work environment, and green impact. The report announces the movement of payroll to eActivities, the increasingly ubiquitous cyan and magenta themed web portal for Union activity, and the retaining of Investors in People status. It is interesting that

where sustainability is concerned, there is no mention of the Union's strategic aim to achieve Investing in Volunteers status.

The report concludes by stating that the Union is "proud to be a member-led organisation", referring to the officer trustees. Union staff compiled

the report over the Easter break and during the first month of the Summer Term.

The full Impact Report can be accessed at <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/impact/impact-report-201415-term-2>.

News

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News Editors

Carol Ann Cheah, Cecily Johnson & Kunal Wagle

Anti-Austerity Protests take place in Central London

Jack Steadman reports on the march that took place at the same time as the Queen's Speech



Douglas Carswell MP said that he "feared the demonstrators". Photo: Huffington Post

Anti-austerity protests took place in London on Wednesday, with demonstrators taking to the streets alongside the Queen's Speech in the newly elected Parliament.

Organised by the People's Assembly, the march covered large sections of central London, moving from outside Downing Street at around 5.00pm.

The march then continued for several hours, with protests spreading across the capital before once again coming together outside Downing Street.

The national secretary of the People's Assembly claimed 2000 demonstrators were present for this main part of the protest outside Whitehall.

There were some clashes between police and protestors, with at least five protestors being arrested during the day. Two were arrested over 'imminent breach of the peace', while another was arrested on suspicion of violent disorder during previous protests.

The arrests were not representative of the protest as a whole, however.

"The... People's Assembly claimed 2000... were present"

One protestor was Navid Nabijou, an Imperial student, who told *Felix* that "the level of support we received from bystanders was incredible. It was a bittersweet reminder that we live in a city which forcefully rejected the Tories at the election."

Labour hold 45 of the Parliamentary seats in London, with the Conservatives on 27 and the Liberal Democrats on 1.

Nabijou describes the protest's "palpable sense of anger and injustice... but also a feeling of hope, a determination not to sink into despair."

"Towards the end of the march a street party atmosphere developed, with 'Dancing Queen' playing on loudspeaker[s] and multi-coloured balloons floating above the crowd."

The protests quickly took to Twitter, with the hashtag #FucktheTories the first to surface, with #antiausterity soon following.

Most participants used the platform to post updates on the status of the protests, with one noting that they were "now outside Downing St having a dance. Choice of music: ABBA. #FucktheTories"

"The crowd jeered and swarmed Mr Carswell, shouting 'racist, racist'"

There was also debate on Twitter over how people felt about the protests, with opinion proving divided.

One Twitter commentator remarked, "last time the braying mob tried to subvert democracy, Thatcher crushed them. Democracy will always win against #antiausterity thuggery," while another tweeted that "Labour should be backing the #antiausterity protest in London. As a party we need to return to the left and represent working class people."

Several tweets also referred to the group of protestors who encountered UKIP MP Douglas Carswell outside St James' Park. The crowd jeered and swarmed Mr Carswell, shouting "racist, racist." The police soon intervened, escorting him to a police van to allow him to escape.

Said one Twitter commentator: "Protestors have found UKIP MP Douglas Carswell and they're not happy with him #FucktheTories."

The People's Assembly have confirmed they are planning further protests, scheduled to take place on the 20th June.

Thoughts of a protestor

We assembled at around five o'clock outside Downing Street, and began to march. For three hours we marched, and though physically exhausted by the end of it, our high spirits kept us going.

The level of support we received from bystanders was incredible. It was a bittersweet reminder that we live in a city which forcefully rejected the Tories at the election.

There was a palpable sense of anger and injustice, with loud chanting along the whole route. At one point we assembled in Trafalgar Square and people were invited to share their own experiences of austerity.

But beyond this there was also a feeling of hope, a determination not to sink into despair. Towards the end of the march a street party atmosphere developed, with "Dancing Queen" playing on loudspeaker and multi-coloured balloons floating above the crowd.

The vast majority of economists now agree that reducing spending in a time of crisis only serves to depress growth and stifle the recovery. The experience of various post-crisis economies now provides ample evidence for this, and it goes some way to explaining why the Government hasn't even come close to meeting the deficit reduction targets it set in 2010.

In reality, these cuts are ideological. Cameron and his inner circle have more or less admitted this, repeatedly stating over the last couple of years that even when they reach a budget surplus they will not be reversing their cuts to public services.

They want to take us back to a level of spending not seen for almost a century. All of this is passed off as "common sense" or "tough choices", when really it is about nothing more than shifting wealth from the poorest in society to the richest.

Protest can make a difference. In 1990, the movement of mass protest and civil disobedience against the Poll Tax led to the charge being repealed and Margaret Thatcher's resignation as Prime Minister.

On the 20th June tens of thousands will join forces in the heart of London to send a message: we will not put up with these lies any longer. I hope to see you there.

NAVID NABIJOU



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Politics

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Politics Editor | Joshua Renken

Our future: as told by Her Majesty

Joshua Renken covers the Government's Agenda

On Wednesday the 27th May, 20 days after the general election, the Queen outlined the proposed legislation of the new government.

The speech included promises that her government would guarantee an EU referendum by the end of 2017, after a sort period of negotiation with other European nations and the current President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

Also in the speech was a proposed piece of legislation banning any increases in income tax, VAT and national insurance over the next five years.

More devolution for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have been pledged together with "English votes for English laws" in Westminster.

The speech included the establishment of a "truly seven day" NHS by 2020, and a promise to create

500 more free schools and turn failing schools into Academies.

The Conservatives want parents to receive 30 hours a week of free childcare for three to four-year olds by 2017, while freezing working age benefits, tax credits and child benefit for two years over the course of parliament from 2016/2017. In this parliament the maximum amount that one household can claim in benefits will drop from £26,000 to £23,000.

Many of these proposals were promised by the Conservatives during the election campaign, and David Cameron can now pass proposals in the House of Commons that he never could in coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

One such proposal is the plan to scrap the Human Rights Act and replace it with a "British Bill of Rights." However, Cameron has

delayed the plans to avoid potential rebellion from his backbenchers. But there is no doubting that it will be pursued.

The speech did not mention the Conservative's plan to hold a free Commons vote on repealing the fox hunting ban, but environment secretary Liz Truss has reassured the public that it will go ahead before 2020.

This is the first Conservative Queen's Speech in nearly two decades, and comes after an historic victory for David Cameron, who is the first British Prime Minister to be re-elected immediately after serving a full term with an increased popular vote share since 1900. 2015's results also made Cameron the only Prime Minister other than Margaret Thatcher to be re-elected immediately after a full term with a greater share of the seats.



Pomp and Ceremony: setting out the future for the UK

Ireland votes "Yes" to legalising same-sex marriage

JOSHUA RENKEN
SECTION EDITOR

Ireland has made history as the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote.

Over 3.2 million people were asked whether they wanted to amend Ireland's constitution to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry, in a referendum asking the electorate to vote "Yes" or "No" to the statement "Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex."

The returning officer, Riona Ní Fhlanghaile, declared that the "Yes" vote had won with 62.1% of the vote, thereby enshrining gay marriage in Ireland's constitution. Of the 43 constituencies, just one voted against the amendment.

The Republic of Ireland's first openly gay minister, The Minister for Health Leo Varadkar, said the "Yes" campaign had been "almost like a social revolution".

The Yes vote was supported by the Government as well as all major political parties. The final result was announced on Saturday afternoon, after polls closed at 10pm on Friday with reports of "unusually high" turnouts for a vote on amending the constitution. The total turnout was 60.5%.

Irish citizens who are registered were allowed to vote, and many people returned home to Ireland to cast their vote.

This historic referendum comes

"the "Yes" vote had won with 62.1% of the vote"



Members of the Yes Campaign celebrate victory. Photo: Associated Press

only 22 years after homosexual acts were decriminalised in Ireland, and just five years since the Irish government first enacted civil partnership legislation, which provided legal recognition for gay couples.

Civil partnerships were a big step forward, but unlike marriages they are not protected in the constitution.

The Catholic Church, a large voice for the No vote, has seen its influence weaken in Ireland after child abuse scandals and the number of those attending church on Sundays has

dropped off in the last two decades.

This gay marriage vote represents the latest pillar to fall in the social progression of Ireland – the previous milestones including divorce in 1995. Many commentators expect a referendum on legalising abortion to be on the horizon.

Same-sex marriages became legal in England and Wales in 2013, with Scotland closely following in 2014. Now, with the Republic of Ireland legalising same-sex marriage in 2015, only Northern Ireland is left as the last place in the British isles resisting

"It is clear the amendment has a strong mandate from the people"

legislation.

All countries before Ireland had legalised same-sex marriage through the national legislature or the courts.

This Irish vote puts the number of countries where same-sex marriage is legal to 20, but homosexuality is still a crime in 77 countries, and carries the death penalty in seven.

No campaigners say they still have questions surrounding child adoption and surrogacy for gay couples, but it is clear that the amendment has a strong mandate from the people of the Republic of Ireland.

Welfare

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Welfare Editors || Diba Esbati & Chanon Wongsatayanont

Crime Trends and Prevention Advice

Former Met officer **Nigel Ward** talks about crime around campus

My name is Nigel Ward, and on 30th March 2015 I was employed by Imperial College as the Senior Security Officer, Crime. My role is to investigate all crime, deliver a gold standard of victim care, and implement prevention tactics and strategies to reduce crime and the number of victims. What I bring to this role comes from serving 30 years in the Metropolitan Police service from which I retired this February.

What is exceptionally important to me is the way that victims of crime are treated. As a result I have created a new Victim Charter; this ensures all victims will be treated with dignity, respect and understanding. Communications will be open, honest, and transparent and victims will be treated in line with their needs and wishes rather than treating everyone the same. The charter also assures that no matter what the severity of a crime, all victims are fully supported and advised from cradle to grave throughout investigations.

The security teams, as well as myself, are also very keen to support any actions or events being organised by the student Union or assist in organising event. Areas such as personal safety/security talks and bike/property marking events helping to ensure our students have a safe and enjoyable college life.

Since starting, the two main crimes that have been all too apparent, impacting the most and creating victims of crime are theft of pedal



Actual photo of the person stealing your bike. The truth is out there. Photo: Image Source Pink / Alamy/Alamy

cycles and theft of laptops. In the last six weeks 13 Laptops and 6 bikes have been stolen. In total the value of the items stolen is approximately £15,000 and some of the crimes were absolutely preventable.

Investigation findings

Bicycles on the whole have been stolen by professional thieves targeting bike storage areas and cutting off inferior security devices such as cable locks. Suspects have managed to enter secure bike sheds

“All victims will be treated with dignity and respect.”

by tailgating people in and then out with stolen bikes and scaling fencing. Thieves have been captured on CCTV walking onto the campus on foot dressed in full cycling gear, helmets, glasses, pollution masks and lycra shorts and then minute’s later riding out again on stolen bikes.

The many laptops that have been taken have, mainly, been stolen when left unattended in insecure areas such as open plan offices, communal areas in halls of residence, unlocked classrooms, and eating

“You wouldn’t leave £1500 cash sitting on a table.”

establishments. Suspects have, again, managed to enter secure areas through tailgating and unfortunately thieves will target the College campus as they see it as an easy target where electronics are left unattended. The example I usually give is you would not leave £1500 cash sitting on a table in an office or communal area and expect it to stay there while you go get a coffee, so then why do it with a computer, phone, or tablet worth similar amounts of money.

Crime Prevention Advice

Bikes

- Use a quality lock not a cheap cable lock. The security office can provide a discounted A graded D lock for £30. They have been in use since 2011 and to date not one has ever been cut off.
- Use the secure bike storage areas. Just get your cycle property marked and registered online, then swipe access will be given to staff or students to use the facilities. For advice contact the security office in room 155 Sherfield.
- When securing your bike, make sure the frame is secured, not just the quick release wheels that only

assist thieves.

- Any quick release items such as saddles, lights and wheels, consider removing them and taking them with you or using additional locks to secure them.
- Do not allow people to tail gate you into secure areas. The only people that should be entering will have swipe access. Being polite and holding doors open is nice but not at the expense of someone’s £1500 bike.
- Take and retain a digital photo of your bike and record bike serial numbers to aid recovery if stolen.

- If you see someone acting suspiciously, report it to security immediately.

Laptops and Tablets

- Keep your communal areas, office spaces and halls of residence as secure as possible, do not allow people to tailgate you into controlled areas.
- Challenge suspicious persons or call security to do so, better safe than sorry.
- Do not leave items unattended in communal areas, even for short periods.
- Lock all IT equipment away in secure areas overnight or when leaving unattended.

- Do not leave doors propped open and be aware burglars do climb so items left next to open windows even when not on the ground floor are at risk.
- Get items property marked, record serial numbers and any facts that could aid identification if stolen.
- Ensure relevant tracking software is installed and enabled on your device where available.
- Use laptop security cables with items in your work stations.



Photo: evanscycles.com

Welfare

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Welfare Editors || Diba Esbati & Chanon Wongsatayanont

On the Hunt for a Haunt

Diba Esbati's tips for navigating the maze that is private sector accommodation

It's that time of year when most of us have to look for a place to live again, and I don't know about you, but for me looking for housing in the private sector is one of the most stressful times of the year. It comes at a time where we're all busy with project work and exams, and the last thing we want is to be worried about whether or not we'll be homeless next year.

Having been in London and having been forced to deal with the private accommodation sector for three years now, I've picked up a few things that will be useful to keep in mind when looking for a new place to live.

Pick a decent estate agent

It's no secret that estate agents have a tendency to bleed you dry with different administration costs ranging from verifying guarantors to taking inventory, but some are worse than others so do your research before you decide which estate agent you want to sell your soul to. Your first point of contact should be your friends who have had to deal with them before, they are the ones who know how responsive the estate agents' are when it comes to responding to your email about the faulty fire alarm versus how quickly they get on your case about the mould they saw on one corner of the kitchen window when they came for their biannual inspection. If that sounds oddly specific, it's because it IS, and everyone who has had to deal with estate agents has stories like these, so make sure to ask around! If you don't feel comfortable enough asking, online reviews are also a good place to check.

Transport links



Couldn't bear to put an actual picture of mould. They were all gross. Just take my word for it when I say you don't want any. Photo: A.R.Mongeon



The drean house you're undoubtedly going to build in minecraft to forget the hole actually live in. Photo: domionfire

Although most students tend to congregate in the usual areas like High Street Kensington and Hammersmith, you might choose to wander a bit further from campus, and that's fine! The most important thing to take into account is how exactly you're going to make it in for your 9am lecture. If you cycle, make sure to check out the route before deciding on a place to make sure you can handle doing it almost every day for 9 months come hell or high water. If you're a bus person, check to see if there are any 24 hour routes near you for those late nights in the lab. You don't want to have to be forced to camp out in the library because you missed the last bus. Also, it's worth thinking about the rent vs transport costs issue. Obviously, if you're closer to campus and generally walk, you can afford to spend a little more on rent, but if you were going to take a bus anyway, it might be worth thinking about moving a little further

away to save some money seeing as how you were going to invest in a bus pass either way.

Budget for utilities

Something some of us forget to account for when looking for a new place, especially if it's our first time paying for utilities directly, is budgeting for how much they cost. This is a fairly easy thing to figure out, just ask the current tenants roughly how much they pay. If they don't know, or aren't there when you go to look around, you could always ask the person who's showing you around or check online for the average cost for the area and then adjust it slightly. As a general rule, students tend to spend more than the average on electricity (because of computers, gaming equipment, and late nights) and less on gas (because we're lazy and don't cook as much, and tend to spend less time at home so don't have the heating on as often as the average family).

Insulation

Definitely ask about the insulation in the flat. Are the windows double glazed? Is it a corner property or are there people on either side you can mooch heat off of? It's not that pressing an issue in June when you're looking for a flat, but come November, you'll be glad you paid attention to the windows when you're not spending a fortune on heating or freezing your arse off while wearing fifty different layers.

Pay attention to the hob, washing machine, and fridge!

Do all the burners work? How old is the washing machine? Does it have a dryer? Is the fridge big enough for the

number of people you have in your flat? Not enough people tell you this, because it seems like common sense, but if it's your first time looking for a flat you tend to overlook these kinds of things, which is how I ended up living in a flat sharing one minifridge between 4 people. Also, I cannot stress how important it is to have a freezer! Freezers save lives (and money, mostly money)! The condition of the appliances can drastically affect your quality of life not only because you're the one who has to use them for at least a year, but also because they reflect how much of a shit the landlord gives about their tenants.

Mould sucks and you don't want any

This is probably something that you hear all the time, but I know I've been guilty of forgetting all about it in my excitement about the fact that "wow, so the TV comes with the flat?". Checking for mould is super important, and not just because it can cause respiratory problems. Mould generally means there is a humidity problem in the property and there is most probably nothing you can do about. Humidity in a house is awful, your clothes don't ever dry, you can't leave anything on your windowsill without it getting soaked, and perhaps worst of all, it messes with your WiFi signal! So if you care about having a decent internet connection, and let's be honest, we all do, you'll check the corners and windows for mould.

These are obviously just a few things to take into account before deciding on a property, so make sure to look online for more advice. And remember, the student hub is great for this kind of thing.

Mental health helplines and resources

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

Helplines

If you are distressed and need someone to talk to:

Samaritans (24 hr helpline):

Phone: 08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org.uk

Anxiety Help:

Anxiety UK

Phone: 08444 775 774
(Mon-Fri 09:30 - 17:30)
www.anxietyuk.org.uk

No Panic

Phone: 0808 800 2222
(daily, 10:00 - 22:00)
www.nopanic.org.uk

Eating Disorders:

Beat

Phone: 0845 634 1414
(Mon-Thurs, 13:30 - 16:30)

Addiction:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Phone: 0845 769 7555
(24 hour helpline)
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous

Phone: 0300 999 1212
www.ukna.org

College Resources

Student Counselling Service

Phone: 020 7594 9637
e-mail: counselling@ic.ac.uk

Imperial College Health Centre

Telephone: 020 7584 6301
e-mail: healthcentre@ic.ac.uk

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

Music

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Music Editors || Grace Rahman & Amna Askari

Get on the zine

Glorified sleeve notes or art in their own right asks **Grace Rahman**

Summer Camp released their third LP, *Bad Love*, this week, and as well as doing a handful of promotional in store performances, they brought out their second ever zine. Full of comics, poetry and prose from fans who are also friends, 'Drive Past My House' is a snazzy addition to any fan's collection, and perfectly complements their dreamy, high-school rom-com aesthetic. Highlights come in the form of comics from Babak Ganjei of **Wet Paint** and **Absentee**, whose other work includes 'Clarkson Blackout' which improves Jeremy Clarkson's autobiography by selectively deleting 90% of the text, and John Allison, creator of 'Scary Go Round' whose illustrations imagine Summer Camp's writing process, involving **Eric Clapton**, a time-machine and 1995. Many contributors are regular 'zine' folk, but comic novices will recognise **Emmy The Great**'s name, and her Instagram-friendly centrefold is a novel take on the comic panel concept. A scripted section sounds like it could be a spoken word introduction to their album; think **Savages**' 'Shut Up' or every track on *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*.

Inevitable comparisons of Summer Camp's sound to American teen movies of the 90s, à la Clueless, are even truer since they wrote and performed every song on the soundtrack for 'Beyond Clueless', Charlie Lyne's documentary about this art form as a better indication of the zeitgeist than adult movies of the same era. The zine certainly fits with this. Prose pieces describe 'Michelles', 'Donnys' and archetypal teen heartthrob Brandon Routh, of *Superman Returns* fame. The album itself is full of pleasing marital harmonies, and whilst maintaining that familiar Summer Camp sound there are stand out tracks. 'Keep Out' is unlike anything we've heard from them before. It's an aggressive, marching to meet your ex tune and manages to feel fresh whilst having that oh so familiar chord progression. Jeremy, who usually sticks to complimenting Elizabeth Sankles' main harmony part, takes centre-stage in 'You're Gone', where he quietly repeats aspirational lyrics against fuzzy guitars on the most raucous song on the album.

Is the zine necessary for full enjoyment of the album? Probably not. If you're not into comics,

"Is the zine necessary for full enjoyment of the album? Probably not."



L: Summer Camp's zine cover. R: Sleater-Kinney-themed comic in 'Not A New Wave' Photo Credit: L: Julia Scheele R: Jess Milton

illustration or particularly obsessed with the band then you might not bother. But, if you're not particularly familiar with them, but know you like their sound and vibe, it might be worth investing in. Your investment being £3, and considering you'll likely as not stream the album, it might be nice to have a physical object to associate with them. In the way that music videos are important, from the days of MTV to the present, where video-streaming counts towards chart position, band released music zines are another way to connect to fans. They're saying: we like this, visually this is our vibe, and do you like it too? In this way, the zine isn't necessarily just 'one for the fans'.

Summer Camp curated their own zine, and you very much get that impression. It's personal, some of the comics take the mickey out of themselves and in no way is it decadent or self-indulgent, without being firmly tongue in cheek. Will zines become the done thing across the board, or amongst big selling artists? Although interesting to see what your favourite bands are

"It feels like they made it purely for shits and gigs."

interested in visually, it's hard to imagine bigger artists curating a zine without being pretentious as Summer Camp manage. You really get the impression that the band are quite nice; there's little hint of self-congratulation, and it feels like they made it purely for shits and gigs. They are luckier in the sense that they don't have to worry so much about marginalising the tastes of fans; **Beyoncé** would probably struggle to curate something that would please the entirety of her huge fanbase. Unless it was just selfies. Which I would inevitably still fork out for.

Music zines don't begin and end with artist-curated collections. It would be wrong to talk about music zines without mentioning the glorious 'Not A New Wave', a **Sleater-Kinney** fanzine curated by One Beat. Without any involvement from Carrie Brownstein's riot grrrl collective, uber fans who happened to be artists or writers got together to make a cheap and cheerful celebration of the band over 35 pages. I'm not being rude, One Beat pride themselves on

producing financially accessible material. The fanzine's only £4, and so significantly cheaper than, and arguably more personal than a band tee. These zine-makers specialise in strong feminist influences, and are putting out a whole book on punk-rock feminism later this year. What seems most exciting is how inclusive they are. The zine scene doesn't seem like such an exclusive boy's club; e-mail addresses are on the site, so if you're a small time illustrator or just a fan they seem pretty welcome to contributions. Like fan clubs subscribed to by fans in the 50s and 60s, zines give people an arena to discuss and create content around the band's themes, whilst simultaneously creating content that other fans will inevitably want to see. In this way, it's like an annual, like those ones you get in W H Smiths around Christmas, except written by people who share your interests who happened to be good at drawing.

All zines mentioned are available at *Gosh! Comics in Soho*. Summer Camp's LP, *Bad Love*, is out now.



Music

music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Music Editors || Grace Rahman & Amna Askari

Brandon flowers on his own

Jack Steadman sees him command the Brixton Academy stage alone

Brandon Flowers going solo has always been an interesting proposition, begging the question: when it comes to **The Killers** and everything they've done, how much of their sound is down to him?

First album *Flamingo* didn't do much to help answer that question, with half of the album feeling like Killers-lite, and the other half spiralling off into a muted (yet dance-y) world of **Fleetwood Mac**, **Kate Bush**, and so on. His latest album, *The Desired Effect*, wanders even further down the road of 80s soft rock, arguably drawing a much clearer line between The Killers and Flowers as a solo artist. Compare *Battle Born* (The Killers' last album) and *The Desired Effect*, and you'll find two very, very different beasts.

Of course, regardless of that sonic divide, the lead singer of any popular band going solo comes with certain expectations. You only need look at **Gerard Way**'s recent(ish) solo tours, and how they sold out almost instantly on the back of his work in **My Chemical Romance** to find proof of that. Should you need further proof, simply turn up to any of Way's gigs. If the sheer quantity of people wearing My Chemical Romance shirts don't convince you, nothing will.

It's no surprise, then, that Flower's first slot at the O2 Academy, Brixton sold out in less than a minute. A second date was added, and sold out a minute after that went on sale. Obviously.

The stalls of the Academy fill out rapidly. The support act get a moderate reaction, although the loudest whoops are reserved for the moment where they thank Flowers for giving them the support slot. They disappear, then after a longer wait than expected, the lights dim, and Flowers' supporting band take to the stage. It's all moody lighting, and a hell of a lot of cheering, whooping, screaming. Then Flowers strides out in a glittery jacket, and all hell breaks loose. A brief moment for him to acknowledge the audience, then he kicks right off into *Desired Effect* opener, 'Dreams Come True'.

It's followed quickly by second track (and lead single) 'Can't Deny My Love', suggesting this might be a straight run-through of the new album (don't worry, it wasn't). Throughout, Flowers hardly ever stands still, moving the length of the stage repeatedly. Everyone in this room has paid to see them, and everyone's going to get a chance to. He hops up onto the monitors, lapping up the excitement of the

"Flowers strides out in a glittery jacket and all hell breaks loose."



What a jacket. And what a face. Photo Credit: Brian Rasic / Redferns

crowd, holding the microphone out to let the crowd fill the gaps he leaves in the chorus. He's loving every minute, and so are the crowd.

Flowers doesn't talk much through those tracks and next song 'Crossfire', the big hit from *Flamingo*. There's the traditional "Hello London", but that's pretty much it. 'Magdalena' gets his first little speech of the night, explaining the context behind the song. 'Hard Enough' is the first quiet moment of the night, before Flowers drops his trump card. Gerard Way opted not to play any of My Chemical Romance's songs during his first UK tour. Flowers is less concerned about any of that.

He gives a short spiel on how this tour has given him a chance to look at Killers songs anew, reworking them into something new, something different. The crowd, predictably, goes bananas. With that, an acoustic(ish), moody version of 'Jenny Was a Friend of Mine'. It feels like

"The crowd know every word, and this new spin on the song goes down just as well."

it's been stripped out of a Western, a dark, country-esque version of the classic. And it's wonderful.

'Jenny' is quickly followed up by the punchy, irresistible 'Lonely Town' and the driving 'I Can Change' (both from the new album), before The Killers rear their head again in the shape of 'Read My Mind'. The crowd know every word, and this new spin on the song goes down just as well, if not better, than 'Jenny'. After the euphoria of that, 'Swallow It', one of the more minor songs from *Flamingo* feels like a bit too much of a come-down. 'Only the Young' doesn't quite manage to salvage the drop in mood, before the Jacques Lu Cont remix of 'Mr. Brightside' storms in to wrap up the main set. It takes a few moments to recognise the song, but as soon as everyone does things go absolutely haywire. There's nothing quite like it.

The encore proves to be special for different reasons, as Flowers talks about the influences behind The

Killers, and how no-one ever seems to acknowledge **The Pretenders** as one of those influences. So he promptly introduces **Chrissie Hynde** for a cover of The Pretenders' 'Don't Get Me Wrong', followed by a duet with her on his own 'Between Me and You'. There's another speech, discussing the twelve years that Flowers has been performing on stage, and thanking the person who's "been sharing [him] with [the audiences] for all these years," his wife, who he eventually coaxes on stage with two of his kids. It's a cute moment, leading nicely into 'Still Want You'.

The high of that song then slows, slipping into closer 'The Way It's Always Been'. It feels like an odd lull to end on, but it's the way *The Desired Effect* bows out. It makes perfect sense for Flowers to take his leave on the same note.

His album, The Desired Effect, is out now.

Squad, Go Go Go!

Felix Games is back with Max Eggl reviewing indie hit Running with Rifles

Back in yonder days when I first started playing computer games, the one that really filled my childhood after-school hours was one called Army Men. Basically it was a shooter revolving around the green plastic men, where you would control one of them and shoot the other plastic dudes using a variety of guns, grenades and vehicles. Sadly the graphics of this classic did not stand the test of time, and I moved on to bigger and graphically better things. However, recently in a fit of nostalgia I decided to look this game up again, and while doing so came across the game Running with Rifles on Steam, made by indie studio Modulaatio Games. Described as a “tactical top-down shooter with RPG elements”, I had found a game that looked eerily similar to my past passion and it didn’t look half bad! After checking out some videos, I knew I had to get it.

Finally, the end of exams came, I fired up Steam for the first time in a long time and spent my hard-earned cash on this gem. At a measly £11 I was well prepared to take the risk that this may be a dud since most good titles (and notably bad ones) usually cost a lot more than this. Furthermore in addition to the relative cheapness, I was also pleasantly surprised that this game also runs on Mac OS (in addition to Windows and Linux, so no excuses!) and it seemed that nothing stood in the way of me jumping straight in! Well, actually a alcohol fuelled night (which didn’t end well) forced me to postpone the playing of this game, but after overcoming my hangover the next day I finally managed to take this baby out for a run and I have to say that I am not disappointed.

Firstly let me give a bit of a description of what this game actually is. You are a soldier thrown into a variety of battles who is looking to win the fight for your chosen team,

(greenbelts, brownpants or grey collars). As you fight you rank up allowing you to form a squad, buy better weapons and influence more of the battle with radio calls. These battles happen on about a dozen maps, which all a very distinctive feel to them. In terms of gameplay the game does what it says on the tin, consisting of you looking down at your little guy and controlling him using WASD and your mouse. You have unlimited ammo, but do still need to reload once your clip is empty. There are quite a few different weapons as well as gimmicks like a riot shield, that all have a distinctive feel about them and allow you to switch up your style according to how you want to play. Furthermore there are several types of vehicles for a quick transport (as well as handy weapon to run over enemies!)

The art style is really distinctive, namely because of the fact that it is really simplistic and cartoony. It really does set itself apart from other things around, and definitely will stand the test of time. This graphical style also allows it to run comfortably on most computers for a super smooth game-play experience.

So now to my personal impression. When I first started the game up I decided to skip the tutorial (like I always do if possible) and jumped straight into a single-player battle. It took me a surprisingly little amount of time (albeit several embarrassing deaths) to learn the controls and finally have an impact on the battle. From the off, rather than feeling like I was just in some tiny skirmish I actually really felt like I was in a battle with hundreds of soldiers, bullets flying around and tanks crushing hapless innocents which I have only really felt in one other game, Planetside 2. This really drew me in and it was quite fascinating watching the ebb and flow of the



conflict. The first battle which I played (which unfortunately we lost) took about an hour and I was completely engrossed the entire time. I also loved the outbursts from the enemies and allies alike that went along the lines of “OMG Grenade!” etc. It definitely was a nice touch and gave me a chuckle which can never go amiss! After messing about with the single-player modes, including different maps, different game modes and the single-player campaign I was really impressed, and I will definitely be spending more time in the world of running with rifles.

However, these days only single-player games rarely make it far, so I was keen to test out the multi-player aspect, something I feel like this game could pull off really well. This is the one part of the game where I was not happy. Not really the fault of the game devs or the game itself, but there weren’t actually that many people online to play with. This could have several factors, for example namely that it is predominantly being played by Americans who were asleep at the time I tried my luck or a lack of a popular interest. The server I did try, which had about 10 guys, really was enjoyable but with the lack of numbers there was a need for computer guys, meaning it actually still felt like a single-player map. Yet,

thinking about it the game just came out so I am not really worried about this aspect and definitely hope that once more people find out about Running with Rifles more people will play online leading to a healthy amount of servers allowing for more options.

One last pet peeve, which is really so minor I feel incredibly petty for mentioning it, is the lack of steam achievements! I love steam achievements, as they give me something to aim for in the game and gives them some longevity, however the game devs seem super friendly and I think this will most likely be a feature implemented in the future.

All in all I have to say, if you just finished your exams, are currently revising or alternatively have nothing really better to do I would give this a game a definite look. For the price you are getting a really fun and enjoyable experience that will definitely take you past the 20/30 hour mark. Furthermore it will run great on almost anything, so you won’t have to upgrade your rig if its slightly older. Now I am off, back to relive the memories of Army men and make some new ones in Running with Rifles!

Running with Rifles is currently available on steam for Windows, Mac OS X and linux for £10.99.

"I will definitely be spending more time in the world of running with rifles."

"After checking out some videos, I knew I had to get it."



Travel

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Travel Editor | Yung Nam Cheah

Losing yourself in Venice: to boat, or not to boat

Yung Nam Cheah shares her tips of navigating the city of waters

Perhaps one of the most frequently asked question for travelers in Venice is whether they should take the water buses or not.

And the answer to these questions, as always, is that it depends. On what exactly, you might ask? Here's a list of factors for you to consider:

1) Are you able to walk for long periods of time?

Navigation is one part of the equation. Given the maze like layout you are likely to do a lot of walking back and forth.

2) Do you have the money?

A single journey costs €7, and a day pass €20. Even for a Londoner these prices are pretty steep. If the answer is yes, then no problem for you! But if it's no, then consider finding accommodation in a centrally located area.

3) Where is your hotel?

If your hotel is central, then getting one ride there and walking the rest of the trip might be a good idea. However, the train station Santa Lucia is a good 40 minutes' walk from St Marks Square that is the center of Venice. This should give you an idea of how far you need to walk. It's also extremely easy to get lost on your way so make sure you know where your hotel or hostel is before you arrive.

I stayed at a hotel on the top

right corner of mainland Venice. It was super easy to find but also means I had to do a lot of walking.

4) Can you navigate?

This might sound like a silly question, but it's a valid one. Venice is maze of a city with dozens of canals connected by bridges and hidden alleyways that look rather dodgy. It's virtually impossible not to get lost and getting from point A to B is not as simple as it is in normal cities. On my trip I had to use google map to navigate and to know where I am – this is how hard it is.

5) How many journeys do you plan to make that day?

If you are planning to hit a few islands on the day, then perhaps it's worth getting the day pass. Note, however that you should check the routes and timetables on the website as going from island to island might not be an easy option.

What did you do? Some of you might ask, and I walked throughout my entire time on Venice. Was it tiring? Yes – but you get to see so much more of Venice's beauty on foot than by boat. Not all canals are reachable by water bus, and maybe the view is different on the water but I enjoyed crossing beautiful bridges and breezing pass little alleyways.

Second of all, the canals are

“You get to see so much more of Venice's beauty of foot than by boat...”



Walking over beautiful bridges is one of the best part. Photo: Yung Wing Cheah

not exactly what you call clean. Though regulated by the city to maintain a certain standard, the water is still a green-blue opaque that you do not want to get into close contact with.

Thirdly, I saved a whopping €80 by not taking the water bus for

four days. There are moments when I genuinely regretted my decision, for example when I had to walk 40 minutes back from St Mark's Square to our hotel with a bursting bladder. So to boat, or not to boat, that is the question that only you can answer.



“I saved a whopping €80 by not taking the water bus”

A quite canal far away from water boat routes . Photo: Yung Nam Cheah



Main canal of Venice full of water bus stations. Photo: Yung Nam Cheah

Union Page



STUDENT VOLUNTEERING WEEK



BURSARY SUCCESS



Check out our impact!

Our Impact Report for Term 2 picks up where we left off in Term 1, and shows the range of our impact at the College.

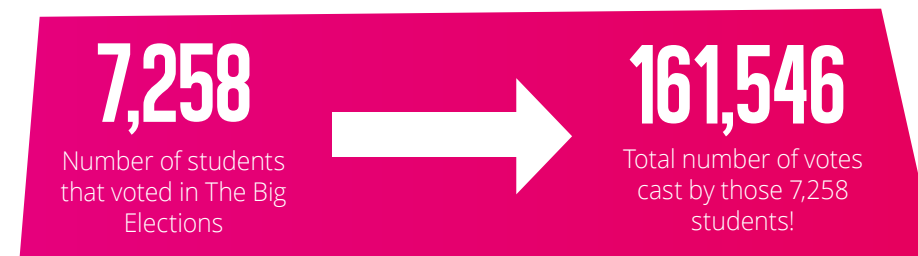
Term 2 saw a number of big campaigns, projects and events take place, making it our busiest term yet! This included:

A successful Student Volunteering Week, including our Great Volunteer Thank You that received 453 Thank Yous;

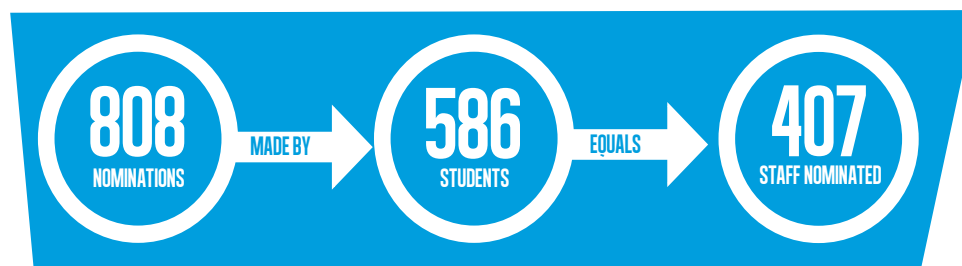
- ▲ Successful lobbying at College to improve their bursaries offered to students, and reduce the cost of halls for incoming students;
- ▲ Record turnout in The Big Elections in March, seeing 42% of students voting
- ▲ Our highest number of nominations in our Student Academic Choice Awards;
- ▲ Surge in student campaigns including Mentality, ICsexism and Fossil Free Imperial;
- ▲ Great events in our bars including Reynolds' Battle of the Bands, The Spring Carnival in our Beit bars, and Wine Tastings at the h-bar.

You can read the full report on our website at imperialcollegeunion.org/impact

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This nationally recognised qualification will support any volunteer holding a leadership role, where they have significant responsibilities or where they supervise the work of other volunteers.

The qualification will enable you to motivate and support your volunteers,

develop effective working relationships with key stakeholders and get the best out of the teams that you lead. The qualification will provide you with skills and knowledge to support you in your volunteer role now, as well as in any leadership or management role in your chosen career.

Applications close on Sunday 31 May. For more information and how to apply visit imperialcollegeunion.org/volunteering



Impetus back for Summer Term!

Impetus is your chance to play one of seven Impetus sports in an organised environment but without the commitment of competitive sport. We'll sort out the where, when and who – all you have to do is turn up when you can. If you like sport but don't have the time or desire to play competitively for a club or team, Impetus may be just the thing for you. We provide all the equipment for the session and even throw in professional coaching to help you get the most out of it!

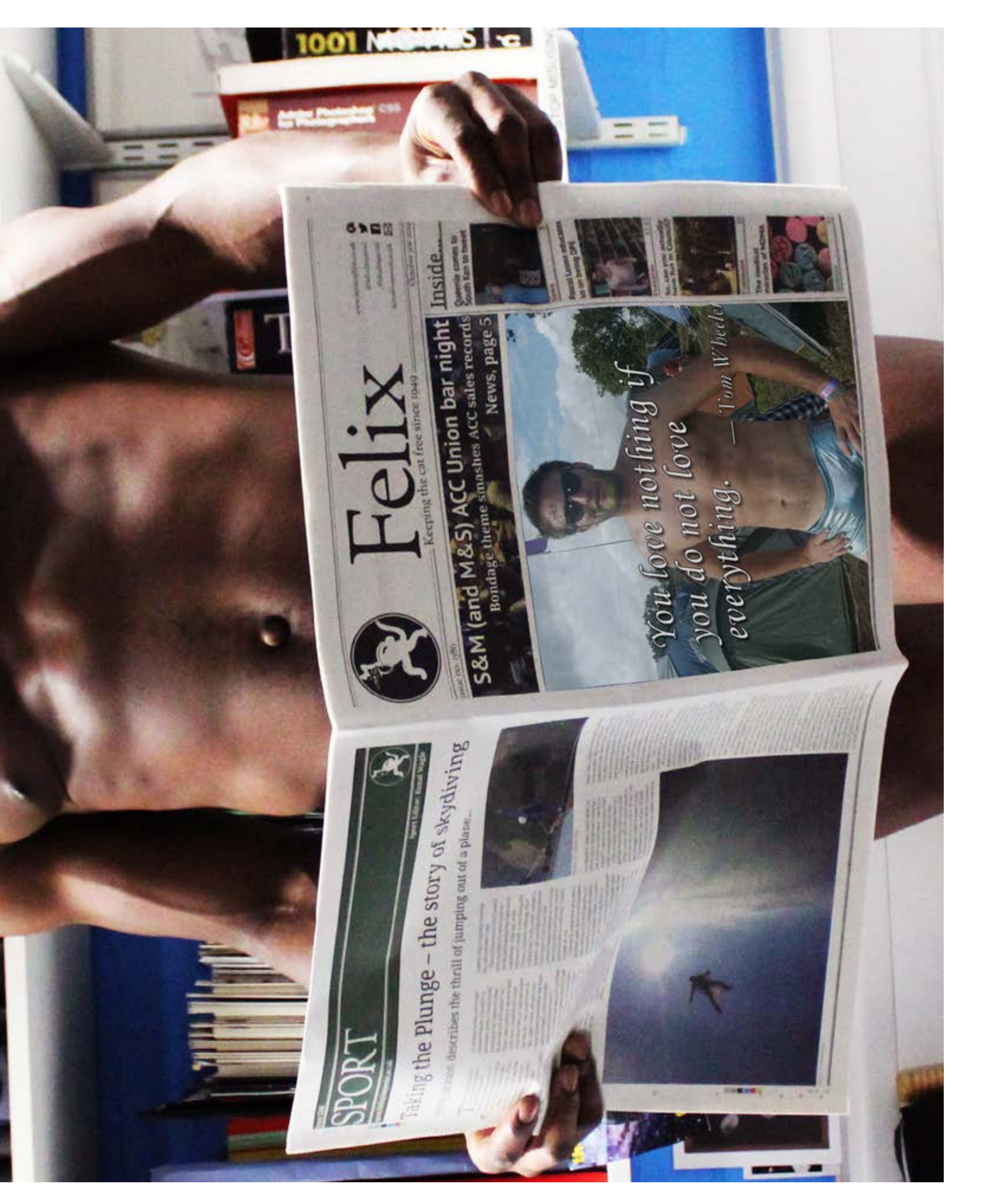
You can sign up in person at Ethos, where you will be asked to complete a registration card. You will be then issued a membership card and then you are able to attend any of the Impetus sessions absolutely free! You see the full summer timetable at imperialcollegeunion.org/news

If you have any questions about the Impetus scheme or would like more information, please email sport@imperial.ac.uk

Even rugby boys

love Felix...





1001 NIGHTS & ...
Digital Photography for Photographers

SPORT

Taking the Plunge – the story of skydiving

...describes the thrill of jumping out of a plane...



Felix

Keeping the cat free since 1949

S&M (and M&S) ACC Union bar night

Bondage theme smashes ACC sales records
News, page 5



Inside...

Queerle comes to South Kent to treat



Fossil Lurine educator on on being OPI



No. 1001 Night's actually has a bit of a connection



The musical tradition of ACC's



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The h-bar will be holding its tasting session on the 29 May from 18:30. Come and taste all of our great wines from all over the world.



i **PULSE**

Friday 29 May
20:00 - 02:00
Metric & FiveSixEight
Featuring DJ

BASHER

Entry

£1.50 if on facebook guestlist

£2.50 on the door

COMING UP!

Date	Event	Time	Location
Friday 29	Wine Tasting	18:30 - 20:30	h-bar
Friday 29	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds
Friday 29	Impulse	20:00 - 02:00	FiveSixEight & Metric
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
Friday 5 June	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds
Friday 5 June	Good Form	21:00 - 02:00	Metric

The Siege: Violence in the Levant

Clara Clark Nevola checks out this Palestinian work

A politically engaged play in a small theatre in South London. There have been many of these and, in the glorious tradition of fringe theatre, there will be more; but *The Siege* at the **Battersea Art Centre** is something entirely different, unique even in London's multifaceted subversive theatre scene. *The Siege* is a performance by the Freedom Theatre, a theatre company and acting school based on the West Bank, in Palestine. They operate from the Jenin Refugee camp, and they are on tour to the UK showing their newest production, the story of the siege of Bethlehem.

Based on interviews with the real-life Palestinian fighters who were present, *The Siege* tells the story of how the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, considered one of the holiest Christian sites, was in 2002 surrounded by Israeli troops for 39 days, besieging the fighters and many citizens who had taken refuge there, as well as the Franciscan monks who lived in the church's monastery. The siege was carried out to capture the Palestinian militants, and was criticised internationally as a humanitarian crisis, since the hundreds of people within the church lacked food, water and sanitation for over a month. Some of the fighters and two civilians were shot during the siege, picked off by waiting snipers outside.

The Siege focuses on a small handful of Palestinian combatants, telling their story during the entrapment. The Israeli troops are represented only as a constant, oppressive threat – the bursts of machine gun fire and the megaphone messages instructing surrender. The throng of civilians, also invisible, is felt as a weighty responsibility, for whom the fighters have to provide by finding food and clean water. After all, as one of the fighters says, "Revolution is like a fish, and the people are its water" – without their support, the revolution is in vain. The fighters talk, while away the time, they worry about their loved ones, pine for good food. Their hope and resistance slowly gives way to doubt and despair as the food runs short, the death toll increases, and the situation shows no signs of changing. What can they do, alone and shut off from the world? Is their resistance in vain? Are they harming the people for whose homeland they fight? These questions hang heavy on them, and on the audience, broken by moments of temporary camaraderie, signing, and reveries of happier times. The first-hand account of the siege is frequently interrupted by an imaginary flash forward, in which an



The cast of *The Siege*, currently on at the Battersea Arts Centre Photo: The Freedom Theatre

enthusiastic tour guide (the brilliant Ahmed Tobasi) shows tourists (the audience) round the Church of the Nativity, pointing out the cultural, historical and religious sites. These scenes are light relief for the audience from the AK47's, shelling, and starvation of the main story, but also highlight the incongruity of the church's role as a battleground.

The Freedom Theatre's aim is to "generate cultural resistance". Their work has a deep community effect by empowering a disenfranchised community, training women and young people as skilled actors, but their message is clear: theirs isn't a happy-clappy alternative to resistance, this is a cultural, non-violent but forceful message of Palestinian legitimacy and resistance to the Israeli 'occupation'. Their presence in the UK has been opposed by some, and the funding awarded to the theatre company by the Arts Council England has been criticised as a 'pro-Palestinian' move, the implication being that this play condones terrorist activity against the state of Israel. Knowing all this, I was ready for an interesting but tiring evening of angry propaganda. What I was wholly unprepared for is the artistic quality of *The Siege*. Whatever your opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian situation, *The Siege* is a play worth seeing, with a fantastic cast, evocative staging and

a gripping and moving story to tell. Moments of comedy and tenderness alleviate a play that highlights the humanity of those involved in what is – to us – nothing more than a news flash. Of course the play is biased, but it would be ridiculous to criticise it for being so: it's the story of Palestinian fighters during the siege of Bethlehem, told from their point of view. Their fears, their hopes, their insecurities, their pain. It speaks to an international audiences whose views have been polarised by more than half a century of conflict.

The Siege doesn't enter into this quagmire of opposing opinions, but presents the views of some young men who fought for their concept of home, family and belonging. The deal which eventually ended the siege was a European-brokered settlement by which the Israeli troops lifted the siege and the Palestinian fighters were exiled to Gaza or a European country where, 13 years later, they still remain. *The Siege* leaves the limbo in which they live, and the home for which they fought for, as a heavy question mark above the audience. Never mind the politics, the rights and wrongs of international law, the legitimacy of one state against another – what about the actual people?

The Siege was on at the Battersea Arts Centre from 19th-23rd May.

"The Siege is completely unique, even in London's theatre scene"

"The home for which the rebels fought hangs like a question mark above the stage"

Editorial: The Power of Theatre

FRED FYLES
KAMIL MCCLELLAND
SECTION EDITORS

Walter Benjamin wrote that "memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience". While this may be true, I feel that actually the theatre is an instrument for exploring both our memory and our past. The theatre can transport us, to far flung place, and long-dead cities; the theatre can delight us, its witty wordplay creating sublime joy; and the theatre can horrify us, forcing us to confront all that is unspeakable about our collective experience. This week, *Felix Arts* takes a look at four new London theatre productions, all of which – in a myriad of ways – explore the role that theatre can play in our lives. We start off with Clara Clark Nevola's review of *The Siege*, currently on at the Battersea Arts Centre. A piece by the Freedom Theatre, based in the West Bank, *The Siege* reminds us all of the way culture and theatre has influenced and affected conflicts, not least in the Levant.

Clara then heads over to the St James Theatre, where their latest production, *McQueen*, is resurrecting the past, bringing the late designer back to life. Only theatre has the power to actually bring a sense of physicality to a ghost, allowing it to tread the boards.

We then check out the National Theatre's latest production, a performance of the restoration comedy *The Beaux' Stratagem*; through watching such theatre, not only do we delight our senses, but we also sharpen our minds on the wits of playwrights past, in this case Irish writer George Farquhar.

Finally, Jingjie Cheng is taken across the globe through the Ninagawa Company's production of *Hamlet*. Taking its cues from Japanese traditions, Ninagawa's *Hamlet* is a perfect fusion between two diametrically different cultures, highlighting the similarities we share as members of a common humanity, and the enduring power both of Shakespeare's language and that of culture as a whole.

Arts

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Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

McQueen: A Well-Cut Piece of Theatre

Clara Clark Nevola is surprised by the heart of this new bio-drama

From the title to the timing, *McQueen* at the **St James' Theatre** has all the hallmarks of a cheesy opportunistic bio-drama. But despite the tormented genius stereotype it conforms to, James Philip's play is a brave, moving, and enchanting portrayal of a person's struggle with mental health.

The play coincides with the fifth anniversary of his death, marked also by the **V&A's** lavish retrospective *Savage Beauty*, and the *Working Process* photography exhibition at the **Tate Britain** earlier this year. Yet the production is much more than a mere homage to one of the most iconic designers; the story it tells is neither the shocking drugs-and-depression tabloid version nor the glamorous *Vogue* version, though both are referenced in a stylised, indirect manner throughout. It is primarily the story of a person, and his relationship to reality. It transcends the narrow confines of the haute couture celebrity world, portraying an experience which deeply resonates with the everyday struggles of human emotion.

The story is set in a single fantasy night, a Tim Burtonesque fairy-tale nightmare reminiscent of McQueen's fashion shows. An obsessed groupie breaks into his house to steal a dress and, when caught, she and the designer start talking. She takes on the role of his inner voice as the

two travel through his memories and relive key moments from his life. The dynamic between the two is completely absorbing – it's never clear whether she is real or imaginary, which creates the disorientating feeling of being inside someone's thoughts. Alexander McQueen is played by Stephen Wright who, beyond his uncanny similarity to the real designer, brings an exciting, almost scary energy to the role. Dahlia, the groupie-cum-alter ego, is played Dianna Agron, known principally from her role as Quinn Fabray in *Glee*. She gives an unsettling performance, easily changing between devoted fan, fairy tale waif, and suicidal psychopath. There's something desperate about her character, a deranged neediness of incredible emotional power. It's not all depressing – moments of laughter and comedy make this play an emotional whirlwind, based on real emotion rather than cheap tear-jerking tricks. It avoids being morbid or mawkish and, perhaps paradoxically, there's something very real and vital about *McQueen*.

The dream-like quality of the two main characters is enhanced with some very original staging decisions. Christopher Manney has created disconcerting choreographies, with a top notch dancing troupe who have an unusually high level of technical skill for a theatrical production. They



Stephen Wright as Lee and Dianna Agron as Dahlia in *McQueen* Photo: Specular

animate each scene as mannequins, creeping out from the wings and whirling around Alexander and Dahlia, unearthly representations of their inner turmoil. The sets are full of references to the designer's work, with Timothy Bird's clever video design combining with the costume design to recreate the essence of

McQueen's creations.

Avoiding the pedantry of documentary and the maudlin of tragic biopics, *McQueen* is a rare thing: a moving play with impeccable production standards, where everything from the script to the costume details is perfect. It encapsulates the essence of a

creative genius, while transposing his struggles into everyone else's. In doing so it achieves the theatrical golden standard of enchantment and catharsis, giving the audience a few hours of enthralled, ethereal escape.

McQueen is on at the **St James Theatre** until 27th June. Tickets from £25. Available online.

The National's Pretty New Diversion

FRED FYLES
SECTION EDITOR

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. It seems this rule holds as true in theatre as it does in physics. After the cerebral existentialism of *The Hard Problem*, the bells-and-whistles approach of *Rules for Living*, and the highly modern adaptation of *Everyman*, the **National Theatre** return to well-worn theatrical traditions. *The Beaux' Stratagem* is a streamlined, watertight performance; it doesn't offer any radical reinterpretation of restoration comedy – and perhaps it doesn't have to – but this means that, despite the ability of the cast and crew, it remains little more than a light diversion.

One of the last examples of a Comedy of Manners, *The Beaux' Stratagem* was the last play of Irish playwright George Farquhar, and –

"The Beaux' Stratagem is a return to the National's well-worn theatrical traditions"

like a majority of works of its time – has a convoluted, twisting plot, full of double-dealings, misunderstandings, and bawdy humour: Aimwell and Archer, the two beaux of titular fame, find themselves down on their luck, their squandering of ten thousand pounds in London leading them to Lichfield, where they enact a plan to ensnare a wealthy bride. Aimwell falls in love with Dorinda, while Archer simultaneously woos Dorinda's sister-in-law, Mrs Sullen, and Cherry, the daughter of landlord Boniface. There are a few obstacles to their plan: Mr Sullen is still in the picture, despite the fact that his send-up of a country squire is the very opposite of the refined London character of his wife; Boniface thinks the two gentlemen are highwaymen, come to rob the ladies' house; and then there are the French prisoners of war to deal with. Make no mistake, *The Beaux' Stratagem* is as convoluted as they come, but the twists and turns of the

plot are softened by the wit contained within Farquhar's script.

However, *The Beaux' Stratagem* also deals with more serious themes, mainly the restrictive marriage laws in England at the time, which made divorce pretty much non-existent. This argument reaches a height in a courtroom-style scene that sees Mr and Mrs Sullen arguing their cases, with Mrs Sullen aptly comparing the golden links of wedlock to the iron manacles of law. After all the bustle of the play, this interlude comes as a surprise, perhaps due to the fact that much of the sophisticated language is cribbed from John Milton, giving it an incongruous edge. Set designer Lizzie Clachan has created a solid staging, with a multi-tiered house whose clever mechanics allow it to switch from a country inn to a manor house, underlining the fact that little separates the behaviour of the characters but money. Outside this set, two other places lurk out of

"Fielding and Bennett-Warner tackle their meaty parts with aplomb"

sight: the London so esteemed by Mrs Sullen, and the growing threat of an expanding France, both of which colour the plot.

There are no complaints to be made about the casting, with each actor handling their part with confidence; particular mention should go to Susannah Fielding and Pippa Bennett-Warner, who play Mrs Sullen and Dorinda, respectively. They tackle the meaty parts with aplomb, transforming them into creatures of comic timing and wit, who seem to be prototypes of the Austen heroine who would come to prominence at the end of the century.

The Beaux' Stratagem is a fine play, with a solid cast whose skills are accentuated by the traditional set design and strong direction of Simon Godwin; it equals exactly the sum of its parts. It may not exactly thrill, but it certainly won't disappoint.

The Beaux' Stratagem is on at the **National Theatre** until 20th September.

Arts

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Arts Editors || Fred Fyles & Kamil McClelland

Ninagawa's Hamlet shows a new Bard

Jingjie Cheng finds that Shakespeare's language is universal



Yukio Ninagawa, Hamlet, Shinnosuke Mitsushima and Tatsuya Fujiwara Photo: Takahiro Watanabe

Right from the outset, Ninagawa Company's *Hamlet* looked like it had been plucked out of an ancient Japanese film. Blue fog shrouded the stage as Hamlet, Horatio, and the guards dart across the stage, confronted by the ghost of Hamlet's father. Spine-chilling Eastern music beats steadily in the background. The ghost, draped in robes befitting of a Japanese emperor, weaved in and out of a row of two-storey wooden houses – the permanent set through which characters dash onto the stage from various directions.

Hamlet himself, played by long-time Ninagawa boy Tatsuya Fujiwara, reminded me of an anime character or a hero from a Japanese sword-fighting drama. With his curly, unkempt hair and black, billowing robes complete with a silver chain around his neck, it is easy for us non-Japanese to associate everything on stage with what is familiarly 'Japanese' to us. However, it becomes clear that Yukio Ninagawa, a director known for his take on Shakespeare, classical Greek tragedy, and contemporary productions, means more than simply to transpose English literature to a Japanese setting.

Perhaps the way the story seamlessly fits into a completely different setting highlights the universality of Hamlet's internal struggle and increasing isolation,

intensely portrayed by Fujiwara. His anguish was palpable – even on the many occasions where he was alone on stage, his internal turmoil expanded to fill the stage.

Motoi Hattori's lighting is impeccable, with the ghost king emerging from eerie blue fog, Claudius and Gertrude bathed in a royal and almost incriminating red aura, while Hamlet delivers his 'to be or not to be' speech while walking through a shaft of piercing white light. Dramatic lighting played a huge role in blowing up appropriately intense and dramatic scenes, as well as highlighting the turmoil within the conflicted Hamlet and guilty Claudius.

Indeed, there is a grandeur to this production that I rarely see in traditional takes on Shakespeare, which nowadays tend to be minimalist in stage set and prop use. The extravagance of the puppet scene, for example, emphasizes the elaborate farce that reigns in the court, where brother sins against brother and then weds his widow. Painted actors resembling traditional Japanese puppetry enact a carefully constructed script of betrayal, but when Claudius realizes that it parallels his own backstabbing of his brother, he storms out in rage and guilt. What ensues on stage is overwhelming, slow-motion chaos. The collapse of the controlled drama into flashing lights, dramatic music

and utter pandemonium on stage mirrors the breakdown of Claudius' image created upon his brother's death, and from this point onwards Claudius begins to fear Hamlet and for his tenuous hold on the throne.

Ninagawa is not afraid to go all the way in exposing the characters' inner struggles in dramatic visual representations – in the scene following the puppet show, Claudius is seen dousing himself in a bucket of water and then beating himself with a rope, clearly anguished and tormented by his fear and guilt. He then quietly prays while Hamlet approaches him from behind, all the while gripping his sword, unsure of the wisdom of killing him there and then.

Perhaps the most nuanced and heart-wrenching performance comes from Hikari Mitsushima's Ophelia, who is introduced to us as a gentle girl discussing with her father Hamlet's perceived advances towards her. Her dainty innocence is progressively corrupted in the play as she is first violently treated by Hamlet, who screams at her to go off to a nunnery, then loses her father Polonius when Hamlet kills him accidentally. She is clearly terrified by Hamlet's change, but it is upon learning of her father's death that she descends into a delicate madness. It was almost as if her innocence could not stand up against the farce and cruelty in court, and like the flowers she hands out to the other

characters in her delirium ('rosemary is for remembrance'), she is easily trampled upon and swept aside in the midst of betrayal and greed. Mitsushima's Ophelia was one of the inadvertent victims of Hamlet's own conflicts – but her purity and deep, untainted love for her father was perhaps the only redeeming good in the dark and twisted halls of the Danish court.

Ran Ohtori's Gertrude, on the other hand, was a bland, somewhat one-dimensional character whose own conflicts were not fully explored. It seemed to me that she was a docile woman who willingly followed whoever was in power, without fully understanding her son's feelings of betrayal – a relationship that had potential to be fleshed out.

As Ninagawa himself mentioned, it seems almost 'hubris' to bring a Japanese adaptation of a classic English play back to its country of origin. In my opinion, however, his unique take on Shakespeare's longest play explores a dimension of the story which enhances its scope for performance. It is always fascinating to observe the versatility of literature, and Ninagawa's *Hamlet* certainly does not disappoint.

The Ninagawa Company's Hamlet was on at the Barbican Centre from the 21st - 24th May. The Ninagawa Company will return for Kafka on the Shore, 28th - 30th May. Tickets available online.

"The story seamlessly fits into the completely different Japanese setting"

"Ninagawa's unique take on Hamlet explores a new dimension of the story, enhancing the play"

Dreaming of a better world film

Jack Steadman is resoundingly disappointed by Disney's latest

TOMORROWLAND: A WORLD BEYOND

Director: Brad Bird

Screenplay: Damon Lindelof, Brad Bird, Jeff Jensen

Cast: George Clooney, Hugh Laurie, Britt Robertson, Raffedy Cassidy, Tim McGraw, Kathryn Hahn

Tomorrowland: A World Beyond is in the running for year's most pointless subtitle. It exists only for the UK, with every other territory simply being treated to the original title of *Tomorrowland*, sans subtitle. It's a needless addition that tries to define the film further while failing to actually explain anything about what's going on. It's an apt metaphor for the film, to be honest.

Tomorrowland (we're just calling it that from now on) is the latest film to be based on part of the Disneyland theme parks, joining the illustrious likes of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and... the *Pirates of the Caribbean* sequels. The other films to be based on Disney rides don't really bear talking about, unless you want something to complain about.

It's got a far amount of promise on paper despite that slightly worrisome heritage, though. Brad Bird is the director responsible for Pixar's classics *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*, before making the leap into live-action with the joyous *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol*. The cast features the likes of George Clooney and Hugh Laurie. The script was co-written by Bird with Damon Lindelof, one of the main men behind *LOST*. That's pretty much where the promise starts to dry up, really. At least on paper.

Britt Robertson gets her first major role in this film, and she absolutely kills it. She plays Casey Newton, an optimist in a world going downhill, and a girl who sneaks onto the NASA launch site at Cape Canaveral, disabling the machines dismantling the pad. Robertson is a revelation, displaying deft comic timing and infectious enthusiasm. She makes some absolute clunkers of lines sound hilarious, and she pushes the film through several of its struggles. She lights up the film around her, which is why the way the script ultimately treats her character is such a crushing disappointment.

Casey is constantly set up throughout the film as being 'special'. Everything appears to focus on her, and with the help of Raffedy Cassidy's Athena she's the main

"Her special power is (drumroll please) the power of positive thinking."



All of the other promotional images were people standing in a field of corn. I'm not even joking.. Photo: Brad Bird/Disney

driving force of the plot. Quite why she's special is never fully outlined for most of the running time, although it slowly becomes clear that her special power is (drumroll please) the power of positive thinking. And if you think this is a somewhat pointless special power that has no ability to push a plot forwards, then don't worry. The filmmakers appear to agree with you. Casey is completely side-lined for the film's finale. That whole section of the film is absurdly rushed – from the moment Casey, Athena and George Clooney's Frank Walker arrive in Tomorrowland itself, the plot barrels towards an inevitable "let's blow everything up" finale. Sod positive thinking. We have explosives.

Those explosives signal the death knell for any hope that *Tomorrowland* might pull itself together in the home straight. Hugh Laurie's villain gets an entertaining speech that pulls off the marvellous trick of actually convincing you that the villain might be right (which admittedly, when the heroes are as full of absolute fluff as the heroes of *Tomorrowland* are, doesn't require a huge amount of effort). George Clooney's natural charm is allowed to shine through as his character starts to warm up. There's some semi-decently shot action. It could all work, and then

Tomorrowland stumbles across its thematic football. It takes a run-up, aims, and then completely misses and ends up sprawled in the dirt. It's such a waste.

Tomorrowland is an enjoyable ride, it should be said. It's enjoyable, but heavily flawed. It never quite understands what its own message is, and during the few moments where that message does start to flicker into life it's complete nonsense. Most of the acting is excellent, but it's forced to cope with an inadequate script

that has forgotten what it's trying to do, and how it planned to do it in the first place.

This is a film to watch, once, enjoy, and then forget about. It doesn't say anything worth hearing. It fails to stick in the memory, and that's honestly a good thing. It's so painfully confused that it's almost upsetting. There's a lot of good work that went into *Tomorrowland*, from the sumptuous visuals to the sterling efforts of the cast. It's just buried beneath a pile of meaningless junk.

"Sod positive thinking. We have explosives."



You thought I was joking, didn't you? Photo: Brad Bird/Disney--

Film

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Film Editors | Ellen Mathieson, John Park and Jack Steadman

Can you spell A Cappella?

Ellen Mathieson enjoys the return of the Bellas

PITCH PERFECT 2

Director: Elizabeth Banks

Screenplay: Kay Cannon, Mickey Rapkin

Cast: Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Hailee Steinfeld, Brittany Snow, Skylar Austin, Adam DeVine, Elizabeth Banks

It's a well-known fact that comedy sequels are tricky. For every occasional good one, there is a whole host of bad ones. Pitch Perfect was one of 2009 most surprising hits, making back its money in a big way and having one of the most downloaded soundtracks of the year.

With almost all of the original cast back, and Elizabeth Banks taking on the role of director after she produced the first one, does this film manage to not be a disappointment like so many sequels are? Well, kinda.

The Barden Bellas are back, three time ICCA champions and one of the most respected names in A Cappella.

As is to be expected this all goes horribly wrong fairly quickly and rather spectacularly at an event involving suspension from the ceiling, an American President and a lack of underwear.

Things go from bad to worse for the Bellas, now the laughing stock of the US, are banned from competing in the championships and recruiting new members.

Their only hope is win the World Championships, and competition that no American team has ever won.

Because the world hates America. No, I'm not making some crude comment, this is literally a joke from the film.

Elizabeth Banks and John Michael Higgins, who were spot on in the first film as the occasionally inappropriate commentators, take the humour way too far in this film, and it just becomes crass rather than amusing.

It's also seen in one of the only two new Bellas that get any screen time.

Yes, she's from Guatemala, but that doesn't mean that literally every word out of her mouth needs to be about that fact.

Whilst there was a great chance to expand on the one dimensional characters from the first film, this one does just the opposite, making those characters seem even more flat and cliché.

The lesbian is the lesbian, the slut is the slut, the Latina is the Latina.

It's just as bad with the new rivals in the film, the German team DSM. We meet them time and time again, but their characters never really do



I wrote this caption before I found the picture, which is why what I'm writing has no relevance at all to what you're seeing. You know you love it. Photo: Elizabeth Banks/Universal

much. They're the haughty attractive foreigners, and that's all there really is to them.

It's not all bad though. Though some of the film feels tired as they repeat popular scenes and scenarios from the first film, there is enough new content and original jokes that it still gets a lot of laughs.

Rebel Wilson as Fat Amy remains the star of the comedy, lightening up the script with her often bizarre improvisation.

What is possibly the best scene in the film involves her, a lake and the best make-out scene in recent cinema.

Newcomer Hailee Steinfeld playing Emily, the only character to really get any sort of development, is wonderful in her role.

She's the bumbling, awkward, overly enthusiastic first year, that we probably all were, and far more relatable than Anna Kendrick's Beca from the original film.

She's the heart of the film, and her developing romance throughout the

film is just delightful to watch.

The romance in general is dealt with well. Many sequels fall into the trap of not really knowing what to do, so throw in a bit of romantic tension and upset to bring in the audience desperate to see if they make up.

This film doesn't do this, instead having Beca and Jesse in a happy relationship that gets barely any mentions other than a couple kisses and conversations.

It's a far better way of doing it, and gives more screen time to more interesting things, like the budding romances this one has to offer.

The soundtrack gives out some great numbers, but it doesn't quite live up to the first, and though this was a deliberate choice made by the creators of the film to show how the Bellas have lost their sound, it's a bit of shame as the stellar soundtrack is what made Pitch Perfect such a hit.

Overall, it might not be aca-awesome, but at least it's not an aca-disappointment.

"The soundtrack doesn't quite live up to the first film."

"The humour just becomes crass rather than amusing."



Make a 'pitches' joke. Go on. I dare you. Photo: Elizabeth Banks/Universal

This week at Imperial Cinema



This week at Imperial Cinema we have *Cinderella*, Disney's latest take on the classic Italian folk tale.

If you're not familiar with the plot, the basic gist is that Ella, an orphan, lives with her cruel stepmother and stepsisters. Soon, however, she meets a dashing stranger in the woods and her fortunes begin to take a very different turn.

This charm-filled, critically acclaimed retelling of the story was shot at various locations across England and has outstanding performances from Lily James as the titular hero to Cate Blanchett as the wicked stepmother, and Helena Bonham Carter as The Fairy Godmother.

The success of both *Cinderella* and *Maleficent* has led Disney to announce more live-action remakes of their classic animated features, with *Alice Through The Looking Glass* set to be released in 2016.

Cinderella is playing on Tuesday 2nd June at 7pm, and then again on Thursday 4th of June, also at 7pm.

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 about our showings this term, visit: imperialcinema.co.uk.



Television

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BBC doesn't mind the Buzzcocks

Jack Steadman rounds up the BBC's axing of the beloved panel show



A typical line up for Never Mind the Buzzcocks during one of its guest host phases. I know who some of these people are. Photo: BBC

Comedy music panel show Never Mind the Buzzcocks was dropped by the BBC this week, after almost 20 years and nearly 270 episodes on air.

A 2014 revamp of the show failed to salvage falling ratings, likely leading to the show's cancellation.

The show's last run often struggled to hit 1 million viewers, with the shift to a 10pm slot on Monday nights believed to have potentially played a part in the drop.

A BBC spokesman said that "After 28 series we've decided not to bring Never Mind the Buzzcocks back to the BBC. This will create space for new entertainment formats in the future.

"We'd like to thank the team at Talkback [the independent production company responsible for the show], Rhod Gilbert [the current

host], all the brilliant hosts over the years and of course Noel [Fielding] and Phil [Jupitus] for the years of enjoyment they've given BBC Two viewers."

The show was first broadcast in 1996, with Mark Lamarr taking the host's chair alongside Sean Hughes and Phil Jupitus as team captains.

Jupitus has been the one constant from that original line-up, staying as captain for all 28 series of the show.

The opposing team was headed up by Bill Bailey following Hughes' departure, and more recently Noel Fielding after Bailey took his leave.

The host's chair saw an even greater number of occupants over the course of the show's run.

Several guest stars took the role after Lamarr left, until Simon Amstell lead the show for four series.

His departure triggered another

string of guest hosts, which ultimately lead to the appointment of Rhod Gilbert to the job.

When Gilbert was appointed to the role, Digital Spy asked if he thought the show "still had legs," to which he responded "If I thought I was coming in just to stand on the bow while the bloody thing sank, I wouldn't be doing it."

Buzzcocks was perhaps most famous for its ability to inspire an angry walkout from its guests, with the likes of Ordinary Boys singer Preston and Fun Lovin' Criminals frontman Huey Morgan all storming off the set during filming.

The show gained popularity with such rounds as the 'Identity Parade', where the show's producers would locate a former music star and insert them into a line-up of similar figures, asking panel members to identify the

'real' star.

Similarly famous was the 'Intros Round', now a staple of phone-in contests on radio stations across the country, a quick-fire blast of snippets of song intros from which panel members had to identify the whole song.

They also featured the likes of 'Woop Woop! That's the Sound of da Police!', a round which saw teams asked to identify how various artists got into trouble with the law, and was fairly exemplary of the show's attitude towards artists.

The BBC has said that they have no further episodes for Buzzcocks planned, including any sort of compilation or retrospective episode (which the show has been known to before), meaning the show's final episode has already aired at the time of this announcement.

"Jupitus has been the one constant from that original line-up."

"the show's final episode has already aired"



Barrowman! Photo: BBC

Never Forget the Buzzcocks

With the demise of Never Mind the Buzzcocks comes the inevitable wave of pieces reminiscing on the show, its trials, its tribulations, and most of all its walkouts.

The seat occupied by Preston (lead singer of the Ordinary Boys) became dubbed the 'ejector seat' after he stormed off set following then-host Simon Amstell reading out extracts from Preston's ex-girlfriend (Chantelle Houghton)'s memoirs.

(Before I continue, I'm obliged to point out two things. One, I have no idea who either 'Preston' or 'Chantelle' are. If you do, please write your answer on a postcard, then set that postcard on fire. I literally don't care. Two, reading the memoirs of someone's ex out to them on TV feels like a bit of a dick move.)

Said title of 'ejector seat' can't help but feel like an

enormous over-exaggeration on reflection. A quick Google suggests that less than five people actually walked out on the show over the many, many years it's been on air.

Videos of the walkouts are all over every goodbye article declaring the end of Buzzcocks, but they're the same few videos. That story about Preston walking out (and why) is the one that seems to appear most. It's in every article. The only story that didn't (really) mention it was the one by the BBC themselves.

Personally, I think the guest hosts were the real highlight of the show, especially David Tennant's stint in the chair. If we remember Buzzcocks for nothing else, let it be for a raised fist and a shout of "Barrowman!"

JACK STEADMAN



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INSIDE: DP(W) REVEALS STRESS LESS CAMPAIGN

HANGMAN



News in Brief: *Felix* Editor: "It's just rude to not join in an orgy you've walked in on."

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NEW: DRESSING UP WITH KAYE

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HANGMAN



News in Brief: The Guardian caught in cash-for-places university league table scandal

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Diary of a Fresher, aged 19 1/4

Sunday 25th May

Wow! It's been a terrible month, diary. I had loads of exams, I spent almost every day in the Library, and it's still not finished! This week is my last week for exams, I have one on Tuesday afternoon and one on Wednesday morning. Thanks, people who schedule exams. Way to give me time to revise between my exams, you dicks.

At least it's a Bank Holiday on Monday, so I don't have to worry about doing anything except revise for an extra day.

Monday 26th May

Some of the people in my halls have finished their exams already, so they're spending the whole day getting drunk in the garden. I really want to join them (anything except revise!), but I don't want to fail my exams. I can have fun when they're over, right?

One of the guys in the garden threw their beer can through my window and it spilt all over my notes. All the ink's run and it stinks of alcohol. Great. Probably wasn't going to learn anything more, anyway. I guess. Might as well go and join them...

Tuesday 27th May

Oh God. Oh no. No no no no. I think I missed my exam? I'm not sure. I remember going down to join the guys in the gardens, and I think I did some shots, and then I woke up in my room just now. I'm sure my exam was meant to be over by now. CRAP.

Wednesday 28th May

Is there any point in even going to this exam now?

NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS



Have you been mis-sold a World Cup by this man?



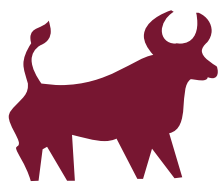
Central Library air-conditioning "still happening, honest."

HOROSCOPES



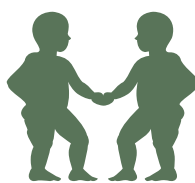
ARIES

This week the usual writer is writing the horoscopes due to the fact that last week's were side dish and in jokes at best. You rejoice in the fact that dank humour will be coming your way and Hangman wonders what taboo joke they will have to edit out.



TAURUS

This week in an attempt to get into hardcore revision you buy multiple adult diapers to prevent wasting those cheeky seconds of revision; however you forget to remove it when you go to the library, leading it to leak out when you sit down in Wolfson.



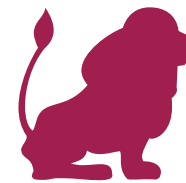
GEMINI

This week, the *Felix* Editor corners you in 568, plies you with drinks and entices you down to her office. After stripping you naked, she makes you wear a fake cat head before taking pictures. It's all good because it's for this week's Centrefold. No, seriously. This actually happened.



CANCER

This week when you try to sneak into the Queen's Speech in Parliament by hiding in her gown you inadvertently get a glimpse of her Ver-JJ and are blinded for life due to the sheer radiance of it. #YOLO



LEO

This week you sit down to catch up on the Eurovision contest whilst eating various cured meats in order to feel slightly less racist than you are; however the sheer amount of bratwurst you consume plays havoc on your bowels, leading to you shitting out entire sausages.



VIRGO

This week you wonder if Imperial's actual motive is just to put its students off science altogether and after an in depth investigative journalism thing, you discover that Alice Gast has been an Art Historian from UCL all along!



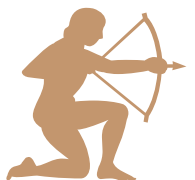
LIBRA

This week you try to catch Dwayne Johnson after the premier of his new film with hopes of his fathering your children; however, the sheer force with which he pounds you leaves you in a wheelchair for a few weeks.



SCORPIO

This week you realize that as the horoscopes writer you are continually just reusing jokes from Diary of a Fresher but luckily that was like at the beginning of the term so no one will remember. What even happened to that anyway?



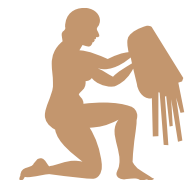
SAGITTARIUS

This week in an attempt to stay up for an all nighter for your exam the next day, you stuff a chilli down your pants; however the capsaicin melts your genitals off and you are rendered as smooth as Action Man.



CAPRICORN

This week you decide to play international cock and ball however your friend points out it's always going to be cock because it's so much harder to reach for ball - like at least 70% and you decide to do a clinical trial to establish the most likely outcome.



AQUARIUS

This week in an attempt to save the NHS so you can have a guaranteed job for the rest of your life, you get Parliament to force all 80 year olds to move to a pension hunger games. You watch your own granny use her false teeth to claw out someone's eyes. Heavy.



PISCES

This week, Hangman writes this horoscope:
No, he doesn't. Joke's on you.

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 back Al Pologies, Vice Provost (Arbitrary Excuses)!

Sadly, further unforeseen circumstances have lead to Al's continued absence from his desk.

In fact, we'd like to use Al's now-empty column to take the opportunity to introduce our brand new Tactical Initiative Task Squad (Student Satisfaction). Lead by our Swedish Vice Provost (League Tables), Knott Gudenuff, just one of our many valued international members of the Faculty team, the Tactical Initiative Task Squad have been tasked (haha!) with taking the initiative (haha!) on our student satisfaction ratings, to help make sure that we can inflate those numbers and climb the league tables.

We're inviting staff members to design the posters that will shortly be going up across the South Kensington campus, encouraging students to sign up to come along to meetings of TITSSS. We're considering offering pizza or other similarly student-attracting foodstuffs, but if you have better ideas for encouraging engagement please do send them in! We're a highly collaborative institution, after all, and it's through collaboration that the greatest work is achieved!

We're currently hoping to have enough participation to require multiple meetings to canvas views of all the students, with our current plan to run pairs of TITSSS meetings throughout the working week. We hope the concurrent meetings will enable us to gather more than twice as many opinions in the same amount of time just one meeting would take! Please, hold your applause.

If you'd like to be involved with the Tactical Initiative Task Squad (Student Satisfaction), send an email to TITSSS@imperial.ac.uk, with 'Sign Me Up for TITSSS!' as the subject.

Hello all,

Welcome back to another edition of Blue News! We've got plenty of titillating tidbits laced with an indulgent dollop of information to make sure you stay informed of everything going on in the world-leading institution of Imperial College London this week.

I'm sure you all awaited with baited breath the release of that liberal rag-well-renowned newspaper, The Guardian's league table this week, which looks at a variety of factors to determine an overall 'rating' out of 100 for each University, which are then collectively ranked based on that rating.

For reasons none of us here in the Faculty Building can quite understand, this list of factors includes student satisfaction!

So, unfortunately, we must come to the conclusion that when it comes to league tables based on student satisfaction, students are our biggest asset. We know that these league tables are inferior to ones we already sit atop, such as those measuring research, number of highly credited (even Nobel Prize winning!) professors, or even quality staff newsletters, but we can't truly claim to be world-leading in every field (as we all know we are) until we've crushed the opposition on every playing fields.

To use a sporting analogy, Manchester Football Club may win the Top Football League and be world-leading, but if they lose their games with Liverpool United Football Club, can they still be said to be the superior team? No, no they can't. And the same is true of Universities, which are obviously much bigger and far more important than sports.

So yes, we may disagree with the bloody liberals Guardian journalists on their methods behind the tables, but we must also respect that some very important people look at these tables when considering which University to sponsor or donate vast sums of money to. And for that reason, if nothing else, we should strive to achieve higher in all aspects of these tables.

If that means improving student satisfaction, so be it.

Have a productive, cohesive, collaborative and happy day!



Alice Gast: Thought of the Week

"I'm overjoyed this week by the results of the Guardian league tables. We continue to rank among the top universities in the country, with being an exclusively scientific institution proving no barrier to our continued success. We have the highest percentage of students in careers after 6 months of graduation, an achievement no other University can match. And we came higher than those wankers at UCL. Get in."

What is going on inside the Blue Cube this week

What Is: Student Satisfaction?

Confused over what all the fuss this week is about? Fear not! Our continuing 'What Is' series is here for you.

On Tuesday at 1pm, we'll be running this session to break down just what 'Student Satisfaction' means, and what we can do to affect it.

Lead by Vice Provost (League Tables) Knott Gudenuff, we'll be looking at past examples of Student Satisfaction, as well as how other institutions have handled having lower ratings than us their own ratings.

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

What Is: The Guardian?

That's right, we're running two 'What Is' sessions this week!

On Wednesday at 2pm, we'll be running a brief session to follow up from our 'Student Satisfaction' session, and keep you all informed of just who *The Guardian* actually think they are, and why their opinion is regarded so highly outside the walls of this world-leading institution.

All-Staff Briefing Cancelled

This week's All-Staff Briefing has sadly been cancelled by the Vice Provost (Arbitrary Excuses) due to the widespread distress over not being ranked above Cambridge in the *Guardian* league tables.

What is going on outside the Blue Cube this week

We sent someone outside to attempt to discern what was going on outside the Blue Cube, but after the disappointing results of the league tables we've realised that if only 80-odd percent of students are satisfied with their time here, then up to 20-odd percent of students are potentially violent hoodlums who could express their dissatisfaction through unwarranted attacks on staff.

We will not tolerate the threat of negative ratings on our valued faculty members, and we take this expression of dissatisfaction very, very seriously indeed.

However, until further notice all staff members are expressly forbidden to leave the Faculty Building without written permission from the President due to Health & Safety concerns.

Puzzles

fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk

Puzzles Editor | Michael Faggetter

Weekly quiz

ICU Quiz Soc

1) Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll

Jimi Hendrix and Marilyn Monroe, among many others, died of an overdose of which drug?

2) Literature and Written Words

Which novel by Sir Walter Scott tells the adventures of a knight under Richard the Lionheart?

3) Foodstuff

Which Indian and Pakistani dish is usually made from spinach and can be served with paneer or aloo?

4) TV and Movies

Hugh Laurie was the protagonist of which show from 2004 to 2012?

5) The Fine Arts

Which subject of an Ingres painting is known as Grande and famously has too many vertebrae?

6) In the Last Week

The ruins of which historical city in Syria have fallen under the control of ISIS?

7) Questions About Good Songs

What should Beethoven do in the title of a Chuck Berry single?

8) Pseudoscience and myths

Which creationist hypothesis advocates irreducible complexity and is used as an alternative to evolution?

9) This Day in History

The fall of which city on the 29th of May 1453 is considered by some historians the mark the end of the Middle Ages?

10) ...and if you got all the other right, their initials spell out...

What mediaeval religious administrative unit may have also been known as diocese?

Suck on these sudokus

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Small Nonobellogram

There are three Nonograms for you to complete this week! Shade in cells according to the numbers at the end of the rows and and columns.

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Slitherlink

The objective of this logic puzzle is to connect the dots with horizontal and vertical lines to form a single continuous line/loop. In addition, the numbers in the grid indicate the total number of adjacent segments within the loop.

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.	2	1	.	.	1	1
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Clubs and Societies

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk

C & S Editor || Ben Howitt

Earthquakes and the Underground

Fiona Walport reports on CivSoc's Spring Tour to Bucharest



We asked if they could bring back a centrefold, but apparently it “wouldn't comply with health and safety”. Photos: CivSoc (including opposite)

On the 29th March, 04:00, 70 Civil Engineers across four years from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering took off to Bucharest, the capital of Romania, for the annual CivSoc International Tour. The students had been looking forward to the event all year and the excitement amongst those going was felt throughout the journey from the Imperial College Union to Bucharest – even with the incredibly early start!

Upon arriving in Bucharest at about 14:00, CivSoc made their way to the X Hostel in the centre of the city on an arranged coach. The accommodation was a great, cosy, and fun hostel with very affordable prices and group discounts. Rooms were of varying sizes, with almost every room including people from multiple years. This acted as a fantastic opportunity to intermix the years and socialise.

The hostel also had lots of break out spaces and a spacious common room providing students with an excellent opportunity to socialise in the mornings and evenings after the eventful days. It also included an escape room which proved very popular, with one group breaking the hostel record. The evening was spent getting accustomed to the area and the Romanian culture, and Professor Bugnariu kindly came to the hostel to give myself and Dominik [Sznajder, CivSoc Chair] a quick overview of the plans for the university and site visits. The hostel was well located with everything that the students could want in walking distance.

Day 2

After another early morning start and an improvised breakfast provided by CivSoc, the group

headed off in coaches across the city to the Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest. We were greeted by Professor Bugnariu and six other members of Bucharest's Civil Engineering Faculty. The content of the morning's first presentation was focussed around the MetroProject that we were going to see the next day. The first lecturer was a consultant on the site itself, and was able to give us a detailed summary of the history of metro lines in Bucharest, as well the layout of the current project. Subsequently, Professor Bugnariu focussed on Bucharest One, specifically the complex geotechnical engineering required on the site. The main difficulty of this project lies in that the two buildings forming Bucharest One are constructed above two Metro line tunnels. Careful consideration must therefore be taken in designing

the pile group beneath the building, as well as predicting the settlement of the soil that can occur on the tunnels. Similarly to the London Underground Ltd requirements, the tunnels have a very low allowable movement. The Professor showed us the detailed steps of finite element analysis they undertook in order to analyse/measure the stresses acting on the tunnels along with the relative displacements. It was extremely interesting, giving the first and second years a great appreciation of the importance of finite element modelling on real construction sites, and providing a practical example to the third and fourth years who were more familiar with the use of this type of analysis. Finally, the third presentation, also geotechnics focussed, gave us more insight on how the site investigations were carried out. This was also an opportunity

for the lecturers to tell us about the seismic activity in Bucharest, which directly related to the University walking tour that followed the presentations.

We were shown around the university campus and then taken outside to their 'seismic testing ground', where the university had set up a seismograph to measure the seismic activity in the city. We were told that there had in fact been an earthquake felt in the city three days before our visit. The University has an educational exchange partnership with a Japanese university that contributes to developing Romanian seismic design. This includes building small scale framed/braced/carbon-reinforced structures to understand the structural capacity offered by these different designs.

Finally, to finish off this very interesting tour, we were led to the

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C & S Editor || Ben Howitt



main structures laboratory of the campus, where the lecturers were proud to show us the main feature, a very impressive load cell imported directly from Japan. This was the main tool to analyse the strength of various structural members, made of predominantly of concrete.

Following the morning's university visit and free lunch period, the group then met up again to participate in the walking tour of Bucharest. For logistical reasons, we were once again split into two groups, but both guides were incredibly cultured and offered as a very interesting tour around the major Bucharest landmarks, whilst filling us in on Romanian history. This provided great insight into a city and country that we did not know much about. Romania has always been a buffer zone between various empires until the 19th century when it gained its independence. The 20th century proved very difficult for the country however, between World War II and their years part of the Soviet/Eastern block throughout the Cold War. The communist regime of Ceaușescu in the late 20th century pushed the country into poverty. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party in 1991 Romania has been trying to rebuild its economy and reaffirm its identity as a country with a long history and important heritage.

The main conclusion of this fascinating walking tour was that Bucharest is a very surprising city of contrasts both culturally and architecturally, with a mix of newly built '16th century Parisian'-style buildings, closed down buildings in ruins and flamboyant landmarks from Ceaușescu's rule and the revolution, such as the Palace of Parliament and the controversial 'Potato on a stick'. This walking tour provided a great end to a busy and insightful day, which was brought

to a close with further discovery of the Bucharest nightlife and more bonding between years.

Day 3

Day 3 started off with the group split in two. Whilst one of the groups headed west in the city to a large metro project site, the other half headed to the north of the city to the site of Bucharest One. The first site gave the students the opportunity to see first-hand what a tunnel boring machine (TBM) looks like and the full size of them.

The tour started with a trip down two levels in the station to see the TBM and the tunnel. The tunnel had just been completed and they were at the stage of shotcreting the walls of the tunnels to prevent flooding within the station. The site was a great chance for the student to see how complex the engineering can become when working in a location with a high groundwater table. It was a topical site visit considering the amount of tunnelling that is currently going on in London with Crossrail.

The Bucharest One site contrasted the metro project and allowed the students to see how buildings are constructed in near proximity and on top of tube lines. It was fascinating to see the site having had the talk on it at the Technical University the day before. On completion, the office building will be the second tallest building in Romania. Students were first given a short presentation by the site manager and it was impressive to see that they were, unusually, ahead of schedule! From the site office, the students were then led around the site, first going down into the basement levels and then up to the sixth floor from where there was a surprisingly good view of the surrounding area. Some particularly

interesting features of the site were the methods that were incorporated to account for the location of the building over the metro lines. Large movement joints and uncoupling of the walls were observed and it was great for the students to see things that they have learnt at university put into practice.

Day 4

After lunch the whole group went to the Romanian Palace of Parliament for a group tour of the magnificent yet controversial building. Even with the knowledge that it is the second largest building in the world, the group was overwhelmed by the sheer size of it in person and the space inside. It was a fascinating tour led by a very enthusiastic tour guide, and enabled the students to learn even more about the history of Bucharest and the communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu. The dictator ordered the construction of this building as a monument to his communist rule, but never saw it finished as it was completed in 1994, three years after his decapitation. This impressive and imposing building, which was valued at \$4 billion at the time of its construction, is extremely controversial, as the marble and lavish ornamentation does not reflect the situation of poverty the entire country was in during the late 1980s. The sheer size of the Palace and the visiting restrictions meant that we were only able to visit 5% of the building, but the group was allowed to go out onto the balcony of the palace from where they enjoyed a fantastic view of the city.

Day 5

Sadly, the final day of the tour came about and the group made their way to Bucharest Airport via coach for the bittersweet voyage back to London. The coach journey provided safe and easy transportation and gave the students a chance to reflect as we drove past the sites one last time. The CivSoc International Tour 2015 was a highly successful event and it achieved above and beyond the goals set out by the committee. There were no serious issues, and everything went according to plan and, most impressively, we stayed in budget! The tour provided the students with a perfect balance between an educational and relaxing week away. Not only did the Tour achieve its main goals for the event allowing students to experience Civil Engineering in a foreign country, the students were also given the educational experience of history, culture and technical knowledge. The social aspect of the tour has enabled the students from all years to come together and form great friendships. The feedback received from the participants was incredibly positive and it has been seen since that there is more integration within the years and excitement for other upcoming CivSoc events. The great success of this year's tour has certainly built excitement and enthusiasm for Civsoc International Tour 2016 and whatever it may hold.

CivSoc Tour 2015 would not have been able to happen and most certainly not such a success without the generous support from our partners. At this point I would like to thank BP, IC Union, the OC Trust (CGCA), CCC, Vinci Construction and the Civil Engineering Department of Imperial College London. Thank you so much on behalf of all the students and I hope we can continue this collaboration in the future!





YOUR OFFICER
Elections 2015

**Your vote will make a
difference!**

Voting opens 12:00 midday

Monday 1 June

Voting closes at 12:00 midday

Friday 5 June

Cast your vote at:

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

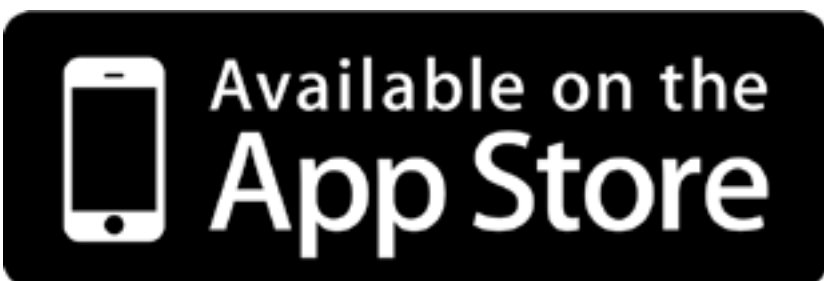
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AND MUCH, MUCH MORE





Premier League: The moments that defined the season

Kunal Wagle offers his reflections on another thrilling season in the Premier League

Boring boring Chelsea?

The chant from Arsenal fans rang around the Emirates in the latter stages of the dire 0-0 draw between the Gunners and Chelsea. For Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho, it was all he really needed at such a late stage in the season. Opposition teams voiced their frustrations at Mourinho's tactics but in reality he was doing a masterful job of marshalling his troops to get them over the finish line. Many forget the roaring start they made to the season, which allowed them to sit back and defend in the latter stages. It may be boring, but my was it effective.

Mike Ashley out of touch?

It says something about the ongoing soap opera at St James' Park that the majority of the neutrals were probably hoping that Hull City managed to pull off the great escape and send the Magpies down to the Championship. Since Alan Pardew left (and let's be honest, this was a classic example of "be careful what you wish for") and John Carver was hired Newcastle have lunged from disaster to disaster. This included a run of eight straight defeats that

transformed Newcastle from a mid-table club into one teetering dangerously close to the relegation zone. They have a lot to address over the summer if they want to stay in the league next year.

Should Brendan Rodgers stay?

Compared to last year, Liverpool had a poor season. They finished in sixth place, with an early start in prospect next season through a Europa League playoff. Brendan Rodgers has become the first manager in recent times to go through three seasons at Liverpool without winning any silverware. Last year he was scathing about Tottenham, saying that "If you spend £100m, you expect to be challenging for the league." This season Liverpool spent £103m, and came sixth. Rodgers last year also said "We won't do a Tottenham." I wonder if he was regretting that statement when the sixth goal went in last week.

Mark Hughes: Hugely underrated?

Few will forget Mark Hughes' horror spell at Queen's Park Rangers, where he was sacked in December without having won a game in the



Chelsea celebrate their triumph. Photo: Graham Chadwick

season. But since then he has taken the job at Stoke City, and has turned in some massively impressive results. This season he led Stoke to their highest ever finish - ninth - and they look well placed to make a Southampton style push for Europe

next year. If they do it, then surely people won't be talking about that year at Queen's Park Rangers any more.

Garry Monk: Manager of the year?

Forget Jose Mourinho. Forget Nigel Pearson. Forget Ronald Koeman. For me, the manager of the year has to be Garry Monk. Who could have thought that former club captain Monk, who was appointed late last season as the Swans avoided relegation, could lead his side to eighth in his first full season of management ever? Certainly not me. This was even after he lost his best player in Wilfried Bony in the January transfer window to Manchester City. He'll face a challenge to avoid second season syndrome next year, but you wouldn't bet against him. Not after this season.

Felix's Team of the Season vs Felix's Flops of the Season

Kunal Wagle reveals his choices as the Premier League season ends

It's that time of year again. The time when football reporters scour all the statistics from the season to decide who goes in their team of the season. This year, I've decided to come up with not only a team of the season, but also a team of "flops" of the season.

In the team of the season on the left I've gone with a Chelsea three at the back. Some newspapers have come up with four in defence with Gary Cahill, but I felt that that would be covered by the defensive midfielder Nemanja Matic, who has been instrumental for the Champions. Cesc Fabregas and Michael Carrick both missed out on the PFA team of the year, which I felt was harsh. They make up the central midfield. The strikers, Harry Kane and Sergio Aguero, pick themselves.

The flops was notably harder to select, mainly because of the number of strikers who deserved to be in the team. One person I did consider including was Steven Gerrard, but it would be harsh to say that he didn't have his moments this season.



Can United mount a title challenge?

Louis van Gaal achieved his target for this season, which was to return to the Champions League. The next target has to be challenge for the title, and if he's going to manage that next year then he has a lot of work to do. The first step will be in the transfer market. Van Gaal's transfer dealings from last summer can only be described as mixed. He had great success with Ander Herrera, and Luke Shaw is showing signs of promise. However the loan move for Radamel Falcao, and the purchase of Angel di Maria can't be ignored. Memphis Depay is a good start, but van Gaal will know he has to fix his defence, and have a solid replacement for when his star man Michael Carrick is injured, to mount his challenge. With his track record, you'd expect it.