



NOT FAIR
NOT SAFE

The story behind the 'weekend effect' figures

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What would your club spend five grand on?

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English unis the most expensive in the world

Study finds that on average, degrees in the England cost more than in the US



New research has uncovered that students working for degrees at English universities are paying more on average than those in China, Japan or the USA.

During the 2013/14 year, those studying in Britain were paying an average of £6000 per year. The US was a close second with average annual fees of £5300, and Japan followed with a dreamy £3300 yearly mean. The study did not include private universities, such as Harvard, Columbia and Yale in the US, many of which in charge much higher fees. Around 40% of students in the US attend private universities, with their average fees topping £14,000. In the UK, there are only four fully private universities.

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted the study. This is the first of its type to be done since the coalition government tripled the maximum tuition fees for the 2012 incoming year group. The study took into account the average fees in more than 30 countries.

However, the Parisian think tank says our high fees are matched with higher graduate employment wages than in most of the countries surveyed. As well as calling the system in England "efficient" and "probably fair"...

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Shadow chancellor praises Imperial on visit

Philip Kurukgy
Writer

MP and shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, visited Imperial this week, where he gave a speech acclaiming Imperial's role in science and innovation. This visit comes only two weeks after George Osborne, the chancellor of the exchequer, visited Imperial's White City campus, where he said Imperial represented "the future of our economy here in the UK".

The Labour MP made his speech from 'the Incubator', which offers leases of office and lab space to new companies.

In his speech, Mr McDonnell

called the new Imperial West campus a "tremendous initiative" and mentioned his particular excitement, as the member of parliament for a West London constituency.

On arrival, he said: "What an inspiring place this is to speak about the future of the economy... at Imperial College's Incubator, where start-ups and entrepreneurs are working alongside the leading minds in science." The Labour front bencher went on to emphasise the importance of new technology in developing the UK's economy, with the Incubator being a prime example of this.

The MP spoke of how his generation had taken free education and affordable housing for granted, questioning why years

after the advances several different governments had made, the MP's grandchildren would have a less secure future than him. Citing "new hope" under Jeremy Corbyn, with "new economics" and a "sustainable society", he criticised austerity and the big corporations whose actions go unhindered under current policy.

Praising Imperial for showing people how science, technology, and innovation are shaping "our new world", the shadow chancellor added that the Labour Party would work with businesses and universities to help deliver his vision. He also pledged to increase the amount the UK spends on research as a share of GDP, to bring it in line with levels seen in France, Germany and the US.

On Wednesday, McDonnell

waved a copy of Chairman Mao's 'little red book' at George Osborne in the House of Commons, in protest of the move to sell state

assets to China. George Osborne had previously shown China's President, Xi Jinping, around Imperial on a state visit.



FELIX EDITORIAL



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A word from the Editor

Not saying you're doomed if you make a speech about economics at Imperial, but chances are within a week or so you'll get some terrible press, and not just from us. Although a slightly cutting bottom third of a FELIX front page is feared throughout parliament (it's not even enough to phase the communications department here at Imperial) the 'mainstream' press have since had a right old go. Having waltzed around Imperial within a couple of weeks of each other, both George Osborne and John McDonnell have had a rough time of it lately. A week in the Business School probably would've taught old Georgie not to play into the hands of both the right and left wing press by backtracking on tax credit cuts, and hopefully would've advised the shadow government's counterpart against waving a copy of Chairman Mao's 'little red book' in front of a room of people you're trying to persuade that you're not a

loony leftie.

These very different human calculators seem to both love it here, and you can see why. For one thing, we're a very reasonably priced Uber from the Houses of Parliament. We've got technology, a huge and uncontroversial new campus on the way, lots of nice science that most people won't get annoyed when you say we should invest in it, clean shiny surfaces, flashy five-thousand pound desks, and of course, a student body tame enough to not occupy whatever hidden space you're using (unless you're so frightened you resort to the Imperial West campus, which of course, even the most fervent anti-austerity campaigners amongst us would dismiss as too much of a trek to protest at).

I'm not saying Imperial breaks you, but it does.

What am I going to rant about here when MPs stop using Imperial's beloved break out spaces to launch policies? Or make dated and misjudged references



to socialism and iPads? Or the internet? Nothing, so please, write for us. It could be your stories I could be making half baked comments about, forever to haunt my digital footprint. Lucky you! Have a half baked comment! Lovely. Please send full baked comments to us at felix@imperial.ac.uk.

Much love!



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Join the FELIX team! This paper is made by students, for students, and you can contribute content to any section. Yes, you! We want writers, illustrators and sports, and web editors.

Come find us in the West Basement of Beit Quad or pop the section editors an email.



Union spends five grand on a desk

In a controversial redevelopment of the union offices, thousands of pounds were spent on stickers, a light-up reception desk and a glass wall

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

This week it came to light that the union has spent something in the region of £20,000 on the refurbishment of its own office spaces, £5100 of which was spent on a new light-up reception desk. Other monumental costs included £1266 on the removal and disposal of the old reception desk, £4180 on the new glass separating the SAC from staff desks, and the new stickers adorning the area between Metric and FiveSixEight, which cost £1640 to create and install. It is unclear whether this last cost included the price of the perspex added to the wall to protect the adornments.

The stickers appeared at the start of this term, and offer a mind-boggling viewing experience to those queuing for the cloak room or trying to get into Metric. Passers-by have called the display, “disorienting and gaudy”, “patronising” with one simply saying, “vile”.

This comes as *I, Science*, a Guardian student media award-nominated Imperial publication, had its £3000 budget slashed to zero by the union at the end of last year. As the periodical was mostly run by Science Communication students, that department now covers the costs.

The union president told FELIX: “The Union is proud to invest millions of pounds each year in enhancing the student experience



Despite looking like a spaceship, this is just a desk. Although for five grand, it should be able to fly. Photo Credit: FELIX

of our members. Investing £4000 a year for the next five years in making our building more welcoming, and the Officer Trustees and staff more accessible is just one small part of that investment.”

FELIX is unaware as to whether these figures include Value Added Tax.

The union’s annual report was released this week too. Staff numbers were up this year from 52 in 2014 to 54 this year, although student staff fell from 132 to 126. Despite this, the amount the union was paying out in wages had increased by £176,000 from 2014. The report also showed one staff member was earning over £80,000 this year, whereas last year, likely the same individual, was earning between £70,000 and £79,999.

Although wages, funding for *I, Science*, and flashy desks all come from different pots of money, the union has still made the choice to spend a pretty hefty amount of cash on what most would agree was an eyesore. The going rate for fancy curved wooden reception desks, and we’re talking a few steps up from IKEA here, is around one or two grand, so the union certainly could’ve been more frugal.

At union council on the 27th of October questions were raised about the union’s redevelopment, including the vague costs, lack of student consultation and the changes to Student Activities Centre (SAC), which many clubs have found difficult. Chris Kaye, the union’s Deputy President of Finance and Services, was actioned to report on the costings of the union redevelopment to Council. The union’s president was actioned to “look into communications with students over developments in the Union that directly impact the student volunteers”. The next union council meeting is on the 8th of December. Any Imperial student can attend.

As well as a reduction of computers in the SAC from sixteen to six, many clubs have expressed difficulty with the new printing system. Whereas before, club officers could use the space for essentially unlimited and unmonitored printing, now, each

club is assigned £10 of printer credit. This works like standard college printer credit, and has the same pricing structure. Several clubs, especially those with lots of music to print, have expressed dismay at the new system.

Although there is a form the union has provided for claiming back lost personal funds, sources from MTSoc amongst others told FELIX: “It’s too difficult to print in the way the union has suggested. The only other option, screenshotting print logs and sending them to the union for verification, seems like a time consuming, needless effort for all involved.”

Another added, “It’s a change that’s hit some clubs’ members harder than others.”

GIANT FREAKING DESK COMPANY

SALES RECEIPT

DATE : AROUND OCTOBER TIME
CUSTOMER : IMPERIAL COLLEGE UNION

NEW RECEPTION DESK + INSTALLATION	5100
REMOVAL + DISPOSAL OF OLD DESK	1266
GLASS TO SEPARATE SAC FROM STAFF	4180
WALL STICKERS OUTSIDE METRIC	1640
	SUBTOTAL 12,186
MISC	8000

TOTAL COST (ROUGH)	20,000

- MAY INCLUDE VAT -

This is not a real receipt, obviously. We did get all the above figures legitimately from union sources, though. These figures may include VAT that can be claimed back by the union. What could your club have done with five grand?





Yoga banned at American university

Teacher claims union said ‘cultural appropriation’ meant the classes would be stopped

Jack Steadman
Writer

Yoga classes at the University of Ottawa have been cancelled by the university’s Student Federation (the American student union equivalent) after apparent concerns over “cultural appropriation”.

Jennifer Scharf, an instructor who had been running free weekly yoga sessions at the university’s Centre for Students with Disabilities, claimed in an interview with the *Ottawa Sun* that she had been told via an email exchange in September that the yoga program had been cancelled for the upcoming term.

In the email, Scharf claimed that a representative of the Centre wrote that “while yoga is a really great idea and accessible and great for students ... there are cultural issues of implication involved in the practice.”

The email continued: “yoga has been under a lot of controversy lately

due to how it is being practiced and what practices from what cultures ... they are being taken from. Many of these cultures ... have experienced oppression, cultural genocide and diasporas due to colonialism and western supremacy, and we need to be mindful of this.”

Scharf attempted to offer a compromise, suggesting changing the name of the program away from yoga and towards “mindful stretching”, claiming that since yoga

She was told there were “cultural issues of implication” involved in the practice



The guilty yoga class itself (artist's impression). Photo Credit: unsplash.com

is “not really what we are doing, we are just stretching”, and name change would not require a material change to the classes content. This compromise was ultimately rejected by the Federation, and the classes were discontinued, at which point opposition to the move began to take hold in the student community.

In response, the Centre issued a statement via Facebook, insisting that “the classes were not cancelled”,

and were instead temporarily suspended to allow for “proper consultation” over the future of the service.

This consultation is part of a review of the service, which the Centre claim is required as during the “couple of years” the program has been running it “has never been reviewed.”

In a comment on the statement, the Facebook account for the Centre

also added that “no one attended the classes so that’s why we ended them, its [sic] not that hard to understand people, the fact that disabled people are getting harrassed over this is ridiculous”, with no further comment or context available.

Finally, the Federation itself stepped in to provide an update (also via Facebook), claiming that neither the Federation nor the Centre “release[d] the statements around cultural appropriation to the *Ottawa Sun* [which broke the story originally]”, and dismissing the quotes on cultural appropriation as falsified. They also reiterated the claim that “the attendance of the Yoga classes was declining” and that the program “has been running for the past 8 years without any re-evaluation.”

The statement concludes with an expression of disappointment over the “harassment and violence” some Centre/Federation staff have experienced over this issue, as well as a plea to be able to “re-evaluate this conversation and have a more conducive dialogue.”

English degrees cost most on average

Excluding private universities, ours are the most expensive in the world

continued from front page

...the leader of the OECD’s Education and Skills department said that the “returns to individuals [studying in England] are still very, very substantial”.

Although British institutions rely heavily on private funds, students in the UK contribute around 20% to the cost of their education, which is more than the EU average of 14%.

At the moment, Imperial undergraduate degrees costs £9000 per year for home and EU students, and £26,000 for everyone else. This is higher than the OECD’s UK average of £6000,.

Sir Peter Lampl, chair of the Sutton Trust, which campaigns for equal access to education, said the figures “should cause the government to avoid steps that could hamper access, including replacing

grants for poorer students with loans leaving them more indebted than richer students, cutting widening participation funding, or reducing the independence of the access regulator”.

He also said that although home student fee increases from 2012 did not seem to have put off students from poorer backgrounds, “it has seen a big fall in numbers of mature part-time students”. Imperial offers part-time courses in several departments including Aeronautics, the Business School and Science Communication.

In his Autumn statement published yesterday, Chancellor George Osborne reiterated plans to scrap maintenance grants for students, saving the national coffers £2bn per year.

The statement also guaranteed

that the wage threshold for home students having to pay back their fees would remain at £21,000 until April 2021, which will mean repayments for the students who started their studies in 2012 or after could work out more expensive.

Despite this new research, the government has no plans to halt its recent green paper recommendations, which would see top universities being allowed to raise their fees with inflation. Still in its infancy, these potential policies are currently going through consultation, but after the tripling in fees in 2012, further increases were predicted by many. Imperial College Union has not yet taken a stance on the green paper, and Imperial College have said they will be responding to the consultation, after discussing the issue with ICU.



An artist's impression. Photo Credit: FELIX

FELIX COMMENT



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The mighty hedgehog will roar

Should we save hedgehogs at the expense of becoming a global laughing stock?



Jennifer Eden
Writer

The lion has long been hailed a most majestic and fearsome creature. Respected by the other animals within its habitat, the lion has a purpose, pride and courage. And as far back as the time of Richard I, the lion has been used as England's national animal for all the aforementioned reasons. As a nation, we supposedly share these qualities with the lion, hence the massive statues in Trafalgar Square, amongst other places, paying homage to our national animal.

However it has been suggested recently that this symbol needs to be updated and replaced. Trafalgar square should no longer be filled with the famous lions, but instead with giant hedgehogs. Huge, spikey hedgehogs which no one is going to be sat on posing for a family picture.

This comes after conservative MP, Oliver Colvile, suggested the Hedgehog becomes Britain's new

national symbol in order to boost public awareness of the hedgehogs decline in numbers. In the last ten years alone, their numbers have decreased by almost a third due to a loss of habitat. Certainly this is an issue that needs to be discussed, but whether it hold the gravitas to change our country's whole identity is debatable. And surely there must be better ways of helping the hedgehog than putting it on our passports and England football shirts.

Ideas such as creating 'specialist habitats' with new housing, and making holes in garden fences for the hedgehogs mobility would make a huge difference. This alongside efforts of wildlife trusts could curb the decline of hedgehogs in the UK. Therefore, reducing the hedgehog's chance of extinction doesn't necessarily have to be done by changing the national symbol. And let's face it, if every species in



Hedgehogs: the porcupine's cuter litter sister. Photo Credit: Carnivoraforum

trouble were made a national symbol we'd end up with the wildlife chart of the UK slapped on a coat of arms. But the other species were perhaps not considered lovable enough to make the cut.

In fact one in three species have halved in number over the past half century. The tiger moth has taken one of the biggest battering's with numbers having fallen 95%. Turtle doves have declined by 93% since 1970, and bats, butterflies, beetles, red squirrels and woodpeckers are just a few of the hardest hit species.

Maybe with the hedgehog as a national symbol awareness of the peril of all wildlife in the UK would

be brought to centre stage. Looking at this from a non-conservationist, eco-unfriendly point of view though, the hedgehog is really not the kind of animal we need as a national symbol. Conserving habitats for our diverse wildlife is extremely important; but changing our national symbol will help neither the hedgehog nor Britain's dignity.

Yes, there may be no lions roaming the British countryside, being tossed the occasional steak by passers-by. But at least the lion as a symbol doesn't make us the laughing stock of the world. A hedgehog, on the other hand, probably would.

ISIS must be destroyed with air strikes

This is a clash between civilisation and barbarism – and civilisation must triumph

Christopher Whitehouse
Writer

In the wake of Paris, David Cameron is set to ask the House of Commons to authorise anti-ISIS strikes in Syria. In terms of strategy, this is common sense. The RAF is already striking ISIS targets in Iraq – it is ludicrous to respect a non-existent border that our enemy does not.

Critics are right that escalation of British airstrikes alone will not be decisive. However, like the UN Security Council Resolution passed unanimously last week, a vote to escalate airstrikes would be an important symbol of British determination, and a small step towards a final victory in the war against ISIS

But the justice of the cause must never be in doubt: ISIS must be destroyed. In my opinion, jihadism is ideologically very similar to Nazism. It is a utopian mass movement, both revolutionary and reactionary in nature. It seeks the overthrow and

conquest of governments to restore the glory of a lost Empire. It values strength, purity and loyalty to the Nation above all other virtues. It despises Western liberal democracy as corrupting and indulgent. It has a genocidal hatred of minorities. Its "grievances" are irrational and ultimately impossible to appease.

Irrational
and
ultimately
impossible
to appease

That's what they believe, so what do they do? ISIS has attempted

a genocide of the entire Yazidi people, sparing only those girls they sexually enslave. They've sought the destruction of the Kurds, to punish them for their adoption of liberal Western values. Homosexuals are thrown from buildings, "adulterers" stoned to death. And as we saw in Paris, they seek to strike at the very heart of the West. Just as Nazism caused the Holocaust and World War II, this barbarity is an inevitable consequence of their hideous ideology. Thus co-existence is not just undesirable but impossible.

Since the collapse of the Twin Towers, much of Western liberal opinion has been unable to maintain moral clarity. In Syria and Iraq, millions of innocents have been caught between Assad's barrel bombs on the one hand, and the knives of jihadists on the other. Hundreds of thousands have died, millions are internally displaced or in exile. Given this status quo, where

both Assad and ISIS are deliberately maximising the devastation, ruling any Western intervention as immoral on the grounds of civilian casualties is the height of absurdity.

Similarly, those who complain that Mohammed Emwazi (Jihadi John), ought to have been tried in a British court need to answer a simple question: how? The butcher of American aid workers and Japanese journalists was in Raqqa, deep in ISIS territory. The choice was between a drone strike and doing nothing. One can only conclude that these critics are more concerned with not getting the West's hands dirty, than any notion of justice or protection of innocents.

Morally, there is a world of difference between the forces of theocracy and democracy. It really is black and white. If we are to win both the war on the ground and the war of ideas, we must never lose sight of that simple truth.



Filibuster foils first aid – fair?

Children should not be denied the opportunity to learn first aid by an old man who has difficulties remembering his childhood



Jack Steadman
Writer

Last Friday, a group of Conservative MPs killed a bill intended to make first aid training compulsory in state-run secondary schools by “talking it to death.” The thrillingly-named Compulsory Emergency First Aid Education (State-funded Secondary Schools) Bill – which tells you everything you need to know about the bill in one snappy title – would have effectively added first aid training to the national curriculum, especially CPR and the use of defibrillators.

Because it was a Private Member’s Bill, put forth by Labour MP Teresa Pearce, there was only a limited amount of time available for debate, which was apparently invitation for a collection of miserable, common-sense-hating MPs to spend the

It’s beyond time for the filibuster to be reformed



Teaching children first aid could be a game changer. Photo Credit: bullseyesafety.net

entire debate spouting absolute nonsense.

A bill backed by St John’s Ambulance, the British Red Cross, and the British Heart Foundation – by far the three biggest charities responsible for promoting first aid to the masses – was killed by Conservative MPs using childish, antiquated tactics that have no place in our parliamentary system.

Are you fucking kidding me?

Making first aid part of the national curriculum is an undeniably great idea, because having more people who know the fundamentals of how to save a life can only be a good thing. And Conservative MPs chose to talk the bill to death. The reasons they gave were nothing short of a piss-take. I mean, seriously, take this steaming pile of premium manure (courtesy of the Independent) from Philip Davies MP, who appears to be the Member of Parliament with responsibilities for Being a Giant Ass-Wipe:

“Among reasons he listed for blocking the bill was that himself had been taught first aid in school but had forgotten what he was taught. He also said the Government should not expect teachers to assume a “pseudo-parent role”, and that he did not want

“the Government to be sticking their nose in at every turn trying to lecture [teachers] every five minutes that they should be doing this, that, and the other.”

The fact that you can’t remember your (non-compulsory) first aid lessons from school is not a valid reason to deny it to children now. The fact that a Member of Parliament is an old man with difficulties remembering something from his childhood should not be a reason for depriving children of an extremely valuable life skill.

Teaching first aid isn’t remotely “pseudo-parenting.” I have zero comprehension of how this is an argument against the bill. Equally, I fail to see how adding this to the national curriculum would be “sticking [one’s] nose in at every turn.” It’s a simple and potentially life-saving addition. Michael Gove tried far, far worse when he was busy dicking about with the curriculum. But let’s leave Philip Davies to his opinions. This filibuster (and it very much is that) was beyond moronic, but it’s provided a flag to an element of the democratic process that is painfully in need of reform.

Yes, the filibuster exists in other governments, most notably the US Senate, but there it has power and

meaning, and acts as an effective check (amongst many, many others). The UK equivalent is a watered-down, weedy version that fails to act as a check on the government in any way, shape or form, and is simply a means to kill off bills unsupported by the Government.

It’s beyond time for the filibuster to be reformed – it’s not only this bill that has been killed off in this manner (or indeed by Philip Davies, who has a horrific fondness for this sort of behaviour), and unsurprisingly there is now a petition for the Government to reform the rules on filibustering. Created by Dr Alex Langford, the petition currently has just over 29,000 signatures, meaning the Government is required to respond. If it hits 100,000, it’ll be considered for debate in Parliament (and if it is, no doubt Mr Davies will attempt to filibuster it).

Conservative MPs used childish, antiquated tactics

Dr Langford on the petition’s aims: “Lowering the number of MPs needed to win a vote on a motion for closure, or limiting the length of speeches in certain sessions, would be options for reform worth considering.”

This is not a demand to remove the filibuster. It can have its uses, but in moderation, not just every Friday afternoon, and not by someone who was taught to do it because their political mentor “did it for fun”. Take a look at the petition. Sign it. It may not sound like much, and it’s not going to change the world, but it will make a difference. And if it means more bills like the Compulsory Emergency First Aid Education (State-funded Secondary Schools) Bill – as unsexy as that name might be – get passed, it will have been so, so worth it.



Communism is the key to luxury for all

It’s time to start thinking about a post-work society



Cale Tilford
Music Editor

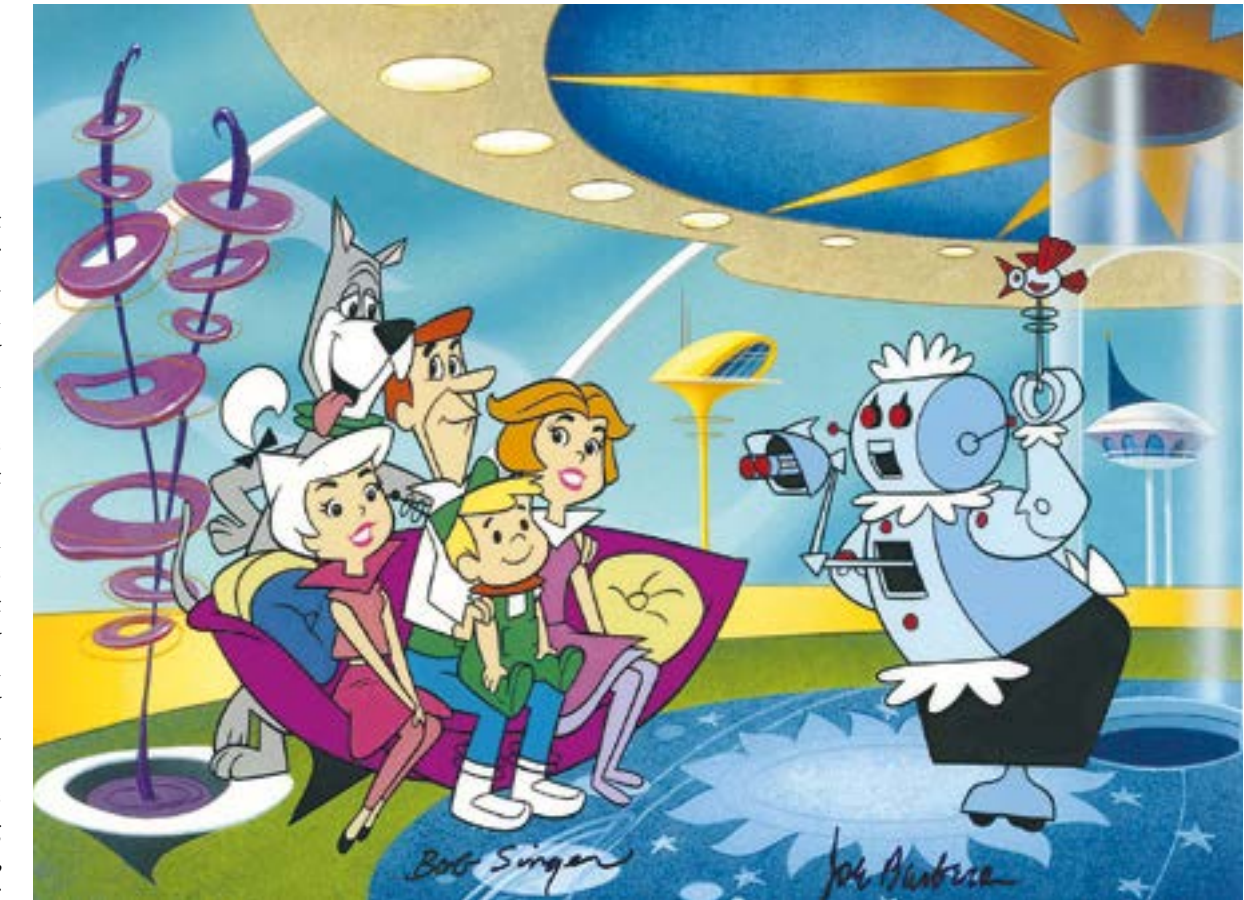
In a speech last Friday at Imperial, shadow chancellor John McDonnell outlined his ideas on a new form of socialism where “technology liberates rather than traps.” With full automation in the not-too-distant-future almost inevitable, it’s now time we start thinking about how Britain will adapt to a post-work society. McDonnell’s speech recognised many of the problems automation might introduce, but offered few solutions. As a party firmly rooted in the trade union movement, Labour seem woefully unprepared for a world with a workforce without work.

It’s likely that Imperial students and researchers will help bring about the automation revolution, whether through robotics or artificial intelligence. It will also be Imperial alumni who profit from the resulting mass unemployment (over the next decade 15 million jobs are at risk of automation). We might drive “future innovation in our economy”, but we could also be responsible for the largest shift of wealth in history.

In the recent past, our university has proven that it is not benevolent. With the College’s insatiable desire for funding, can it be trusted with the future of our society?

Socialism, but socialism with an iPad

Those who own the robots and own the artificial intelligence will have the whole nation under their control; Imperial is likely to be complicit in all of this. From my experience, there is an alarming lack of discussion about the ethics of our actions. This would be okay if our politicians contemplated



You know you’re in the future when there are robot maids. Photo Credit: Warner Brothers

the consequences of automation,, but few have the foresight. Unfortunately, left unregulated, the technologies we help create could cause social upheaval and society’s ultimate collapse.

Yet I still believe we should embrace automation. The possibility of a ten hour work week is enough to make it worth it. John McDonnell dreams of world “where everybody has the ability to develop their talents and enjoyment of life to the full.” This might be possible, but only if we look beyond capitalism.

The futurist left have a solution: fully automated luxury communism.

It begins with the common ownership of all that is automated,, enabling luxury for all. Rather than letting giant corporations be the sole profiteers of scientific advance (which will undoubtedly have been funded in some way by the state), every citizen of Britain should have some share of the profits. We are already automating more of our transport, health care, manufacturing, admin, and retail, – this will only continue.

Take for example Über (which John McDonnell gave brief mention of in his speech), a company which is seeking to be fully driverless by 2030. We shouldn’t let a small few at the top make vast profits at the

expense of everyone else; instead, a company like Über should be publicly owned or run cooperatively by the community.

The technologies we create could cause social upheaval and society’s ultimate collapse

If the state nationalised all automated industries, the introduction of a universal basic income would be possible.

The Green Party proposed an unconditional basic income of £71 a week in their manifesto (which was unfairly ridiculed by the media). This wasn’t proposed in the context of a post-capitalist society, but it’s still a good start.

Many might argue that without competition no innovation would occur. It’s interesting that McDonnell decided to describe his economic ideas as “socialism, but socialism with an iPad.” Apple is the most profitable company in the world and arguably the greatest success story of capitalism. However, nearly all of the technology that makes up Apple’s iPad and iPhone was originally invented, by state funded or state owned organisations. Without the US military, DARPA, and CERN it’s unlikely the iPad would exist today. If a state owned agency invented and produced this sort of technology in the future, luxury could be available to all.

Fully automated luxury communism isn’t a totally new idea; it’s the communism of the past reapplied in the context of the 21st century, taking full advantage of technological progress. It’s a fascinating ideology that’s completely incompatible with Labour ideals. I’m now realising that I might be in the wrong party.

FELIX COMMENT



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Terrorism is a marginal and exaggerated threat

When we're surrounded by so much fear, we forget that we still have freedom

Sebastian Gonzato
Writer

In 1853, the architect Georges-Eugène Haussmann was tasked with the renovation of Paris, a city crippled by overcrowding and disease. Part of his work involved creating large, straight boulevards that critics at the time said were to allow the army to manoeuvre more easily and to suppress armed uprisings. Whether that really was the motivation behind them, today we are regrettably seeing soldiers lining these boulevards.

The response to the attacks in Paris has been substantial to say the least. The day after the attacks, France mobilised 115,000 soldiers across the country, while 1,000 extra soldiers have been stationed in Paris itself. Closer to home, we have seen David Cameron pledge £3 billion for anti-terrorism units, the first increase in military spending in decades.

I was relatively unaffected by all this until recently, when my hometown of Brussels was locked down due to an “imminent threat”. I had been told how surreal the situation was, but it didn't quite hit home until I saw pictures of the desolate city centre, thoroughly empty apart from a handful of soldiers patrolling here and there.

The fear that all this has caused is hard to exaggerate, and it's understandable. Terrorist attacks are frightening because they are so unpredictable, and have little care for who their victims are. They fill us with a sense of powerlessness as we think to ourselves, “that could have been me”.

This shouldn't divert us from the fact that these attacks capture our attention so much because they are freak events. We all know this deep down, but what may be surprising is just how uncommon these events are. 32,658 people were killed in terrorist attacks in 2014, but only a small fraction of these were Westerners. Of all the terrorist attacks that have been committed around the world since 2001, only 0.5% of these have been in the West (that figure goes up to 2.6% if you include 9/11). Sensationalism is sadly the bread and butter of modern news, and we ignore this at our peril.



Brussels' usually busy shopping areas have been empty this week. Photo Credit: Quartz

All the news coverage and heightening of security creates an unwarranted atmosphere of fear, but that is not the only harm that these measures do. The obsession we seem to have with terrorist attacks diverts our attention (and ultimately government spending) away from causes that could save more lives than any city-wide lockdown or air strike ever could. Because of this, we have accepted that cuts to police, education and junior doctors' wages are acceptable, while an increase in military spending can be proposed without any seeming contradiction. This winter some 20,000 will die from lack of proper heating, but we will not see any proposals to prevent this because this happens year on year and it's simply not news anymore.

There is also the question of whether heightening security and proposing air strikes in foreign countries (as David Cameron did quite recently) does anything to help with the ‘War on Terror’. This is a hard question to answer. However, what is certain is that these measures do more to promote fear in Western populations than they do to prevent the supposed cause of that fear.

This brings me to what I believe to be the most damaging consequence of the scaremongering we have seen

in the last decade and a half, and that is the use of fear as a way for governments to pass measures that would otherwise be unthinkable. The most prominent of these measures has been the mass surveillance we have seen with GCHQ, justified by William Hague in eerily Orwellian

These attacks capture our attention so much because they are freak events

language: “if you are a law-abiding citizen... you have nothing to fear”.

While there are other examples of successful infringements on our human rights, what is equally worrying are the laws

that have been proposed before being thankfully struck down. In 2004, the UK government tried to introduce indefinite imprisonment for suspected terrorists but this was ruled to be a breach of human rights. The right to jury trial is part of the UN Declaration for Human rights as well as the Magna Carta, and to see a government try to take away this right so flippantly is deeply unsettling.

More recently, we saw Theresa May propose measures that will outlaw “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values”, as well as a bill that will pretty much legitimise GCHQ's activities. This is a gross overreaction to what I consider to be a marginal and much exaggerated security threat. Not only that, but it opens up the door to activities that wouldn't look out of place in a police state, all the while with our implicit consent.

We often talk of our human rights as if they were inalienable, but history has shown us that we are more easily stripped of these than granted them. While it is hard not to be swept up in the hysteria that follows from terrorist attacks, we would do well to remember this. Above all, we should not be so easily led to believe that we have to make a choice between freedom and security.



China declares war on peer review fraud

Ghostwriters and superstitions arise in the scientific community

Madeleine Webb
Writer

From the perspective of students, peer-reviewed journals are the front line of research science and the pride of the academic publishing process. However, there has been a building scandal in the international scientific community around the process of peer review. The story broke into the mainstream when Springer, one of the world's largest academic publishers, announced they were retracting 64 articles from across ten of their publications after discovering faked identities and email addresses were used to pass the peer review standards required by the journals.

Though the 230 papers retracted in the last three years for this type of fraud are a tiny fraction of the thousands of papers published,

there is widespread concern about the peer review process. Since the majority of the papers retracted were authored by Chinese academics, pressure has been mounting on China's research institutions to take action. "If it wasn't obvious before, it is now difficult to deny China's research community has serious underlying ethical issues," says Benjamin Shaw, China's director for the English-language editing company Edanz, in Beijing.

China's central research agency, China Association for Science and Technology (CAST), is launching an investigation of dozens of scientists involved in the peer-reviewed scandal that lead to mass retractions. Additionally, the Natural Science Foundation of China announced that if any retracted paper was the basis of a successful grant application, all funding has to be returned in full, regardless of how much of the

money has been spent. There are also calls to increase the sanctions on the authors discredited by such investigation, to show how serious abuses of the system are taken. The Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE), suggested the problem also has to be tackled internationally by increasing the stringency of publication practices in order to reverse the tide of manipulating publishing practices.

The problem is compounded by the fact that responsibility for rigged and ghostwritten reviews is difficult to place at a single person's door. "Some researchers may have innocently become implicated in attempts to manipulate the peer review process by disreputable services," said Elizabeth Moylan, senior editor for research integrity at BioMed Central. In other cases there is evidence that editors subverted the peer review process by recommending articles through



Yep, this paper is all lies Photo Credit: Center for Scientific Review

fake accounts. It's also important to address the root causes that lead to peer review fraud, which is often the peer or perish culture of modern research. Charlotte Haug, the vice-chair of the Committee on Publication Ethics blamed the pressure Chinese researchers are often subjected to, saying "We don't think that Chinese researchers are any worse than anybody else. But

what we know is that the pressure to publish – for example in Western journals – is enormous in China". However, as long as academic success continues to be measured by publication in a select number of elite journals it's difficult to imagine how the pressure which drives researchers to such measure will end, even if when it's detrimental to the wider scientific dialogue.

Is the COP 21 our final chance for action?

World leaders are coming together in Paris next week in what some see humanity's last chance to take coordinated action

Daniel Silva
Writer

The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference also known as the COP 21 is taking place next week in Paris. From 30th November to 12th December, this will be the single biggest gathering in history of world leaders with the sole purpose of agreeing on a legally binding and universal agreement that will prevent the world's temperature from increasing over two degrees centigrade from pre-industrial levels.

After the disappointments of the last climate change conferences at Copenhagen and Doha, many estimate that this will be our last chance to avert the catastrophe predicted by scientists if we fail to substantially reduce greenhouse emissions over the coming decades. This agreement must determine the

necessary strategy in which different mechanisms and policies set the incentives that allow countries to move away from fossil fuels and into new forms of clean energy production.

The severity of the man-made caused situation has been consistently explained over and over by climate scientists as the single most important issue facing humanity this century, yet we have failed to take the required action to tackle this over a number of constrains. The institutional stickiness of a polluting system, embedded special interests from certain companies, short-termism on behalf of our politicians and a tragedy-of-the-commons like situation where countries have been free riding on the current state of affairs are all reasons why we haven't acted with the urgency required. The time to act is now!

In an effort to pressure governments to take serious action

on climate change, civil society is mobilizing with marches in hundreds of cities around the world over the weekend.

In London the march will take place on Sunday 29th November, forming around 12 noon from various places and working its way toward Parliament until around

3pm. Many Imperial College students will be marching on Sunday with the university students block.

Over the coming days, there will also be a series of seminars, events and activities including the Conference of Youth in Paris and the Climate Games, aiming to raise

awareness on this issue and creating spaces where people can make their own contributions.

The world needs a strong binding agreement that will set the stage for humanity to shift from dirty fossil fuels into a zero emissions society. For a bright and clean future, we must get this one right.

In London the march will take place on Sunday 29th November



Delegates arriving at the disappointing COP15. Photo Credit: Neil Palmer



100 years of general relativity

How Stephen Hawking didn't come to Imperial, but we had a great time anyway

Lef Apostolakis & Natasha Khaleeq
Science Editor & Writer

Before handing the stage over to the speakers, he treated the audience to a recorded message by Professor Hawking.

"I am very sorry that I cannot be here with you to celebrate 100

years of general relativity. The theory was very successful but also had major critics,

including Isaac Newton himself. The main criticism was 'action at a distance'. To understand the conundrum imagine what would happen if the sun suddenly jumped somewhere else. According to

it's our experience that is limited to only being able to access one part of the block at a time, so to speak.

Following Professor Dowker, Professor Jerome Gauntlett took the stage giving the audience a more traditional lecture around his research and our quest of unifying the theory of relativity with quantum theory, entitled 'Black Holes and the Unity of Physics'. He took the audience on a journey to the centre of our universe and the super massive black hole theorised to lie there. Black holes are so, well, massive, containing so much mass in so little space, that even light can't escape their gravitational pull. The point of no return is the event horizon and it is this quality that makes them appear black. This ability of theirs to suck everything made it particularly surprising when Professor Hawking proposed that actually, black holes are rather hot. Indeed they emit radiation.

Quantum particles spontaneously come into existence in pairs all the time (an electron and an anti-electron for example), but usually they collide into each other shortly after, annihilating each other in the process and disappearing back into thin air. Yet sometimes one particle will find itself into a black hole's event horizon, being sucked in and proceeding towards a space-time singularity, leaving the other particle to roam the universe freely and in the process, emitting radiation. Professor Gauntlett continued by explaining the implications of black holes being 'quite hot' on theoretical physics, going briefly into string theory and outlining some hopes and aspirations for the future of the field.

The night concluded with a Q&A session where the audience was given the chance to geek out and take all their existential angst out on the two speakers.

Overall the event was a beautiful celebration of our achievements as human beings and even though Hawking was a no-show, the talks generously provided by the two professors on such short notice gave us a taste of cutting edge physics while filling our eyes with stars and the occasional black hole.



Professor Gauntlett talking about black holes. Just another Monday. Photo Credit: Imperial College London

years of Einstein's theory of general relativity. Albert Einstein was the greatest physicist of the 20th Century and his discoveries revolutionised our understanding of the world and our place in it. Although I cannot be there I know you will be in very good hands with students who trained in my relativity group, Professor Fay Dowker and Professor Jerome Gauntlett. The theoretical physics group at Imperial College has a great tradition in carrying out research in fundamental physics since its founding in by Abdus Salam and I look forward to visiting on another occasion."

Professor Fay Dowker kickstarted the talks with an interactive presentation titled 'Inner Space, Outer Space: A Meditation on General Relativity'. The talk started with an overview of our understanding of the world and how it changed with the discovery of gravity by Sir Isaac Newton.

Newtonian gravity claims that between every two objects in the

I know you will be in very good hands with students who trained in my relativity group

Students and staff at Imperial were so thrilled to hear Professor Stephen Hawking was going to pay a visit to Imperial to celebrate 100 years of general relativity that 6,000 of us tried to obtain tickets for the conference. Insufficient space in The Great Hall led to a ballot where specific members of the Imperial faculty and student body were admitted, leaving those fortunate enough to get tickets eagerly waiting to see the legend that is Professor Stephen Hawking. Unfortunately though, due to illness he was a no-show.

However this small hurdle didn't seem to greatly affect excitement surrounding the event. "We were all extremely excited about meeting Stephen Hawking to talk about general relativity in person, but we're equally excited to hear from his students who are now famous professors at imperial. The knowledge will still be communicated" said Dr. Ling Chi, executive officer to the Vice President for Development and Innovation. Similar sentiments were echoed from other eager attendees.

As usual the Provost, Professor James Stirling, started the celebration with a 'short' speech, introducing the night's speakers and providing the necessary background needed to fully appreciate the 100 years that have passed since Einstein published his theory of general relativity.

He further expressed his disappointment in Stephen Hawking not being able to attend, but stressed his concern for the theoretical physicist's health, before wishing him a swift recovery

"Of course we hoped that Professor Stephen Hawking would be here to deliver a presentation this evening, and we were all saddened to learn that Stephen has been unwell recently and is unable to be here with us today. So, on behalf of everyone at Imperial College, I would like to wish Stephen a very full and speedy recovery."



Is Tuesday's child full of grace?

Research at Imperial College London adds an additional layer to the supposed 'weekend effect' currently being used as a political football

Gabriella Beer
Writer

Like most politicians, Jeremy Hunt is used to featuring in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. His continuing tete-a-tete with junior doctors has split the population, either outraged at current youth salaries, or in disbelief over the strain cuts could have on our NHS.

With 98% of balloted Junior Doctors supporting strike action, they are adamant that this is a disagreement that concerns respect, trust and the quality of the NHS, not a demand for a pay rise. Hunt's claims about the drop-off in weekend care experienced by patients have been strongly refuted by NHS staff from all backgrounds. Some statisticians are seriously questioning his use of data presented to parliament which allegedly supports the demand for a 'seven-day NHS'.

Mr. Hunt is thought to have carefully selected his conclusions via a study published in 2012, by a team from University College London. Investigations as to whether there was a difference in risk of death between those admitted to hospital at the weekend than a weekday, concluded that admission at the

weekend was indeed associated with an increased death risk within 30 days of admission. However, what Mr Hunt forgot to mention, was that the overall likelihood of death actually occurring on a weekend was less than on a weekday.

New research conducted by Professor Paul Aylin and his team at Imperial College London, has just added an additional layer to the 'weekend effect' debate. The paper published by the *British Medical Journal* analysed over 1.3 million births in NHS services in England between April 2010 and March 2012. Imperial scientists found that births occurring at the weekend had a higher risk of complications than those occurring during the week. When using the comparison of per thousand babies delivered, the rate of perinatal death (stillborn or death within seven days of birth) on weekdays was 6.5 per thousand babies delivered whereas the rate of babies dying across the weekend was 7.1.

"In our paper we tried to account for the fact that differences in rates of complications on different days may be due to chance, or that births on certain days are more complicated in some way," said Professor Aylin a senior academic from Imperial's School of Public Health. "However, even after making these adjustments, we found the rates of complications vary on different days."



Jeremy is surprised to hear that doctors are humans too and deserve weekends. Photo Credit: Howard Lake

Tuesday had the lowest rate of stillbirths

In fact, Tuesday was the day with the lowest rate of stillbirths. So as well as Tuesday's child being 'full of grace,' do they also ensure a hassle-free delivery? I'm sure Hunt would jump to that conclusion. Speculating far enough, you could say these findings support his plans, those same plans which some portray as an attempt to 'destroy' the NHS as we currently know it.

Before Mr Hunt rejoices too much however, the second part of the study investigated whether there was a link between birth complications and the recommended consultant staffing levels in labour wards: no association was found between consultant staffing levels and complications such as perinatal death or injuries to the baby during birth.

"We don't know what causes this difference, and when we looked at consultant staffing levels we didn't see a strong link between reduced staffing and complications," said Aylin. "More work needs to be done to better understand the causes of these differences, so that steps can be taken to improve outcomes for mothers and babies. Maternity care involves a whole team including midwives and other medical staff, so one avenue for future research might be to look at staffing levels beyond consultants."

When asked about the possible

complications that could occur during birth (on any day of the week) an anonymous new mother and medical registrar for the NHS, stated that "there are so many life and hospital factors to consider in each individual patient case, that one single reason simply cannot explain why complications occur in pregnancy."

Dr William Palmer, lead author and honorary research fellow from the School of Public Health, also raised an interesting point: "we have been able to present a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the 'weekend effect' in this important area of healthcare. However, this is a study based on administrative data and so we did not observe the quality of care directly."

Clearly a statement about patient care cannot be created from these findings if the care of women and babies was in no way monitored. So, whilst this is interesting data it is important to remember that this is an observational study; we should not draw conclusions in the same way Jeremy Hunt did after the 2012 report on the adult mortality rate.

Thus, speculation should be kept out of the political arena. Until further investigations are completed, we can still presume that 'the child that is born on the Sabbath day' can still be expected to be 'bonny and blithe, and good and gay'.



Look at that baby all alive and well. Probably born on a Tuesday. Photo Credit: George Ruiz



ICRADIO.COM

Show of the Week

Election 2016

Wednesdays at 3pm

Billy Micou and Varun Mann

You've seen the various memes about Donald Trump, you know Hillary Clinton is a shoe-in for the first female president, and you've watched Bernie Sanders' rousing speech on socialism, but you still have no idea what is going on in the US election. Why is Bush polling so poorly (No, not George W. And no, not George Sr. either. The other one. Jeb!)? Who on earth is Martin O'Malley? Is Marco Rubio the Republican Party's Obama? Well fret not! Now, thanks to *Election 2016* hosted by Billy Micou and Varun Mann, you can keep up to date with the most important exercise of democracy on the planet and gain the intellectual ammunition to shut down that one social activist friend when they start running their yap after a couple of pints in the Union.

Billy and Varun talk through the week's global events and their impact on the US political landscape, backed up by facts, polls and soundbites, to provide an intellectual commentary that Paxman could only dream of. Critique of both sides is guaranteed, from Clinton's secret affair with your future employers on Wall Street, to the inane ramblings of Ben Carson, the hypocrisy of all presidential candidates is ridiculed both fairly and concisely. It's not all high brow stuff though, this election cycle has plenty enough fools. Combine this with the wit of the political duo and the occasional song, the mood is kept entertaining – think more 'This Week' than 'Question Time'.

If listening is too passive for one as erudite as yourself and you'd like to have a say on the views spouted from the deluge of GOP candidates, or those of the hosts themselves, Billy and Varun are looking for guests to discuss particular subjects for 10-15 minute segments. You can find their contact information on the IC Radio website, and make sure to follow them on Twitter @icelection2016.

The best political radio show in SW7 broadcasts live from the West Basement Wednesdays at 3pm, and is recorded for your listening pleasure, at icradio.com.

Barnett brilliant at Postbahnhof



All eyes on Courtney Barnett and her band-mates. Photo Credit: Jingyuan Feng

Jingyuan Feng
Writer

– a song originating from strong support for local shops over big supermarkets, spiced with a touch of political connotation.

Sometimes I sit and think, sometimes I just sit, and this time I use side doors. One has to say, it's incredibly hard to resist the excellent noises delivered by a bunch of milk addicts, and nearly impossible to pay no heed to an aussie singer-songwriter who has "severe allergies, a hint of hypochondria, and a paramedic brother," which all came across as inspiration for the heart-tickling short story 'Avant Gardener'.

Given warning about the crappy sound quality at Postbahnhof by a friend from Berlin, I was a little skeptical at first, but soon we had an organic apple, a Club-Mate, and got on the ride – after all, things can't go amiss with a **Courtney Barnett** show.

The whole place was like a giant warehouse, where you can imagine people in cropped Levis, glittery dresses, and cult ankle-boots throwing adrenaline-kicking gigs all night long if it was set up in London. Girls in baggy jumpsuits, with natural side swept bangs and zero makeup, and middle aged men with less mobile ring fingers will be something you see at a Courtney gig, or at least a Courtney gig in Deutschland.

The show kicked off right after the support band **Big Scary**, as the trio walked in in their habitual deadpan way. Just as always, the drum beat intro of 'Dead Fox' hit me hard

I come up here for perception and clarity... And the wind's the only traffic you can hear." This kind of celestial feeling miraculously blended in perfectly with the background distortion.

"I think I'm hungry, I'm thinking of you too." Some late night insomnia, reminiscing about a skim-read book on palmistry, and blurry eyes fixed on the off-white ceiling paint all intertwined in 'An Illustration of Loneliness (Sleepless in New York)'. Courtney then decided to move on and fantasize: "Wondering what you're doing, what you're listening to, which quarter of the moon you're viewing from your bedroom." Such süß loneliness.

The next one rocked us out. This definitely says a lot about Courtney's slacker rocker charisma; what was a deadpan crowd just two seconds before suddenly lightened up when she rattled off the lyrics from 'Pedestrian at Best.' And it was all a rave: "My internal monologue is saturated analog it's scratched and drifting I've become attached to the idea it's all a shifting dream bittersweet philosophy." Bones (The bassist) went hyper, as too, did the backup vocalist at that very point. Slick guitar riffs, groovy bass lines, radical drum beats. People in the front rows began to mosh (slightly, thank god).

'Depreston' got to us just in time. Imagine a two-guitar-chords-throughout song burrowing into your psyche and taking root, with profound narratives and complete spontaneity. Über Alles. That's how

I would describe Courtney Barnett and her crazy clique and their very best music. They simply know how to capture the mundanity of real life subjects and sing about it with mundane delivery.

Not seeing her at O2 was an easy decision to make, although I later had to deal with the pain of taking a huge amount of time to unsubscribe from a German event website (and I

There are things better than sex and drugs and they are sausage rolls

don't read German). And as an aside, don't go and read her bibliography if you haven't yet as you won't find anything more interesting than her having a transgender stepfather. Sit back and give the songs a listen. There are things better than sex and drugs and they are sausage rolls.

Rob Garside
Writer

Manchester's **Old Skin's** final release is a furious, bleak, suffocating affair. Originally intended to be released in the new year on Holy Roar Records, Old Skin made the decision in the wake of their somewhat inevitable break up to release their recorded album for free. It is with no exaggeration, however, that this is Old Skin's most complete and ambitious work.

Musically, Old Skin are a very interesting proposition as they take advantage of their vocalists deep percussive vocals by placing them unusually far down in the mix. With the vocals sitting alongside the rhythm guitar, they allow the lead guitar to provide the mood and melody of their songs. This works particularly well on the slower building tracks of the album, where the vocals are allowed to come in late to the songs, adding an urgency

to the building atmosphere.

The title track of this album is a great example of this. The song begins with a wall of noisy feedback and tribal drumming before introducing dark minimalist guitars, building up a brooding atmosphere. The song suddenly switches midway through, with the vocals introducing heavily distorted guitars (like **Trap Them** level distortion) creating a pummelling and fierce end to the song.

The album really showcases the breadth of Old Skin's influences and sensibilities. There are the faster aggressive **Converge**-esque songs that lead the album, such as the exhilarating 'Deadfall' and the poverviolence themed 'Dead and Gone', to doomy post metal influences (i.e. **ISIS**) showing in later more atmospheric songs (such as the creepy 'Spoil').

'Bury me', the triumphant closer of the album, demonstrates this composite style excellently drawing together the different facets that Old Skin have displayed throughout the album. It starts with

Old Skin, new album

This is Old Skin's most complete and ambitious work



Like autumn leaves, Old Skin have now withered way. Photo Credit: Oldskin

a desperate funeral march drum beat accompanied by a poignant guitar line the transitions into a heavy hardcore section before finally moving to a thrilling, gang vocal led closer.

It's a real shame to see the end of Old Skin, like previous exciting UK hardcore bands (**Esoteric Youth**,

Bastions, and **Kerouac**) their career has ended far too soon, but their last album is absolutely their best work. It's a moving, atmospheric and exciting record.

Out now on Bandcamp

The Demo Dump will return next week!



Send your demos to music.felix@imperial.ac.uk

PC Music go mainstream

Cale Tilford
Music Editor

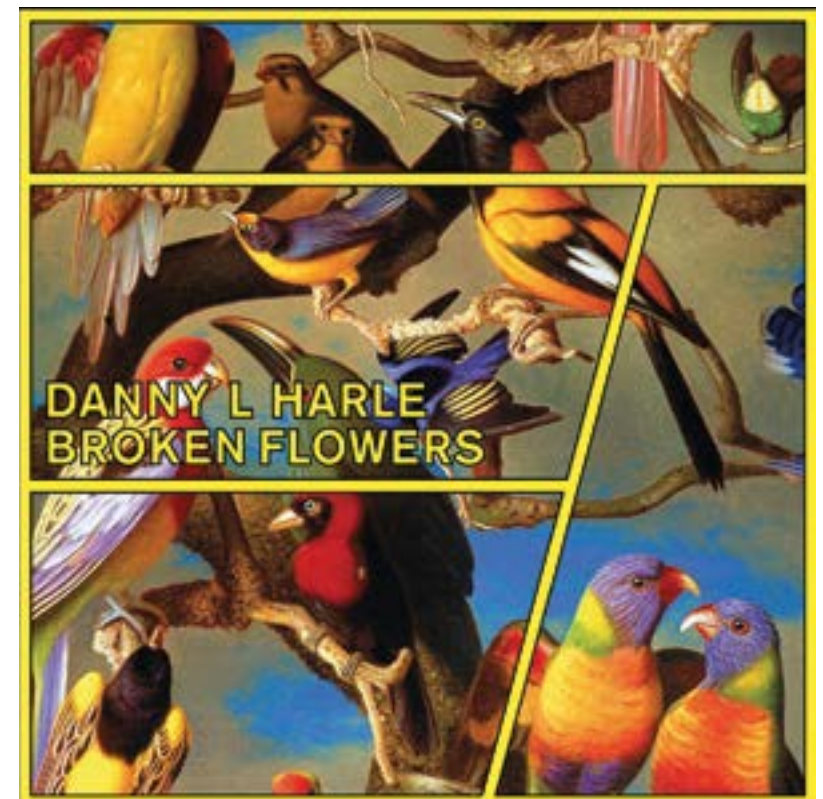
Danny L Harle's *Broken Flowers* is the first official PC Music release on Columbia Records. Up until now every single or EP produced by the net label has been available to download for free online. So, you'd expect their first commercial release to be something special. This isn't the future-electro that PC Music have established a cyber-cult around; it's radio-friendly music designed and perfected for mainstream audiences.

Harle has studied pop and distilled it. He plays with the idea of what an EP can be, with the last track, 'Awake For Hours' a complex and accelerated remix of the first. They are different enough that, initially, you might not notice their shared vocals. However, in reworking the song, he adds squeaky, harsh synths, breaking up the tropical production of 'Broken Flowers' into something more jittery and impulsive. It's the

It's the sort of track you might listen to after five shots of espresso

sort of track you might listen to after five shots of espresso.

'Forever' is less innovative. It begins with bleepy synths, a worn out staple of PC Music, but is still immensely addictive. 'Without You' slows things down as yet another unnamed female vocalist sings: "Sometimes I feel, maybe, this



#hugedanny. Photo Credit: Danny L Harle

could be real." *Broken Flowers* defies aren't serious. They're real and no the sceptics who believe PC Music one makes better pop music.



Goya: Chronicler of his time

National Gallery's dedicated show the most thorough exploration of Spanish master's portraits

Jingjie Cheng
Arts Editor

I first came to know Goya's work through his *Disasters of War* paintings and *Black Paintings* – dark, sinister works that captured his world view in his later years. With the unrest around him and his steady mental and physical decline at that point, it is no wonder that his paintings were bleak and pessimistic. However, in an amazing exhibition at the National Gallery, I discovered an entirely new dimension to the Spanish painter – one that reveals him as an observer of people and a documenter of his time.

In this largest-ever exhibition of Goya's portraits, with works on loan from all over the world, his expansive repertoire is explored from his early days as a court painter of the aristocracy, to intimate and honest portraits of his closest friends.

Often described as both the last of the great masters and the first of the modernists, Goya straddled the tumultuous times between the 18th and 19th centuries – the unrest of the neighbouring French revolution, the civil unrest in Spain, and the French invasion were all reflected in his work. At the same time, while his earlier portraits were very classical, taking after masters like Velazquez, some of his later works developed the beginnings of impressionism. There is a continuity in his paintings, with the same subjects often appearing in different paintings at different stages of their lives. *The Marchioness of Santa Cruz*, who appears in his 1805 painting as a modern muse, was first painted as a four-year-old girl in his group portrait of the Osuna family.

We are presented with a man who is fiercely adaptable, expertly manoeuvring his way through the socio-political landscape around him and constantly affirming his relevance to the people in power. As a court painter early in his career, his style was modern, favoured among the aristocrats for its alignment with enlightened principles. After a devastating illness in 1793 that left him profoundly deaf, painting portraits became Goya's method of communicating with his subjects. One of his most magnificent works



Goya's *Self Portrait with Doctor Arrieta*. Photo Credit: National Gallery

is a full-length portrait of his great friend, the Duchess of Alba, one of the patrons who brought him security and encouraged his career as a painter. Haughty and graceful in her traditional Spanish lace, she points to an inscription on the floor – “only Goya” – a sign of his popularity among the aristocrats at court.

Even following the 1808 popular uprising in Spain, a time of great political upheaval, Goya's skills as a

portraitist gave him the flexibility to adapt his work to the needs of those in power – be they the enlightened, the reactionary, the French or the English. And, even as a portraitist, Goya recorded the unrest of the time in the images of the people he painted. In his study for *The Duke of Wellington*, he is uncompromising in the depiction of the toll war can take on a man – with drooping eyelids and sunken cheeks, the haunting sketch is Goya's commentary on the

in one of them, an aged, unkempt Goya glances at his own reflection, revealing scruffy grey hair and tired eyes. This tired man is the same one shown in a painting in one of the earlier rooms, standing in deep concentration before an easel with candles adorning his hat – meant to cast just the right amount of light on his subjects for his paintings.

The painting that left the greatest impression on me was found in the last room. In *Self Portrait with Doctor Arrieta*, Goya is weak in the arms of his doctor, who is trying to feed him what is presumably medication. Shadowy figures lurk in the background, perhaps the personification of his mental demons. The exhaustion and

The honesty
of his
portraits
extends to
depictions of
himself

resignation in his eyes as he pulls at his sheets reflects his difficult survival of the illness that almost killed him in 1819. Inscribed with a note of thanks to his doctor, this unusual work is the culmination of Goya's painterly accomplishments: honesty in depicting himself, a connection with the people around him, symbolic purpose and impeccable technique.

This exhibition is bold, an unfettered display purely made up portraits, yet is astute in its curation and organisation of the many facets of Goya's portraiture career. Through his paintings of people alone, we are brought on a journey through socio-political unrest, intellectual movements and his tumultuous personal life – a must-see for anyone interested in the Spanish master.

Goya: The Portraits is on till 10 Jan 2016. Tickets from £8.



Lucky pup David Elms takes on the Dot

Peter Munton
Writer

Tucked away around the corner from King's Cross St. Pancras lies The Invisible Dot, an intimate comedy venue hosting comedians from all over the country. As I quietly entered the room to stand at the back of the bar, David Elms made his way on stage, acoustic guitar in hand. He talked to the crowd politely and surprisingly quietly, smoothing them into his set with boyish charm.

Standing at the front of the stage, as still as a statue, he delivered hilarious jokes in a mild, deadpan style that thrilled his audience. We were led down a winding path of back catalogue stories from his life, only to be surprised with sudden changes in tone and direction. On top of this messing with the crowd, he would intentionally create awkward, tense moments. The audience were constantly on their

toes, anticipating what he would say to diffuse the them.

Elms talked about his (recently) married life, learning to compromise

By the end
of the set,
everyone
felt they
knew
David's wife
pretty well

with his wife, as well as his fears of parenthood. Pulling up audience members on stage, he engaged them in his thoughts on love and

marriage through music and song. In fact, there may have been a bit too much audience participation, as he next asked eight audience members to play out various scenes from his life. Thankfully, in this case the people he chose played out their respective parts entertainingly.

The strongest part of his set was undoubtedly the musical section. Displaying great talent, he told heart-warmingly emotional stories about his marriage and love through song. He alternated between these poignant moments – almost causing the crowd to well up – and cracking out jokes that caused uncontrollable explosions of laughter. He also used pre-recorded material to relate home situations to the audience, delighting them with these witty anecdotes. By the end of the set, everyone felt they knew David's wife pretty well. We left knowing multitudes of her hilariously embarrassing stories.

*The Invisible Dot in King's Cross
Tickets from £7*



Not exactly the most exciting poster for a stand up... Photo Credit: David Elms

Love After Love

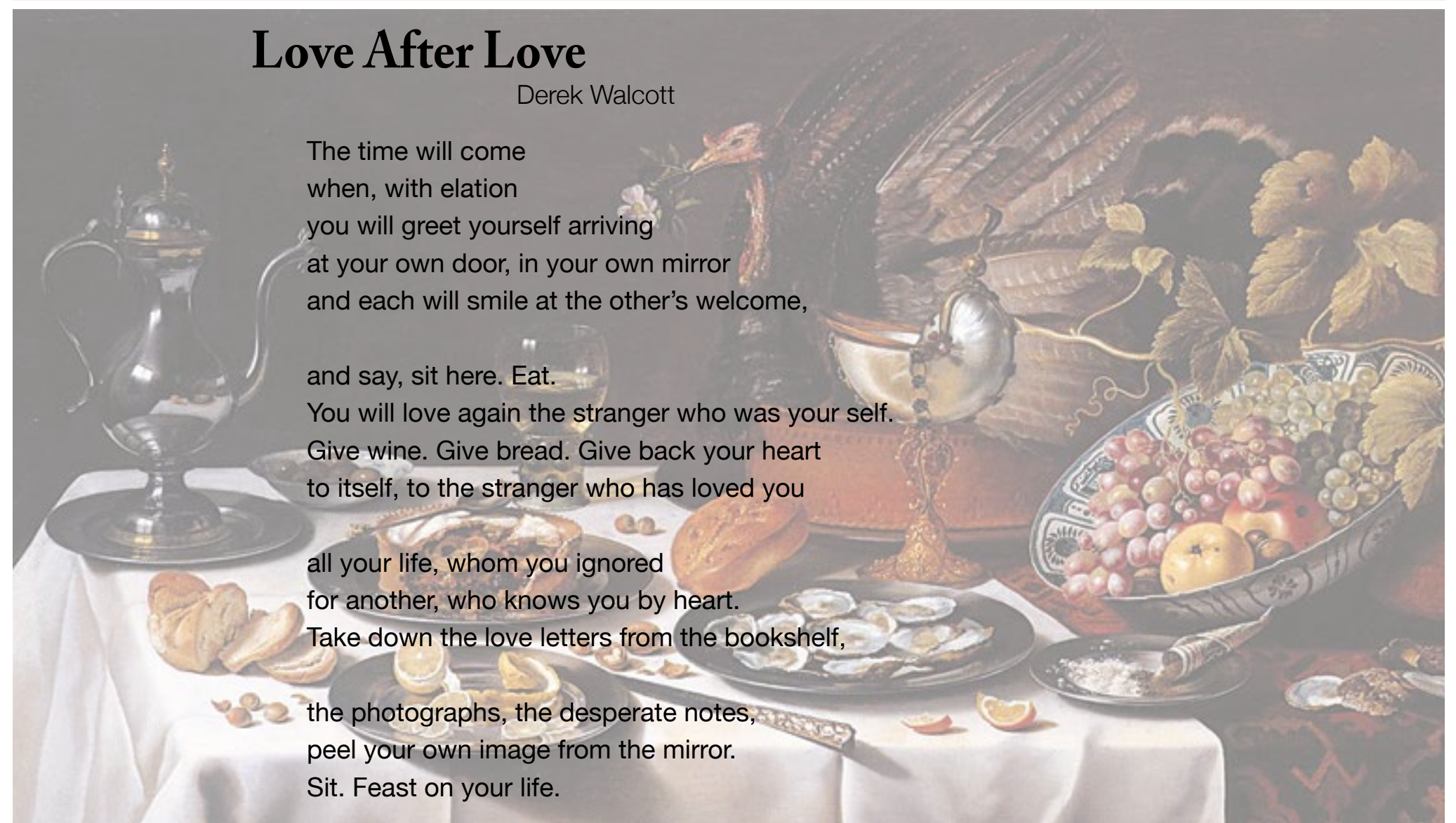
Derek Walcott

The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror
and each will smile at the other's welcome,

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.



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It's a no for Gaspar Noé

Wooden acting, clunky dialogue, and childish themes mean *Love* fails to light a fire

Love



Dir: Gaspar Noé *Script:* Gaspar Noé *Starring:* Karl Gusman; Aomi Muyock; Klara Kristin. 135 minutes.

Fred Fyles
Film Editor



Murphy (Karl Gusman) and Electra (Aomi Muyock) get up close and personal in Gaspar Noé's *Love*. Photo Credit: Curzon Artificial Eye

In the film *Love*, the walls in protagonist Murphy's (Karl Gusman) bedroom seem to serve as a mission statement for Argentinian director Gaspar Noé: plastered with posters for shocking art-house fare – Pasolini's *Salo*, Warhol's *Frankenstein 3D*, Tod Browning's *Freaks* – it is clear to us that one day Noé wants to take his place among the auteurs of upset, the unsettlers of the staid filmgoer. But to achieve this you really need to be able to produce something shocking and offensive; unfortunately for Noé, boring your audience to the point of nausea doesn't count.

The barely-there plot of *Love* is straightforward: we are introduced to Murphy on New Year's Day, hung-over, the warm domesticity of his life (cherubic son feeding him cereal, girlfriend teasing him for gaining weight) is shattered by his nihilistic inner monologue, which declares that his 'life is shit'. He still pines for his ex-girlfriend, Electra (Aomi Muyock), who encouraged him to take part in a threesome with their 16-year-old neighbour Omi (Klara Kristin), this led Murphy to cheat on Electra with Omi, who subsequently became pregnant, upturning his life and trapping him in a bucolic paternalism.

But really the plot's function is the engine that drags us from one artful sex scene to another. It is true that Noé has a sense of style: the shots are all well-lit, with excellent cinematography from Benoît Debie (so far removed from his work on the lurid *Spring Breakers*), giving the frames a grainy, authentic, film-like quality. Noé takes an unconventional approach to the idea of the jump cut, interspersing each take with a second of black screen. This heightens the photographic quality, giving us the

sense we are travelling backwards and forwards through Murphy's memories, as if on a Kodak carousel. Unfortunately, it also means that, from the 90-minute mark onwards, there are innumerable occasions where we think the film has finished, the screen switching to black, only to have our hopes cruelly dashed – forget Lars von Trier, Noé is cinema's true sadist. It also brings attention to the bloated runtime of 135 minutes, which possibly comes from having Noé act as his own editor; removing the blank shots in favour of a Godardian approach would have saved the audience about 15 precious minutes of torture.

Aside from Noé's style, and the excellent, eclectic soundtrack, pretty much everything else in the film is poor. The script, in particular, is clunky, full of aphorisms about love and death that are toe-curlingly humiliating. Noé's decision to use non-professional actors has certainly not paid off, and while we may perhaps admire him for the gamble, admiration does not a good film make. It is difficult to tell where the wooden acting ends and the bad dialogue begins, really. Perhaps the actors would have done better

with a competent script, or perhaps the script would have been better serviced by experienced actors – we will never know. What is perhaps most unsettling about the screenplay is the sheer unfamiliarity of people and places: the characters are all supposed to be 'real' people, but I have never, never, met anyone who behaved or spoke in such a contrived way; the film provisionally takes place in Paris, except the fact that everyone speaks perfect English. It adds up to a sense of falsity the film can't shake off, not even with the unstimulated sex scenes.

And onto these scenes: Noé wants to bring back the sense of 'warmness' he identified in 1970s and '80s erotica; or, in the words of Murphy, one of many characters representing the director, wants to "make a movie that truly depicts sentimental sexuality". So, does Noé achieve this? Well, let's take a brief overview of the evidence.

Watching the numerous sex scenes, which recur through the film like a persistent case of herpes, here are things I thought about during these unwelcome interruptions to the narrative: whether or not I need to order new contact lenses, the

discography of Funkadelic, knitting the soup I had waiting for me at home, Fran Lebowitz, the use of 'winter' as a verb. Here are things I did not think about: sex.

You see, there is an issue with sex scenes in cinema: it's not that they're offensive, or shocking, but really that they're mind-numbingly boring. Noé's scenes, despite their masterful lighting, have such little sexual charge it's like being hit in the face with a carrier bag full of dead batteries.

Above all, the film is juvenile, embarrassingly so. It's the kind of

minor work that a director would make at the beginning of their career, and regard later on with a kind of warm, slightly-creaky affection. From the couple's decision to name their child Gaspar, to Noé's cameo as an art gallery owner who fucks Electra against a wall a couple of scenes after being introduced, the entire thing is endlessly self-referential.

What *Love* really managed to do was make me long to watch other films – hardly a ringing endorsement. The flaccid erotica on display made me long for the summertime sensuality of Luca Guadagnino's *I Am Love*, or the shimmering sexual mirage of Alain Guiraudie's *Stranger by the Lake*; the wooden dialogue, which comes down on the audience with such force it could constitute a deadly weapon, made me yearn for the remarkable script of Richard Linklater's *Before...* trilogy, and the entire experience – so nauseating in its pretentiousness, in its elevation of style over any simulacra of substance – made me ache to get home, put on a miserable British social realist film, and scrub the entire 135-minute experience out of my mind.

Forget Lars von Trier, Gaspar Noé is cinema's true sadist



Steve McQueen: The Man & Le Mans



Dir: Gabriel Clarke; John McKenna. *Starring:* Steve McQueen; Chad McQueen; Neile Adams. 112 minutes.

For the avid cinephile, whose interest in films borders on the obsessive, there is a special passion for the 'making-of' narrative. *Steve McQueen: The Man & Le Mans* taps into this with a behind-the-scenes look at *Le Mans*, a 1971 passion project of 'King of Cool' Steve McQueen, based on the legendary 24 hour motor race. With little in term of plot or dialogue, the film was an unmitigated flop, but still holds a special place in motorists' hearts for the realism it brought to the screen.

Indeed, *Le Mans* is a visual treat – serpentine shots from the cars place the viewer immediately at the point where rubber meets tarmac. Directors Gabriel Clarke and John McKenna got lucky twice in their discovering of unseen raw footage from the 1971 film and unheard audio of McQueen himself. They approach the challenge of representing audio footage well, pairing it with sparse landscape shots that form a counterpoint to the dynamism of *Le Mans*.

Seen from our present-age viewpoint, McQueen is something akin to an extra-terrestrial: married to a Broadway starlet and oozing rugged machismo, he is a slice of nostalgic Americana, a throwback to an age that – despite embedding itself in the public consciousness – seems impossibly remote. McQueen's obsession with representing his passion of racing as purely as possible may have crashed through the film barrier in terms of technique, but also put many people at risk, culminating in British racer David Piper losing a leg on set.

At 102 minutes, the film's biggest issue is that it is too long. Certain scenes could have been cut out completely without no detriment to the structure – most notably a bizarre segue into the Manson Family murders that adds little to the film other than to its length.

As a piece of pure filmmaking, *Steve McQueen: The Man & Le Mans* is robust, and Clarke and McKenna deliver a film that hums with visual energy. Where it really excels, however, is in building up a psychological portrait of McQueen,

allowing us to peer under the hood of an icon, and see the obsessive engine beneath.

FRED FYLES

Güeros



Dir: Alonso Ruizpalacios *Script:* Alonzo Ruizpalacios; Gibrán Viradi Ramírez Portela *Starring:* Tenoch Huerta; Sebastián Aguirre; Ilse Salas. 108 minutes.

I really had no idea what to expect from my first art-house film, but if they're all like *Güeros*, then sign me up.

Existentialist at its heart, the whole film is a joyous and somewhat satirical exploration of what it means to be young and rebellious. It follows young Tomás, his elder brother Frederico, and roommate Santós, amidst the 1999 student protests as the three restless youths search Mexico city for a dying folk-rocker.

While the plot may sound lacking, it doesn't really matter; where the film finds meaning is in the interactions of its characters and their viewpoints, not in some built up climax and resolution. An extremely fun film, there are moments of black humour that send you reeling, stories told that are left unfinished, and hilariously meta moments when the camera asks the actors what they think of the film.

These combine to produce a film that's incredibly self aware and intelligent in what it wants to show you – by the end of it you feel like

you've spoken to the director Alonso Ruizpalacios himself. That's what the whole film is: a witty and honest conversation about what it was like to be the kinds of people depicted.

The fun extends to the film's cinematography, and boy does Ruizpalacios get inventive, playing around with image and sound to make you smile. Shot entirely in black and white and in the old 4:3 aspect ratio, it's a refreshing departure from what we expect to be plonked in front of us when we hear 'film', and soon enough you learn to trust the director, and enjoy the ride.

As an introduction to art-house movies, *Güeros* is perfect. An endlessly interesting film, it establishes Alonso Ruizpalacios as a director to watch. Go see it, and come away with a smile on your face.

THOMAS CARROLL

My Nazi Legacy



Dir: David Evans *Script:* Philippe Sands *Starring:* Philippe Sands; Niklas Frank; Horst von Wächter. 96 minutes.

While children are not responsible for the sins of the fathers, there are occasions where the legacy left behind by our forbearers is inescapable. Such is the case in *My Nazi Legacy*, where international genocide lawyer Philippe Sands explores the burden of history resting on the shoulders

of Niklas Frank and Horst von Wächter, whose fathers were the Nazi governors of Poland and Galicia respectively, responsible for sending thousands upon thousands to their deaths.

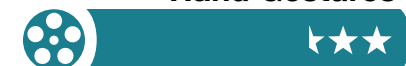
What follows is a deeply personal documentary – Sands grandfather, who grew up in Lviv, Ukraine, was the only family member out of 80 to survive the Holocaust – that shakes up our preconceived black-and-white notions of attitudes to the past. Frank has come to terms with the legacy of his father, and is completely ready to denounce him as an evil man. For von Wächter, however, the fall of Nazi Germany meant he 'dropped out of normality', and there is a sense that he has never really returned. He refuses to face up to his father's undeniable links to the Holocaust, and yet in some ways he cuts the most sympathetic figure of the film – a much less polished speaker than Frank, there is a sense that he is exposing himself completely to the camera. "I don't want to be stuck somewhere full of pain," he says, and it is difficult for us not to see where he is coming from. As the film progresses, he is brought more and more evidence of his father's deed, but von Wächter remains an immovable object against the irresistible force of oppressive history Sands brings down.

While Sands adds an Adam Curtis-esque authority to the documentary, his linking together of past and present events is not as seamless – we end the documentary on a mediation on growing Fascist sentiment in the Ukraine that seems

to sit oddly with the rest of the film. Nevertheless, *My Nazi Legacy* is a moving, deeply personal portrait of the scars left by the march of history.

FRED FYLES

Hand Gestures



Dir: Francesco Clerici. *Script:* Francesco Clerici; Martina De Santis. 77 minutes.

A meditative exploration of craftsmanship and the passion of artisans, *Hand Gestures* takes a long, slow look at the work of Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, a foundry located in Milan, that has been making bronze sculptures for the last century. The technique they use, lost-wax casting, goes back even further, to the 4th millennium BC. This information, about the technique and the foundry is shown at the beginning of the film, and then for 77 minutes we are left alone, with the craftsmen and a sculpture.

With no soundtrack, other than the occasional strain of a classical concerto coming in from the radio, and largely static shots, director Francesco Clerici seems to have taken a leaf out of Frederick Wiseman's book – although it is good that he does not inhabit a Wiseman-esque approach to time, since there is no way the subject would have been able to stretch to more than the film's current run time.

Thoughtfully shot throughout, there is the sense that we are being admitted into a sacred space when we enter the foundry, something only heightened by the silence of the craftsmen.

Throughout, the footage is interspersed with footage from the 1960s; lost-wax casting is passed down by oral tradition, and – as the black and white clips show – the only thing to have changed is the approach to health and safety. Although – spoiler alert – the life-size dog sculpture produced at the end is fucking hideous, *Hand Gestures* serves as a powerful visual link to the past. But the line between pensive and ponderous is a narrow one, and while *Hand Gestures* just about manages to remain entertainingly reflective, it did push this sleep-deprived reviewer to the limit.

FRED FYLES



Three young men head off on an art-house adventure in *Güeros*. Photo Credit: Porter Frith PR



The top three *action films* that aren't *Die Hard*

I love *Die Hard*. In fact, I'm one of those people who call it one of the best Christmas films of all time. The issue is that I am banned – as we all should be – from watching the film until at least the start of December. Until then, it looks like we need some other action films to fill the void:

13 Assassins (2010)

For the uninitiated, Japanese filmmaker Takashi Miike is a lunatic. Debuting in 1991, Miike-san has now directed almost 100 films. But he doesn't direct crap: *Audition* and *Ichi the Killer* are just two classics attributable to him. Also unmatched in his disturbing and gruesome content, in Miike's *13 Assassins* alone we see disembodiment, torture, seppuku, and child murder, to say nothing of the hordes of soldiers murdered by our main samurai cast. For plot, imagine *Seven Samurai* meets *The Magnificent Seven*.

Starship Troopers (1997)

I don't think there has ever been a film as misunderstood as *Starship Troopers*. It's almost funny watching people praise the film for what it isn't. Behind this seemingly meat-headed war flick is parody and commentary on the level of classics like *Dr Strangelove*. In this universe the humans are the fascist invaders – they're basically wearing Nazi uniforms for God's sake. The action set pieces are solid, but go into this movie looking for the right things and you'll uncover a hidden depth.

The Raid (2011)

Oh God, is *The Raid* good. I mean really good. Best-action-film-of-all-time good. In all honesty I don't need a complex argument to explain why. The film features Iko Uwais, a real-life Indonesian Pencak Silat champion taking on countless drugged up gang members as he and his SWAT team ascend a tower block to reach a drug lord. The fighting is flawlessly choreographed and brutal, with every scene here surpassing what would be the main set piece other action films.

BEN COLLIER

Is *Tangerine* a tipping point for transgender representation in cinema?

On 9th June 2014, American actor Laverne Cox became the first transgender person to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine. Statuesque in a deep blue dress, Cox's face, framed by flowing tresses, stares deep into the viewer's eyes; to her left, the title of the lead article is written – The Transgender Tipping Point: America's Next Civil Rights Frontier; it is a direct challenge, a confrontation for those who stand in the way of trans rights. And out of all who could lead the charge, Cox is an exemplary choice: best known for her portrayal of transgender inmate Sophia Bursert in the wildly popular Netflix show *Orange is the New Black*, Cox has brought the issue of transgender representation to TVs, laptops, and tablet screens all over the globe. Her character is resilient, sympathetic, and – most importantly – a well-rounded representation of trans-identity. In a cultural medium that prefers to deal in tropes, Cox isn't just adding her view. She's changing the conversation.

It seems *Time* is correct: transgender rights really are the next frontier, at least in America. With high profile transwomen like Janet Mock and Juliet Jacques encouraging transgender people to take control of their own narrative, it appears that we are waking up to trans issues. Of course, no discussion of the contemporary transgender landscape can be complete without a mention of Caitlyn Jenner, the former Olympian whose coming out earlier this year – to borrow a phrase most associated with her stepdaughter – broke the internet. Whether or not you agree with Jenner's support for a Republican party that continues to be oblivious to trans rights, or believe that her narrative detracts from the experiences of low-income trans

women of colour, it is clear that trans issues are entrenched in the limelight. At least, this is how things seem at first sight. However, there is a world where transgender representation has been repeatedly mishandled: the world of cinema. Laverne Cox



Laverne Cox, queen of the world.
Photo Credit: Time Magazine

says "There's not just one trans story. There's not just one trans experience," and yet in terms of mainstream films we seem to be getting the same thing, over and over again. The first problem we can identify is that there is a severe dearth of films featuring transgender characters. GLAAD, a US-based organisation monitoring LGBT+ representation in media, regularly publishes its Studio Responsibility Index (SRI), which ranks the major motion picture studios in terms of representation. In 2013, only two films released by major studios featured transgender characters; in 2014, major studios released no films containing transgender characters.

This lack of representation is obviously shocking, but it becomes even more of an issue when we consider the wider implications: 41% of trans people in America have attempted suicide, including Cox – "I went to the medicine cabinet and got a bottle of pills. And swallowed them. And went to sleep, hoping not to wake up," she said in *Time*. One of the major triggers for this behaviour is a feeling of extreme isolation – the idea that no-one out there can understand what you've gone through. In light of these findings, the necessity of transgender narratives is obvious.

But then we have our second problem: many films and TV shows that do feature transgender characters feature them in a negative light. Another GLAAD report, looking into transgender representation on TV, found that out of transgender characters, 54% had a negative representation, 40% took on a victim role, and 21% were portrayed as killers. In contemporary cinema, transgender people often feature as the butt of a sexual joke, their existence used to undermine the masculinity

and heteronormativity of the – inevitably white, male protagonist. Films such as *The 40 Year Old Virgin* and the *Hangover* series have used this trope, portraying transwomen as sexual tricksters, with the implication that transgender people are devious, conniving, and inherently undesirable. Another alternative open to transgender characters is that of the psychotic killer. This trope has a long history, from Anthony Perkin's cross-dressing killer in *Psycho*, through to the rampaging murderer in *Sleepaway Camp* and Cilian Murphy's character in *Peacock*, who suffers from dissociative identity



Mya Taylor and Kitana Kiki Rodriguez in the ground-breaking film *Tangerine*. Photo Credit: Magnolia Films



age of 17 after her gender identity was revealed; none of the three men involved were charged with murder. California has since banned the defence, but it is still possible to use it in America's 49 other states. The grim reality is that transwomen have a one in twelve chance of being murdered in the US, a number that increases to one in eight for transwomen of colour. As long as transgender people are portrayed as either sexually deviant, a threat to masculinity, or a murderous force, trans actors are unlikely to change.

Such a murder provided the material for perhaps the most well-known transgender film *Boys Don't Cry* (1999): in 1993, Brandon Teena, a transman living in Nebraska, was raped and murdered after his gender identity was discovered. Hilary Swank – then a little-known actor – played Teena, and earned an Academy Award for her portrayal. Tender and moving, the film was described by critic Roger Ebert as "Romeo and Juliet set in a Nebraska trailer park". The casting of Swank was also generally praised – since Teena had not been taking hormone replacement therapy, and had not undergone any surgery, choosing a female actor was a defensible choice.

However, this is not always the case. In the last couple of years, numerous films have come under fire for casting cisgender actors as transgender characters, most notable Jean-Marc Vallée's 2013 film *Dallas Buyers Club*, which centred around Ron Woodroof (Matthew McConaughey), a ultra-masc rodeo cowboy who contracts HIV. The casting of Jared Leto as Rayon, a drug-addicted, HIV-positive transwoman met with critical acclaim – he won an Academy Award for the portrayal – but also widespread condemnation from the trans community. The issue stems around whether trans characters, who are in such desperately short supply, should be portrayed by non-trans actors.

At a February 2014 screening Leto was heckled by an audience member – his reply was that if only trans actors are able to play trans characters, "you've made sure people that are gay would never get the opportunity to turn the table, and explore part of that art." It is a similar defence used for whitewashing, the practice of taking parts that historically should be filled with minority actors, and using white actors instead, resulting in an ancient Egypt populated by Caucasians. But such a defence

ignores the very real challenges faced by trans actors, who often only play trans roles: a survey by the Screen Actors Guild found that for LGBT+ actors, one third reported prejudice from directors, casting directors, and producers. When transgender actors are denied the opportunity to play cisgender roles, to deny them the chance to play transgender roles seems unfair.

In an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Vallée was asked if he's ever considered hiring transgender actors for the part of Rayon; 'never,' he replied, before questioning whether such actors *actually existed*. Such comments, along with Vallée's use of masculine pronouns to describe the character of Rayon all through publicity of the film, makes Leto's casting seem, if not prejudiced, then at the very least misinformed.

Furthermore, the casting of trans actors can bring a much greater sense of realism to trans parts. As columnist Paris Lees wrote: "for truly accurate portrayals of trans people, cast trans actors". As we can see with the case of *Orange is the New Black*, Laverne Cox has brought an extra sense of realism to the role that no amount of method acting could provide. While Leto's performance in *Dallas Buyer's Club* is brilliant, the characterisation of Rayon is completely two-dimensional. Steve Friess, writing in *Time*, said that "there is no stereotype about transgender women that Leto's concoction does not tap". Lees writes that ' "Rayon isn't a person, she's a function", a statement it is difficult to disagree with, especially when Vallée stated "I am not aiming for

In *Tangerine* the extreme reality brought to the screen makes us pause for thought



Jared Leto as Rayon in *Dallas Buyers Club*, for which he won an Oscar.

Photo Credit: Focus Features

the real thing. I am aiming for an experienced actor who wants to portray that thing." The 'thing' in question? A transgender character; a woman who has hopes, and dreams, and a lived reality like all of us.

And this is why *Tangerine*, released two weeks ago, is such an important, ground-breaking film. Following two transgender sex workers roaming around the hell-hole of Downtown LA on Christmas Eve, *Tangerine's* director Sean Baker cast two transwomen – Kitana Kiki Rodriguez and Mya Taylor – in the lead roles. The film is funny and lively, with Rodriguez and Taylor delivering rapid-fire dialogue that would put world-class rappers to shame. There are also moments of extreme beauty and serenity, such as when Taylor's character gives Rodriguez's character her own wig following a transphobic attack. The fact that the entire thing was shot on an iPhone (and not even the latest model) is not the most startling thing about it; instead it is the extreme reality that Rodriguez and Taylor's performances bring to the screen that make us pause for thought. Here are two women who truly understand what the characters are going through, and carry nuances in their performances that make the idea of ever casting a non-trans actor as a trans role seem completely nonsensical. There is a campaign to get Rodriguez and Taylor nominated for the 2016 Academy Awards; modern entertainment, the world of cinema, and the rights of trans people across the world would be improved if they succeed.

FRED FYLES



The unstoppable march of the YA dystopia



J-Law as Katniss Everdeen, in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*, the first of the YA dystopian films. Photo Credit: Allstar

When the first *Hunger Games* film was released back in March 2012, I was still in secondary school, preparing for the end of my final year and the subsequent upheaval of moving to university. It was either that summer or the summer before that that I sat down and devoured Suzanne Collins' YA trilogy, racing against the looming deadline that would see me make my transferral to the adult world where I would put away my childish things, no longer having an excuse to read fiction aimed at an audience several years younger than I was at the time.

Now, here we are, three and a half years later, and the final instalment of the series has just been released: *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*, again marking the end of an era. Many of those my age have left higher education, and are now taking their first tentative steps into the 'real' world, living out their Lena Dunham-esque fantasies of rising rent prices and insecure employment. In that time, the cultural landscape has shifted beneath our feet; where once vampires and wizards were par for the course in Young Adult (YA) fiction, now dystopia is king.

The last three years have seen a proliferation in dystopian fiction whose film adaptations approach

with a sense of weary inevitability. The last year alone has seen films in *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *Maze Runner* series, all of which feature plucky teens facing an oppressive power structure helmed by adults. Of course, dystopia has been a popular genre for years, with *Brave New World*, 1984, and *The Handmaid's Tale* all leaving their marks on impressionable young minds. What seems different now is the pace with which new books and films are released, which has reached an almost oppressive onslaught. Surely this bubble soon must pop, as teens, shot through with fickleness, move on to the next big thing.

How long will the YA dystopia bubble last before it pops?

The trend, however, only seems to be increasing. At the time of writing, the latest of *The Hunger Games* films, in cinemas barely a week, has taken nearly \$250 million. The other series are also in ruddy financial health: not a single film from *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, or *Maze Runner* series has failed to make a substantial profit. The first *Maze Runner* film, made on a budget of \$34 million, took more than ten times that in box office takings; *The Hunger Games* series has grossed around \$2.5 billion. While critics may be largely ambivalent about the films, the public is lapping it up as the films garner MTV accolades, People's Choice Awards, and gargantuan profits. It seems dystopian films are a guaranteed smash hit.

Why are they so popular, and why now? Several have identified the obvious analogy for the high school experience, an idea that perhaps doesn't transfer seamlessly over to the UK system. Dana Stevens, writing in *Slate*, said that dystopian fiction "externalises the turmoil that's already taking place in adolescents' minds, hearts, and bodies". For Tom Shaw, the brutal killing in *The Hunger Games* is the perfect analogy for the quest towards perfection and popularity taking place at schools up and down

the country: *The Hunger Games*, Shaw says, "is the story of a girl who's voted the homecoming queen of the world". While the double-edged sword of popularity has been explored by films such as *Mean Girls*, *Heathers*, and *Carrie*, this new wave of dystopian cinema seems to be upping the ante, perhaps reflecting the increased pressures media like Instagram and Twitter have wrought on the teenage microcosm.

For fans of *Divergent*, the analogies with school become even more obvious: set in a future Chicago, society is divided into five poorly-named factions, based on personal traits. Those who do

Do we have the YA novel for the post-Columbine generation?

not acquiesce with the system and conform to one of the five mind-sets are 'Factionless', and have no social worth. As Tom Stone in *The Guardian* said, *Divergent* is about 'A 16-year-old girl trying to find her place in a world modelled on a series of frat houses'. In order to survive, Tris Prior (Shailene Woodley) must disguise the fact that she is 'divergent', placing her light under a bushel in order to fit in. It's a narrative familiar to teenagers up and down the country who have to sand off parts of their personality in order to fit the space they've been allocated.

In contrast, Andrew O'Hehir, writing in *Salon*, seems to think that these books mask a sinister message about individualism and libertarian ideals. For him, *Divergent* and *The Hunger Games* are "capitalist agitprop", "propaganda for the ethos of individualism, the central ideology of consumer capitalism". This theory centres around the idea that such novels feature an individual protagonist who overcomes extreme oppression (typically in the form of big government) in order to defend their right to express themselves. The upshot of the films, O'Hehir writes, is that they "remind ourselves how grateful we should be to live in a society where we can be 'ourselves', where we can enjoy unspecified



and vague freedoms". It is an idea picked up by Ewan Morrison in *The Guardian*, who sees the oppressive antagonists of the films as symbols, not of power gone awry, but of states and community which the individual must overcome in order to thrive. *The Hunger Games*, under this reading, becomes a Randian struggle for independence, where social parasites must be killed in order for the individual to realise their true potential.

It is true that these series promote the idea of uniqueness; sitting in the cinema, the anonymous teen can identify with the main character for a few hours, imagining a world where they have left their suburban existence behind and become world-famous. While previous popular film and book series, such as *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* series, feature protagonists thrust into the spotlight, where the dystopias differ is in how violent they are. In the media popular just 5 years ago, it was enough for the individual to rise; now, not only must the individual succeed, but others must fall. In *The Hunger Games*, where the pressures of society force adolescents to turn upon each other in a ritualised

bloodbath, could we finally have the YA novel for the post-Columbine generation?

While such an interpretation is interesting, it seems a bit overwrought. The natural tendency for adolescents to rebel against authority needs no explanation, so deeply is it carved into the bedrock of our collective culture. But there is something to be said about the new direction YA fiction and film has taken, and I personally see it differently to Morrison and O'Hehir. That is, as the global recession has worsened (leading to massive cuts to the welfare state) the paradigm shift we desperately need has not occurred. Instead, what we have is a doubling down of Thatcherite policies, and an emphasis on individual action that comes directly from central government. Why is it a surprise that teenagers are lapping up narratives about how they have to rise above and defeat their peers when individualism is the order of the day and we are all in direct competition for the state's limited resources?

We are currently less than a year into a Conservative-majority parliament, and since Cameron

came to power in 2010, youth services have been decimated: raised tuition fees mean the average student will leave university £45,000 in debt. A refusal to build social housing has led to a property bubble where the average London house is 13 times the median salary. NHS mental health services for young people, already stretched to their limit, have been cut by £35 million. The result: an environment for young people that is not dissimilar to a Hobbesian state of nature – one where life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. The government tells us that under-25s don't deserve the living wage since they are 'not as productive' and all the while stripping 18-21 year-olds of housing benefits despite the fact that 49% of people living in homeless accommodation are aged 16-24. Not only that, but a recent report indicates that young people are most likely to volunteer their time to serve their local community with the under 25s spending twice as much time as the 55+ acting as volunteers.

We live in a world where the baby boomer generation holds a majority of the power. Young people



The cast of teenage-dystopia *The Maze Runner*. Photo Credit: Allstar

hold up this system by offering unpaid labour, be it in the form of charity or internships, and are made completely dependent on those at the top. As the austerity cuts deepen and social services for young people are completely swept away by a tide of ideological economics, our society begins to resemble a

desperate scramble to the top, a war of all-against-all. Why should we be surprised that dystopian fictions, in hindsight quasi-prophetic, continue to attract audiences? Dystopias no longer reflect our worst fears; they now reflect our basic reality.

FRED FYLES

Documentary corner: *Indie Game: The Movie*

Ben Collier
Film Writer



Jonathan Blow: indie developer and sex god Photo Credit: Indie Game: The Movie PR

see what these men have sacrificed to produce their game. We see them cut off their family members, experience depression, and even break down in parts.

First we are introduced to Edward McMillen and Tommy Refenes, the men behind Super Meat Boy – an intensely difficult 2D platformer which went on to sell one million copies. These men – charismatic and

enthusiastic – are the people we can best empathise with in the film, but we begin to see them deteriorate as deadlines close in. We can also see what their project means to them – "I made it for myself". Edmund explains at one point.

In direct contrast, we have Phil Fish, who when we first meet him, had been working on his game, *Fez*, for countless years. Somewhat of

least time with is Jonathan Blow, whose game, *Braid*, is the only of the three featured I have properly played. It's an incredibly popular and intelligent time-twisting puzzle game and a critical darling. Yet Blow could well be the most pretentious man you will ever meet – he is in equal parts hilarious and totally insufferable. One of best moments in any documentary I've seen involves him dramatically lamenting over reviewers and YouTubers who are enjoying his game, but not grasping the depth of his artistic vision. Despite all this though, Blow is still a deeply intelligent creative, who is genuinely fascinating to listen to.

What all these stories amount to is a fantastically well put-together and honestly quite emotional film. We really begin to feel for these developers, as we see some of the things they had to sacrifice for success. Even if you're not a particular fan of video games, *Indie Game: The Movie* raises sad questions about whether the appeal of artistic freedom and chance of success in this medium are even worth the struggle – I wholeheartedly recommend it.

The character we sadly spend the

FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER



iPOP

**Friday
27 November**

20:00-02:00
Metric &
FiveSixEight

Free before 20:00
£2.50 After
£2.00 With entertainment card



Cocktails and Nibbles

Open to Students and Staff
Every Friday from 17:30

Every Friday we will be transforming Reynolds into a cocktail lounge with a chilled atmosphere, relaxed music and a new venue layout. Come on down and let our newly trained mixologists whip you up some classic cocktails, plus our very own creations and specialities!



Friday 27 November
h-bar / 17:00 - 20:00

The h-bar wine tasting session is great for meeting people who share a passion for wine. The session costs only £7.50 and you get to try eight wines from a selected global region.



THE WINTER CARNIVAL

FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER 2015
20:00 - 03:00 | ALL UNION BEIT BARS

GET YOUR TICKET BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE
EARLY BIRD ONLINE PRICE ONLY £3.00
ON THE DOOR PRICE £5.00

COMING UP – SEE OUR WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTERS FOR MORE DETAILS!

Date	Event	Time	Location
Every Tuesday	Super Quiz	20:00 - 22:00	FiveSixEight
Every Tuesday	Cocktail Night	18:00 - 23:00	Metric
Every Wednesday	CSP Wednesday	19:00 - 01:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Every Wednesday	Sports Night	19:00 onwards	Reynolds
Every Friday	PGI Friday cocktails	16:30 onwards	h-bar
Every Friday	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds



Dinner for lunch

FELIX reviews Heston Blumenthal's 'Dinner' in Knightsbridge

When I first told my parents I was taking my girlfriend of almost two years to Dinner, Heston Blumenthal's Michelin two-star restaurant, for her 21st birthday, the reaction was one of shock at my extravagance and wilful self bankruptcy. Given his ingenious mix of fantastic culinary sense, mad science and overall celebrity status, it's a true enough assumption that his restaurant would also set you back a fair way. With the cheapest main course coming in at £28, they weren't far from wrong, but I quickly assuaged them with the fact that the three-course lunchtime set menu would only be £38 a piece, which, given the occasion and my desire to visit this culinary temple, I was more than willing to hand over.

Ever since I took a serious, career-based interest in cooking, Heston Blumenthal has been one of my inspirational figures, combining both scientific technique and gastronomic smarts. My longing to visit one of his restaurants has increased year after year. Naturally, I jumped on the opportunity when it presented itself this term. Booking a table was done easily online a month or so in advance, as we weren't heading in for an evening showing of the culinary arts – the set menu only runs at lunchtimes. Then, the long wait began.

I already had one of Heston's cookbooks – Historic Heston. It's a journey through his amazing investigation of historic and often forgotten recipes, combinations and techniques. Whilst he often derives inspiration loosely from original ideas, his end results are very modern interpretations, and would

I am a savoury man, but even I was enraptured by the delicate custard



Not quite like how your mama makes it. Photo Credit: Sanjay Bhattacharya

not be instantly recognisable to the authors! I had this in mind when I had a look at the set menu the morning of the lunch, and was pleased to see a few dishes I recognised. I had pre-agreed with my girlfriend to each choose a different option for each course so as to try the full variety – and it happened to suit our tastes as well.

We set out to Knightsbridge, and found ourselves outside the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Weaving our way through the archways and columns, we were escorted to Dinner, where we had a lovely table with a view over Hyde Park. The décor is fittingly eccentric, with porcelain jelly moulds as light fittings, scattered chilli plants and other oddities. A charming host presented us with the menus, and we chose to have some cocktails – being more attracted by their adventurous blends than the (expensive) offerings from the wine list. With my rosemary-infused Sargasso Sea (very refreshing, if almost too herbal) and my girlfriend's Emoliente Sour (she made the better choice – sweet and subtle, with lavender that didn't, for once, make me think of soap), we ordered our food and tucked into the delicious wholemeal sourdough and unpasteurised butter. It was bloody good bread, but even my refined (read: pretentious) palate couldn't really tell that it was

unpasteurized butter, though it was indeed golden and luscious.

Arriving on simple white china, my ragu of pig's ears was certainly not as pretty as my girlfriend's lemon salad – a bright, summery plate of smoked artichokes, goat's curd, pickled beetroot and radishes. The contrast between the two dishes was apparent – mine, rich and unctuous, had a hearty slice of toast underneath that soaked up all the rich meaty juices. The ears (yes, offal is off-putting to some but I try almost anything) had been cooked to perfect succulency, and were offset by a slight hint of vinegar. Caramelised onions rounded out the whole compilation of flavours, and I was in heaven. My girlfriend was just as happy – the delicate, tangy curd had just the right consistency to compliment the smoked artichokes, and crisp radishes and beetroots leant refreshing bite to the party. I was thrilled – so many people, including chefs who I've worked with, said that I should not set my hopes too high. Yet, the chefs at Dinner, and Heston himself, had delivered. Whilst relatively technically simple, both dishes delivered bold, punchy combinations that were what I had expected. I eagerly awaited the arrival of our main courses.

Once again, I was thrilled, and highly impressed. Juicy braised pork belly, with an umami sauce to add another dimension of richness

and flavour. It made for a delicious accompaniment to lightly cooked hispi cabbage that was perfused with delicate shreds of salty ham hock. A leaf of intense herbed gel intertwined with the cabbage, and everything was given the most perfect crunch with some pork puffs, or deep-fried dehydrated pork skin, producing some powerful piggy flavour. Again, relatively few components, but all flawlessly cooked. That was the precision I had been looking for, and it was also evident in my girlfriend's perfectly cooked pollock. A white fish that has always been reminiscent of poorly-made school dinner fish and chips, pollock's subtle flavour is well worth the gentle cooking it had been given. With delicate brown shrimp, tangy capers and creamy pea puree (such a vivid green), one look at her face confirmed that we made the right choice by booking a table. Being the greedy bugger that I am, I hankered after that little bit more of both dishes, but was still pleasantly surprised by the handsome portions of both fish and flesh. Feeling extremely lucky, both with my company and the meal, we moved onto desserts.

Now, I should mention – I am a savoury man. But even I was enraptured by the delicate custard that filled my prune and tamarind tart, along with crispy, almost caramelised shortcrust pastry. The whole work of art was brought

together by the custard's torched, brûléed top – such a crisp, satisfying skin. My girlfriend loves crème brûlée, but was equally impressed by her bitter cocoa mousse paired with sweet honey ice cream and a tangy grapefruit gel. With a subtle hint of yuzu (a Japanese relative of the grapefruit) permeating the chocolate, it offered a very clean, refreshing end to the meal, or so we thought. Not so fast – a delicate post-dessert dessert arrived – and this was my favourite part. Slightly salted, a long, thin caraway biscuit was presented with a tablespoon-sized portion of an amazingly rich chocolate mousse, this time flavoured with Earl Grey. Wow. This was the flavour combination I enjoyed the most out of everything we tried so far. It was rich, yet salty

Both dishes delivered bold, punchy combinations

and crispy – everything I really enjoy in a pudding – but combining it with the fleeting, whimsical taste of Earl Grey put the dessert on another level entirely. It's a mixture I'm going to look into more, and out of everything was the element I wanted to replicate the most.

So, having settled the damage, we left fully content. Whilst much cheaper than other two-star Michelin restaurants, Dinner is not the cheapest place in London to dine at. However, the standard of service (which, needless to say, was impeccable throughout) and cuisine that you receive, it really is worth every penny, if not more. I'm already looking into getting a table for our two-year anniversary (yes, we'll be sodding the cost and going a la carte). If there's someone in your life you want to treat, or if you're simply looking to indulge yourself, don't hesitate. That being said, I guess there are some sweet Nando's discounts available too.

SANJAY BHATTACHARYA

FELIX HANGMAN



hangman@imperial.ac.uk

NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS



JEREMY HITS BACK: "I KNOW YOU ARE, BUT WHAT AM I?"



HANGMAN GETS EXCLUSIVE LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF THAT DESK

HOROSCOPES

 ARIES	 TAURUS	 GEMINI	 CANCER	 LEO	 VIRGO
 LIBRA	 SCORPIO	 SAGITTARIUS	 CAPRICORN	 AQUARIUS	 PISCES

ARIES This week you go to see that new 3-D porn film; however, it is literally the most insufferable film possible and you masturbate with your tears. Someone films you for evidence and it grosses over 2.3 billion pounds.

TAURUS This week apparently the Union paid a lot of money for the desk – no-one would tell me any more than that so I assume it's like full of gold or something.

GEMINI This week after reading a BBC news article you realise you forget to show your gran how to make the thermostat work and you realize she has frozen into an icecube. You feel bad but then realize she's still getting her pension and buy yourself a milkshake to cheer yourself up.

CANCER This week... what the fuck I just found out the desk cost like 5000 pounds what the hell. It better have like a small masseuse stored inside one of the drawers for when you're stressed.

LEO This week you discover that beer is actually sold in the SCR. You realize that this explains why you're thermodynamics lecturer spent half an hour talking about the best way to palpate a dog's anus.

VIRGO This week you think about writing a joke about the new tree in Beit Quad but the joke is as dead as your love of science. Guess I'll just become a banker and be rich but miserable for the rest of my life.

LIBRA This week you go to an STD clinic, um, for a friend, and you, umm, are wondering something. Like, if a nurse touches your penis can you count her as a sexual partner? Just asking for a friend...

SCORPIO This week you are a Argentinian biochemistry student and your British flatmate is helping you expand your English vocabulary, however, it conspires that they were lying to you and calling your tutor a "saucy little minx" doesn't have the intended effect.

SAGITTARIUS This week you are very excited about Star Wars. There's no joke here. Star Wars is gonna be fucking amazing.

CAPRICORN This week you want to celebrate a mass murderer who came to a foreign country only to instigate the subjugation of a whole nation of people and take their land from them, however, Tesco is out of turkey so you give Thanksgiving a miss.

AQUARIUS This week you realise that if you write an inappropriate and unprintable joke that references [CENSORED], Hangman will just slap "censored" over it. I bet this doesn't even get printed. [Yeab, well, it did. -Ed.]

PISCES This week you are Hangman. Your horoscopes writer only sends you eleven horoscopes, and even then your ability to print them is called into question. You print them anyway, and then make the twelfth a meta-horoscope bitching about the horoscopes.



Provost Post of the Week

Every week, we like to provide the opportunity for one of our wonderful Vice Provosts to write a short column on a topic of their choice. Providing our staff with the opportunity to communicate to the masses in such a highly respected organ as Blue³ is key to our continued commitment to staff development here in the Blue Cube. This week we welcome Joe Kinaround, the Vice Provost (Political Dealings) for a few words on our recent visitations from the powers that be.

Hello everybody!

What an absolutely smashing pleasure it is to be writing this week's Provost Post of the Week. As an avid reader of Blue News – oh, sorry, it's Blue³ now, isn't it! I really must keep on top of these things! - I've been lobbying Alice for months to give me a post of my own. And after that little keruffle with Reese Huffle (ahem) last week, it has finally fallen to me to give all of you top fellows (and fellow-esses!) a few words of wisdom that I've picked up in my time here.

As I'm sure many of you are aware, my job mostly involves liaising with the political powers (or political non-powers, in the case of those bloody lefties in the Shadow Cabinet) to encourage them to come and have a butcher's at the vital work we do here at Imperial.

Obviously, they always come away feeling extremely impressed at just how world-leading we are (I'd like to think we've come to define the term in their eyes), but there's always more we can be doing to make sure their visits show us at our best. As such, I've got a few points for you all to enact and react to!

1. No more bloody students. Get rid of them.
2. Seriously, I mean it, stop letting students interact with our guests. It's unprofessional.
3. That's it.

Hello all,

Welcome one, welcome all, welcome everybody to another edition of Blue³, everyone's favourite newsletter about the wonderful (and sometimes wacky!) goings-on of the Faculty Building of Imperial College London.

This week or so we appear to be have been inundated with floods of important visitors – a reflection on our world-leading status as a beacon of science of prosperity, no doubt! – which means all of us here in the Blue Cube have been somewhat rushed off our feet making all of these important people feel right at home amongst our gleaming spires and ivory concrete towers.

First off, we had the lovely boys and girls from the Lancet (subs, can you please check what this is? I've never heard of it before) over to give us some more talks about antibiotics and how they should totally work or whatever – a continuation of our themes from last week of Doing Science™, taking a strong Stance on Science™ and being a Science Stronghold™ (with thanks to the lovely Simon the intern for getting that last one trademarked!).

Then we had a collection of the finest minds in Europe – the leaders of various leading universities across Europe (or LERU – the League of European Research Universities – if you like acronyms, which I personally don't) all came together for a cup of tea and a nice chat about Europe and how our current government seems intent on leaving it altogether. As the most world-leading institution amongst many, we were of course chosen to host the whole shebang, and host it we did! Guests were treated to a lovely tour of our Big Number Crunching Box™, as well as a quick visit to those lovely biologists next door. Great fun!

And finally we had some pinko leftie drop in uninvited to give us a surprisingly effective stand-up comedy set, where he made such corking jokes as "The Labour Party will work with business"! We probably won't be allowing him back into the vicinity of any of our campuses, but it was nice to have a good laugh nonetheless.

Have a happy, prosperous, wonderful and collaborative week!



Alice Gast: Thought of the Week

"As Imperial once again makes the news, I reflect with pride on our world-leading institution. It really is a joy to see leaders from other universities admiring the result of such incredibly hard work by our investment department – I know it took those lovely boys weeks to get KPMG to bung us a cheeky £20 million for that Data Science whatever, and I look forward to a long and prosperous future of being bought out by many more amoral accounting firms!"

What's going on inside the Blue Cube this week

What is: What Is?

There appears to have been some confusion of late over what exactly our 'What Is?' series actually is, so the wonderful team responsible for producing it have decided that they'll be running a very special edition this week, letting you know just what 'What Is?' is.

The session will be exploring notions of just how we can truly appreciate 'What' something 'Is', and whether we can ever hope to fully understand the important concepts we tackle in these events simply through the medium of a 30-minute talk. The 'What Is?' team would like to reassure you that the answer is an emphatic 'yes!', but we'll leave it to them in their session to do that.

Any fears that that last paragraph sounded far too humanities-esque can now be allayed – we have since established that Simon the Intern wrote it. On an unrelated note, we regret to announce that Simon the Intern had an unfortunate accident involving him and a p45, and he is no longer working with us. Any intern-related needs should now be directed to Steve the Intern.

Attendance at this event is, naturally, compulsory – even if you think you already know what 'What Is?' is, there's almost certainly going to be something new and exciting for you to learn at this event, and you wouldn't want to miss out on that. And even if you did, attendance is compulsory (like we said), so you have to turn up anyway.

Pop along to The Boardroom at 1pm on Tuesday for the session.

Superiority Sessions

We like to encourage positivity amongst our staff, and what better way to feel positive than by feeling better than other people?

That's right, we're providing special sessions on how to feel superior to everyone else. You're already working in the Blue Cube, so you're clearly already above the teeming masses of ignorance, but it never hurts to be reminded of that fact.

Wednesday, 2pm. The Boardroom. We look forward to seeing you there - don't forget your yoga mats, and green tea will (of course) be provided!

What's On outside the Blue Cube this week

Oh, who cares? None of us, that's for sure.

Union Page

People's Climate March in London - Sunday 29 November



This Sunday, a day before world leaders meet in Paris for the most important UN climate summit of our generation, we are joining our voices with the hundreds of thousands of people and civil society groups who are marching streets worldwide.

More than 2,000 cities and 150 countries will take part in the biggest mobilisation in history against climate change.

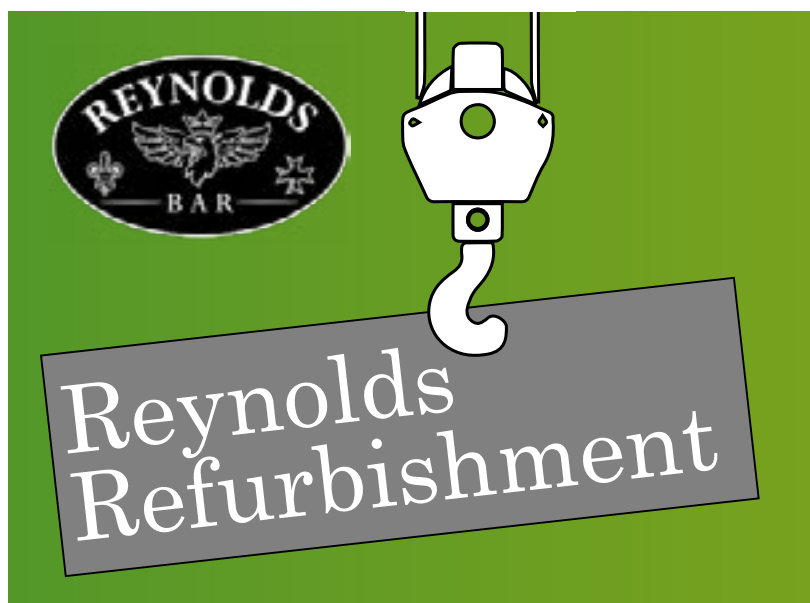
In London we're marching from Park Lane at 12:00 on Sunday 29 November. Click now to attend the event on Facebook and invite everyone:

www.facebook.com/events/516078015212179/

On the table there is a proposal for a planet-saving deal to get the world off fossil fuels and onto a 100% clean energy plan. But the fossil fuel industry will do everything they can to block it. That's why it's important for all of us to take to the streets and put pressure on our leaders to secure the clean, safe future that we and our children deserve.

To change everything, we need everyone - especially you. Sign up and share widely: www.facebook.com/events/516078015212179/

Thanks for being involved!



We need your input for a new Reynolds

Imperial College Union is investing a significant amount of money in refurbishing the social space this Easter. This is your chance to have your say on how we can improve this space and make it popular every night of the week. We really want to get as many students as possible involved in shaping the design of the space.

We also want to hear from anybody who currently doesn't use the Bar as well as current users, what could we do to the space to make it suit you?

We also have two meetings where you can have your say and discuss ideas for us to take on board on 30 November and 2 December at 17:30 in the Reynolds Bar. app at:

imperialcollegeunion.org/reynolds-transform

Student Volunteering Week is coming!



Student Volunteering Week is a national campaign across the country where we celebrate volunteers and help inspire students to get involved. This year's theme is a collaboration; this can be collaborating with different student groups, College departments, charities and even different universities.

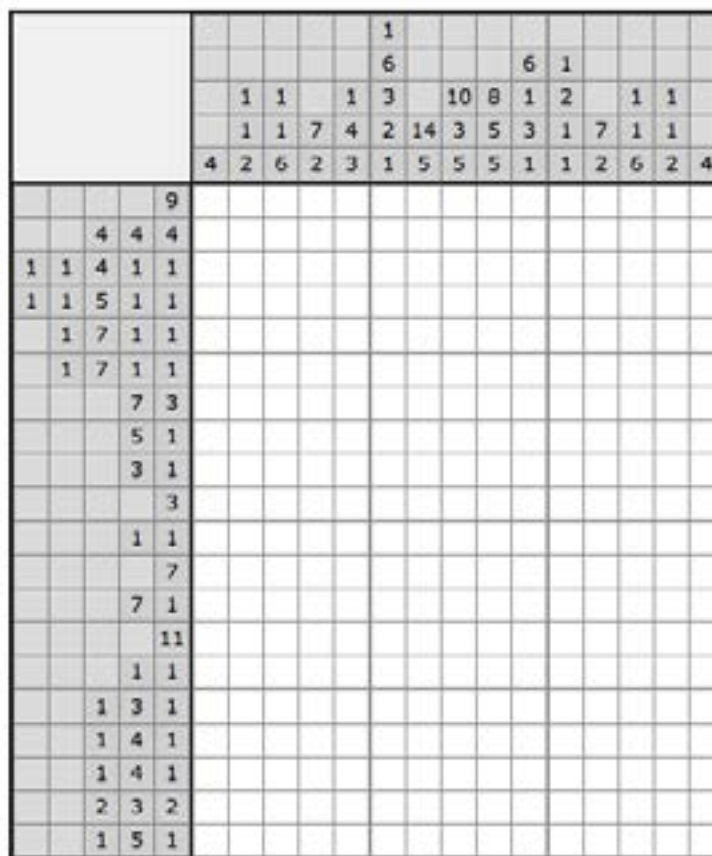
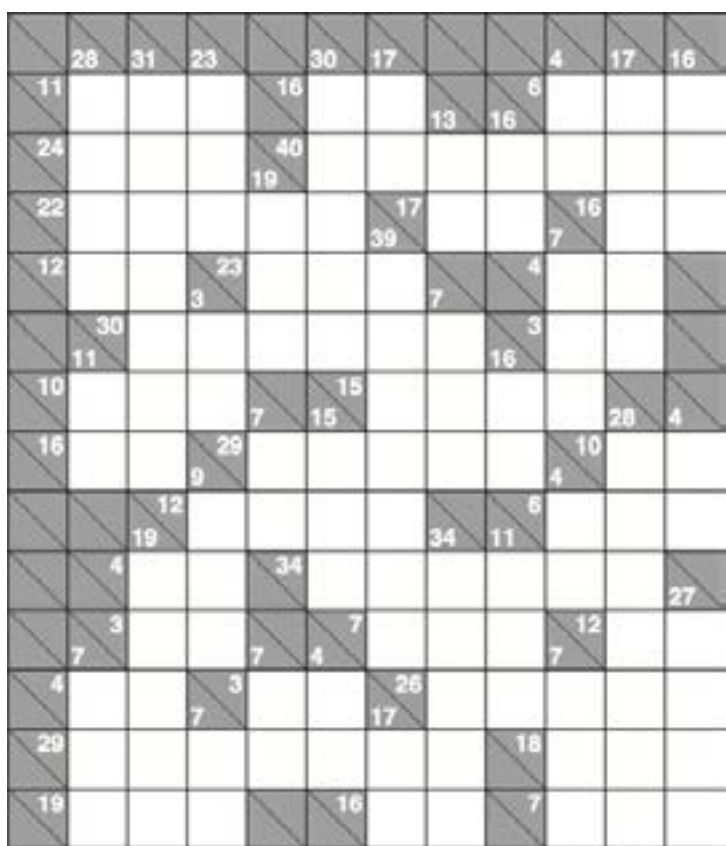
We are looking for a fantastic team of student volunteers to get involved and help shape and lead the week. With this you can decide what events we create and how we celebrate our volunteers. activities during SVW - which is celebrated nationally in universities and colleges across the UK. Volunteers will need to sign up by Sunday 13 December and come along to our first Team Planning meeting on Wednesday 16 December, 15:00.

To register online to: imperialcollegeunion.org/svw-team

FELIX PUZZLES



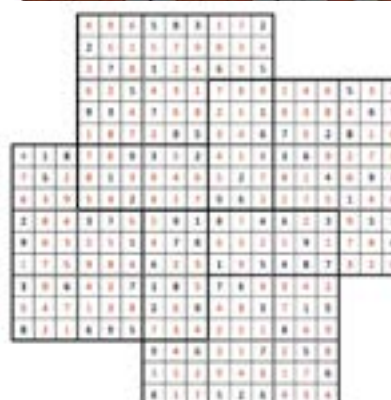
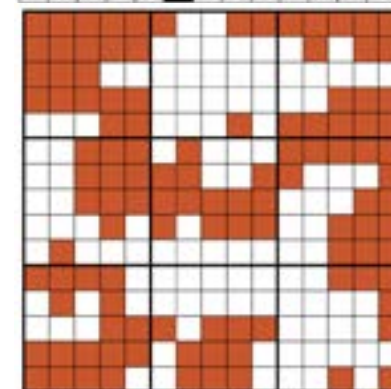
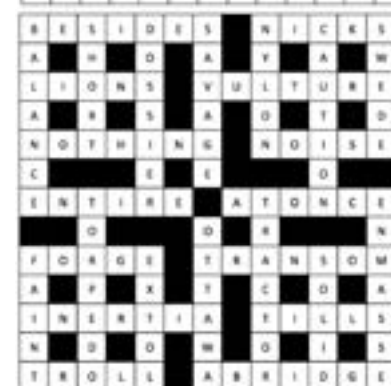
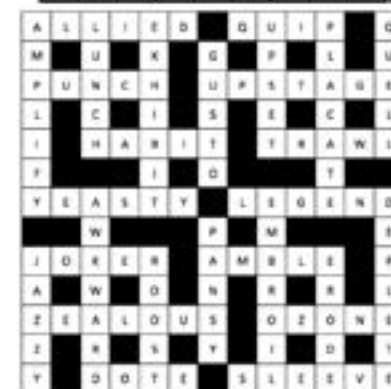
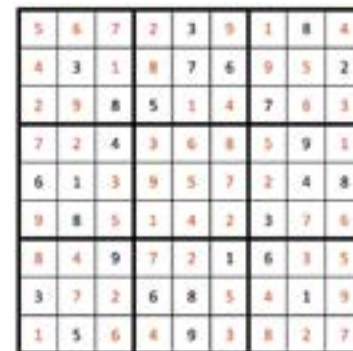
fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk



Solutions

Email your solutions to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk, before midday on Wednesday!

Word wheeler: *Chocolate*
Number of races needed: 7



									4
3		4	8	6					
8	6			9					
4	8								
9	5		6			3	2		
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8	2								9
6	9		7	1					
3	4								

Riddles

- R1. What has four fingers and a thumb, but is not living?
- R2. I have keys but no locks. I have a space but no room. You can enter, but can't go outside. What am I?
- R3. I can only live where there is light, but I die if the light shines on me. What am I?
- R4. What comes once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years?
- R5. What has many keys, but can't even open a single door?
- R6. What can you catch but not throw?
- R7. What has a foot but has no legs?

FUCWIT

- Solo Efforts**
- 1st Nicholas Sim 75
2nd Cherry Kwok 74
3rd Greg Poyser 34
4th Ayojedi 18
5th Jan Xu 13
6th Harry Secrett 10
7th Ho Chin 7.5
8th Sach Patel 6
=9th Grace Chin 3
=9th Jeremy Ong 3

- Groups**
- 1st Gap Yahhhh 28.5
2nd CP FanClub 23
3rd Pufulezzi 21
4th Parmesan 9.5

- Points available**
- Kakuro 2
Anagram family 1
Riddles 7
Sudoku 2
Crossword 3
Nonogram 2

Down

1. Rigatoni, tortellini etc (5)
2. Appreciation (5)
3. Waiting for Godot playwright (6,7)
4. Pounce (6)
5. Lose impetus (3,3,2,5)
6. Urge by gentle flattery (6)
7. Small extraterrestrial body (6)
12. African country, once French Sudan (4)
14. Swear (4)
15. Venetian painter – shade of red (6)
16. Jail (6)
17. Kickoff time? (6)
19. Inspect accounts (5)
20. Horrifying – sensational (5)

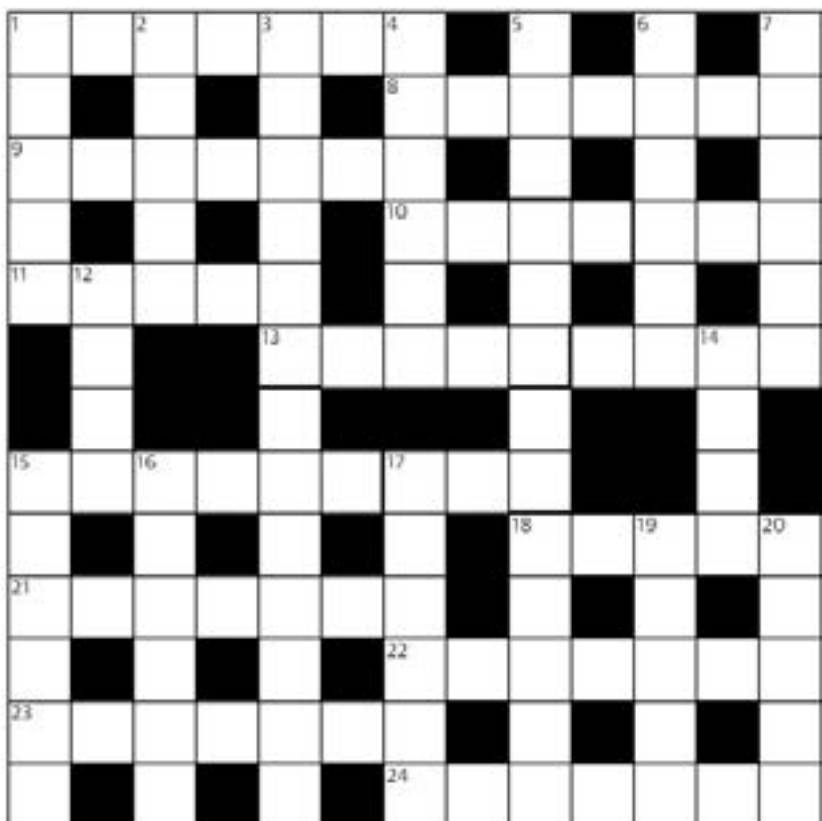
Across

1. Northern hemisphere constellation – use gaps (anag) (7)
8. Birds' clothing (7)
9. Speech defect (7)
10. Haematite, for example (4,3)
11. Fairly large (5)
13. Astronomical distance (5,4)
15. Alerted (6,3)
18. Covering for the shoulders (5)
21. Small piece of jewellery (7)
22. Gracefully slim (7)
23. Early Christian missionary (7)
24. Enticed (7)

Anagram family

Unscramble the four words and find what they have in common

SPIN PHASE
END SASS
TIM STEP IN A POND
CEMENT EXIT





American football: stung by Bath Bees

There were strong individual performances despite the loss

Panukorn Taleongpong
Writer

Last Sunday, the Immortals hosted their first home game this season against the Bath Killer Bees. After coming out of two bye weeks in a row, the Immortals were determined to earn their first win at home but unfortunately, were unable to stop the swarm.

Overall, the first quarter started out poorly. Defensively, we struggled a lot, allowing the Killer Bees to score three touchdowns early on from pass plays. Panic seemed to be present within the team after going down three scores to nothing and may have caused some of the poorly executed assignments from the offensive players.

In the second quarter, defensive game plans were changed to solely man coverage as zone coverage proved to be unsuccessful. This was a major turning point of the match as the defensive team prevented the Killer Bees' offense from gaining significant yardage and even forced a fumble when Jonas Schwenckzenegger teamed up with the linebackers to bring down an oncoming running back.



Stretching, we think. Photo Credit: Imperial Immortals

Offensively, we executed our assignments very well and even got two yards within the end zone. Unfortunately, due to a mishap with the snap, we were unable to score on that play. Intermittent errors in the third quarter for the offensive team and penalties for mistakes like false starts meant that we were unable to make many significant advancements. The defensive team was solid in the second half and,

despite the Killer Bees scoring one more touchdown, many rookies stepped up, solidifying the defense. Special mention goes to Imraj Singh Sunner for flying around the pitch, handing out massive tackles to anyone going through the front seven. The offensive team had their fourth with the quarterback moving the ball effectively and Papa Noach scoring a crucial touchdown and

conversion that ended the game with a deeply frustrating score of 8-29. Mistakes early on unfortunately cost us the match.

The defensive MVPs for this match are the D-Line, once again for an outstanding game, preventing any successful significant run plays from the opposing team and Imraj 'J'aime à la folie les filles françaises' Singh Sunner, for stepping up and causing a lot of trouble for the Bath

offense. The offensive MVP goes to Sam 'Famalam' Hill for having an amazing game and handing out some terrifying cut blocks.

Overall MVP goes to Papa Noach for his many great plays, especially a dazzling catch that led to a touchdown and his recovery from an unsuccessful snap during the conversion to score two more points for the team. The Ironman award goes to our quarterback Kevin Kim Kardashian for persisting throughout every play even after some big sacks against him. Finally, even though he didn't get any awards, a big mention to Spewy 'is never the designated driver/goes to a top university/plays American football/has a friend' Coidan for bashing his #hitstick and almost slowing down a Bath player.

Despite the loss, the Immortals look forward to their next home game against the Hertfordshire Hurricanes this Sunday. We would like to thank everyone who helped out and came to support the team, especially the cheerleaders and the old boys. It was a pleasure to see familiar faces such as Rob 'Works From Home Alone 3 Better Than The First Two', Matt 'has lost his mind' Connell and James 'was the big dog' Alden.

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Windsurfing: Aussie Kiss

Cornwall offered a podium position and a weekend away to these surfers

Joel Russel & Adam Ouzeri
Writers

After a promising month windsurfing at our London HQ (Queen Mary Reservoir), Imperial windsurfers grabbed their wetsuits and embarked on an incredible journey to Bude, Cornwall. Home to Europe's oldest living man, Stanley Lucas, Bude invites tourists to enjoy its scenic coastal pathways and relaxing English charm. What windsurfers had in mind, however, was something far gnarlier. The arrival of the first winter Westerlies set a blustery backdrop to a windsurfing weekend like no other. Alongside 50 or so university clubs from across the UK, Imperial windsurfers joined the lakeside antics at the UK's biggest student windsurfing festival: Aussie Kiss, a landmark event hosted by the Student Windsurfing Association (SWA).

Aussie Kiss (like a French kiss, only down under) has a long legacy, with 2015 marking its 14th consecutive year. With an appropriately epic theme, 'The Age of Discovery', it was organised as part of the SWA's event series which attracted over 500 students to share in a celebration of all things windsurfing. Aussie Kiss has become a startling achievement of university collaboration, harnessing the passion of an entire community, welcoming people not only to a sport but also to a family. The power

of this year's event was astonishing, with countless opportunities for everyone to get involved both on and off the water.

Within the university ranks, student instructors piled forth to run classes for all abilities. Taster sessions gave beginners the chance to try the sport for the first time whilst intermediate and advanced clinics focused on cracking new moves including water starts, carve gybes, and even the Flaka. The event grew even bigger this year and attracted premium sponsors including Patrik, Sailloft and Boardwise. This guaranteed plenty of opportunities for surfers to try cutting edge equipment for the first time.

Saturday was a quiet day with changing wind conditions at Roadford Lake. Imperial windsurfers made the most of the free sailing with the entire club out on the water for the majority of the day. An eleven-person paddle board made the perfect light wind distraction and the sun kept shining all day.

Newly crowned start windsurfers Gemma McNamara, Javier Ash and Lucinda Wilkinson fared excellently out on the water in blustery afternoon winds. Off-shore conditions meant gybes were avoided but excellent progress on upwind maneuvers showed clear promise for potential race contenders. Elsewhere, more advanced members dived into sessions, swapping tips with other universities and all looked very



James Metcalfe enjoying a Saturday Free sail. Photo Credit: Imperial Windsurfing

comfortable blasting around. Saturday was rounded off with a DJ set from sponsors Red Bull and, in true SWA tradition, the night was made special by an immense fancy dress party with 'Fictional Explorer' costumes ranging from Disney's UP to the Wild Thornberrys.

Sunday morning dawned with caravans shaking, trees trembling, and the sign of some excellent

wind for a hard day of competition. Representing Imperial in the freestyle, Adam Ouzeri showed his flair with switch stance sailing and completing duck gybes and cowboy maneuvers. Part of a strong heat, this was unfortunately not quite enough and Adam was eliminated in the first round.

Nevertheless, this did not discourage Adam, who was later joined by Joel Russell and Samuel Cooper for the team race. With an excellent starting leg from Sam, Imperial qualified first in their heat, setting up for a high octane final that saw Imperial out in front for the majority of the race. In the final leg, however, strong racing from Southampton and Birmingham saw Imperial pipped to the finish and claiming third place. With the sun setting on the lake during the award presentation, a podium finish was a satisfactory accomplishment, but, more importantly, it does leave strong hopes for the next competition. With the next SWA event 'Up The Brum' just a week away (4th-6th December), it won't be long until Imperial get to settle the score.

What windsurfers had in mind, however, was something far gnarlier.

Aussie Kiss was another weekend of sheer fun that shows off all the fantastic work underway in student windsurfing, enabling a nationwide activity that is active, inclusive and progressive. Imperial are proud to be part of a movement with such a wide offering to all students. If windsurfing is something you've ever liked the look of then it's never too late to try something new, and we would love to see you at the next SWA event in Birmingham!



They came third in the team race. Photo Credit: Imperial Windsurfing

FELIX SPORT



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Rugby 1st XV: Back to their winning ways

IC beat Kent at home 21-12

Alex Clayton
Writer

IC 1st XV arrived at an incredibly windy Harlington, the flat surroundings doing nothing to shield the boys from the gales. Nevertheless, the warm-up went smoothly, with not one ball dropped and everyone seeming ready for a fight.

IC's CPS started. A strong run from Kent's hooker and two fall-off tackles later, Kent were bearing down in IC's 22. A fast few phases from Kent's forwards and a quick ball out to the backs saw Kent score a try not even five minutes into the game. Shock and disappointment was ubiquitous with most of the team wondering how on earth they were going to impress the RVC Netballers that night if they didn't win. This, and the odd word of inspiration from the captain, spurred the boys into gear.

A strong restart from our fly-half positioned the forwards deep in opposition territory. A penalty was



Up you get, lads. Photo Credit: ICURFC

given right in front of the posts. Centre, Sam Moorby, stepped up, somehow managing to send it right off the posts with a kick as pitiful as his hairline.

The lineouts were going brilliantly despite the gale-force winds. Strong phase play carried by flanker and banter factory, Alex Clayton, saw

Second Row, Toby Simpson, crash over the whitewash for IC's first try. Moorby converted, making up for his atrocious first attempt.

Another bit of brilliant play resulted in Imperial crashing back up the pitch, leaving their boot inches away from Kent's private parts. Ali Zaboronsky lashed out at

the ref's ankle, seeking to remove any competition with the ladies that evening.

Scrum half, Matthew Blackett, organised well and questioned the Kent defence with lots of darting runs. The forwards were carrying really well in tight pods with author of this article, Clayton, leading the

charge, almost as if he were a man of average height. Kent struggled with his silky smooth footwork, dashing good looks and straight arm denying their tackles.

Quick ball from the scrum and some more great rucking resulted in Simpson's second try. The backs were starting to look really dangerous and Moorby soon got a try of his own. Both conversion attempts were successful, bringing the score to 21-5. Simpson seemed eager to score another five, unfortunately blowing his load prematurely and dropping the ball over the line. Low morale ensued from a blatant hat-trick avoidance.

Kent's winter bulk programme had evidently been more effective than ours as they dominated the scrum. Kent used this to their advantage, crossing over the line to score their second try. If only Martin Head's legs were as big as his arms, they may have been able to hold on. Final score was 21-12 and MOTM was deservedly awarded to Alex Clayton for an outstanding, nay astonishing performance.

Imperial Girls Can

Free Yoga, Boxing and Pilates are all part of the event's kick-off next week

Toni Semmence
Writer

From this Monday, Imperial College London will be revelling in all things female as part of their #ImperialGirlsCan campaign. Sport Imperial and Imperial College Union have joined forces to spend a week celebrating the achievements and successes of female athletes at the college.

The week will begin with Motivation Monday, starting early in the day with a 'DJ spin class' featuring songs from all-female groups and singers. This will include all the classics, from the Spice Girls to Beyoncé.

Appetising Tuesday will include the 'Let's Talk About Food' nutrition session hosted by the

Ethos Active Lifestyles team. This session will challenge perceptions of media icons and provide handy hints and tips on what we should and should not be eating.

Winning Wednesday will pitch our #ImperialGirlsCan alongside the BUCS #ThisBUCSGirlCan campaign. Across the sports sites, we will have a huge number of our female sports teams bidding to take away that all-important WIN as the season enters its halfway point. What better way to celebrate after gaining that win than at the 'ACC Sports Night' in the Union?

If you're feeling a little fragile from Wednesday night, then why not pick up a spot in the 'Old School Sports Day'? Expect some of your old favourites such as the egg and spoon and three-legged race where, fingers crossed, by lunchtime you'll be able to race in a relatively straight



When you realise you left your kit in the cloakroom at ACC. Photo Credit: Sport Imperial

line!

Feel Good Friday begins with a relaxing Pilates session – a great way to unwind and relax. After all that rest and recuperation, you can head out to the 'ICSM Cocktail Club' to

get the weekend started.

Across the week there will be a series of giveaways and freebies; and boys, if you thought you had forgot about you, think again.

For a full range of the activities

taking place across the week, and to find out how you can get involved head to the Sport Imperial website or alternatively join the Facebook Event '#ImperialGirlsCan Week' to keep up to date with all the action!